



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Family Assistance

Biographies

2013 ACF Region IX TANF Peer Collaboration and Technical Assistance Workshop

Shareef Abdur-Rahim was born December 11, 1976, in Atlanta, Georgia. The first son of William, and Aminah Abdur-Rahim, Shareef has ten other siblings. Affectionately known as “Reef” to family and friends, he attended Joseph Wheeler High School in Marietta, Georgia where he led his varsity basketball team in two consecutive state basketball championship appearances.

Mr. Abdur-Rahim’s basketball prowess led him to the University of California, Berkeley where during an impressive freshmen season he was named third team All-American, led all freshmen scorers in the NCAA, led his team and the Pac-10 Conference in scoring, and became the first freshmen in Pac-10 history to win Player of the Year honors. Selected as the third overall pick in the 1996 Draft, Mr. Abdur-Rahim left the University of California, Berkeley after one year to pursue a professional basketball career in the NBA.

Mr. Abdur-Rahim immediately impacted the league and became the leading scorer for the Vancouver, Grizzlies, averaging 18.7 ppg and a total of 1,494 points which was second among rookies and 26th overall in the NBA. In his second year, his scoring jumped to 22.3 points per game and he ranked sixth overall and second among small forwards in the NBA. Gradually increasing his performance statistics, Mr. Abdur-Rahim further solidified his status as an elitist in the NBA by his selection to the 2000 USA Basketball Men’s Senior Team for the 2000 Olympics and the 2002 All-Star Team.

Talented on and off the court, Mr. Abdur-Rahim has proven other facets of life exist outside of professional basketball. Owner of Abdur-Rahim Enterprises and founder of Future Foundation, Mr. Abdur-Rahim incorporates his ideals regarding social responsibility into his for-profit and non-profit ventures. Abdur-Rahim Enterprises provide start-up businesses with financial assistance, while Future Foundation provides comprehensive enrichment services that empower youth and communities. “We provide a community center environment for at-risk youth in East Point, the part of Atlanta where I grew up”. It’s a chance for kids to receive the help they need to graduate high school and enter a post-secondary institution. We also focus on engaging parents through workshops and family engagement activities. “There was nothing like that for kids when I grew up,” Mr. Abdur-Rahim says. “I wanted the kids in Atlanta today to have that opportunity.”

As a result of his community activities, Mr. Abdur-Rahim was a finalist for the 2002 Fannie Mae Foundation Home Team Community Service Award. In 2001, he received the NBA’s Community Assist Award for his “Rebound America” program. Mr. Abdur-Rahim established “Rebound America” to encourage NBA players to raise funds for victims of the September 11th attacks on America. The group raised a total of \$212,275.00, including \$69,600.00 from Mr. Abdur-Rahim. He was also named one of the “Good Guys” in sports by Sporting News and received the prestigious Trumpet Award.

Shareef Abdur-Rahim is the current director of player personnel for the Sacramento Kings and is also the general manager of the Reno Bighorns, the Kings’ minor-league affiliate. Shareef graduated from the University of California, Berkeley last May and is married to Dee Dee Abdur-Rahim. The college sweethearts met while they both attended the University of California, Berkley and they have two children, Jabri and Samiyyah.

Jill Duerr Berrick serves as the Zellerbach Family Foundation Professor in the School of Social Welfare and co-director of the Center for Child and Youth Policy at the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Berrick's research focuses on the child welfare system and efforts to improve the experiences of children and families touched by foster care. She has written or co-written ten books on topics relating to family poverty, child maltreatment, and child welfare. Her interests target the intersection between poverty, early childhood development, parenting, and the service systems designed to address these issues. Her research approach typically relies upon the voices of service system consumers to identify the impacts of social problems and social service solutions on family life.

Mary Farrell, co-founder of MEF Associates, serves as Executive Vice President for the firm. She brings over 20 years of experience studying and evaluating social policy programs. Ms. Farrell's work involves managing program evaluations, conducting implementation studies, and conducting quantitative analyses. Currently, she is working as a subcontractor to MDRC on the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) project, the TANF/SSI Disability Transition Project (TSDTP), and the Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration (ETJD). She is also working on Abt's Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND), Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self-Sufficiency (ISIS) evaluation, and Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Impact Study. Prior to starting MEF Associates, Ms. Farrell was at The Lewin Group, where she directed the income security and employment work within the Federal Human Services Practice. She previously worked at MDRC and the U.S. Department of Education's Planning and Evaluation Service.

Katharine Gale has more than 20 years of experience in the fields of homelessness and special needs housing. She is currently serving as a Policy Director at the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). Her portfolio includes family homelessness and she co-chairs a federal interagency workgroup on strategies to prevent and end family homelessness. She is also responsible for promoting data analysis and research on homelessness and effective strategies and solutions. In addition, Ms. Gale provides regional support for place-based initiatives to end homelessness in Nevada, Arizona, and northern California. Prior to joining USICH, Ms. Gale was a consultant and project manager for public and non-profit agencies working to end homelessness and served as Deputy Director for the Alameda County, California Housing and Community Development Department. Ms. Gale's consulting work focused on helping communities use data to transform local responses to homelessness in keeping with the goals of HEARTH and Opening Doors. Ms. Gale holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley.

Robert (Bob) Garcia is the Acting Regional Administration for Region IX at the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As the Acting Regional Administrator, Mr. Garcia is the principal representative of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in Region IX which includes responsibility for a broad range of federal programs that address the needs of children and families. These programs are administered by states, Tribes, and other grantees in Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, and the Outer Pacific. The largest of the programs are Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Child Support Enforcement, Head Start, Child Care, Child Welfare, and services to Runaway and Homeless Youth.

With over 23 years of federal government service, Mr. Garcia started with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the San Francisco Regional Office in 1989, hired as the Regional Child Development Program Specialist. His initial assignment was serving as a Head Start Program Specialist for two years until the authorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act and ensuing federal child care program. He worked as the Regional Child Care program lead staff from 1991 to 2006 when he was promoted to the Regional Program Manager of the Office of Child Care.

Mr. Garcia has a Bachelors Degree in Psychology from University of California Berkeley and a Masters Degree in Developmental Psychology/Early Childhood Cognition from San Francisco State University. He is the proud father of two daughters ages 27 and 23.

Earl Johnson is the Director of the Office of Family Assistance at the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Prior to joining ACF, Dr. Johnson was senior Policy Advisor to Oakland, California Mayor Ron Dellums, where he was responsible for helping set policy and program goals for the city in the areas of workforce, health, and urban affairs. He also worked with the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships on fatherhood initiatives.

Before serving in Oakland he had significant state and non-profit sector experience, having served as Associate Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the California Health and Human Services Agency, as Associate Director, Working Communities for the Rockefeller Foundation, and as Senior Program Officer for The California Endowment, a private statewide health foundation.

Dr. Johnson graduated from the American University in Washington and earned a Master of Arts in Public Policy from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D in Social Welfare from the University of California. He is widely known for his work in developing programs and policy on matters related to TANF and has authored articles on needy family issues. His areas of expertise include poverty and fatherhood, both high priority issues for the Administration and HHS.

Alicia Meckstroth, a senior researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, has over fifteen years of experience conducting evaluations of family support, employment and training, youth development, and teen pregnancy prevention programs. Ms. Meckstroth was project director and principal investigator for the Rural Welfare-to-Work Strategies Demonstration Evaluation, an experimental impact and benefit-cost study of two innovative programs for at-risk families. She currently plays lead roles on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Advancing Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency Research (Project AWESOME) and the Evaluation of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Approaches (PPA). She recently provided technical assistance to education evaluations around various methodological, analytic, and reporting issues for a U.S. Department of Education project. She holds a Masters in Public Policy from Georgetown University.

Robin Schmitt brings 25 years of educational experience to his current position of Executive Director, Programs and Interventions in Antioch Unified School District. He is currently in his sixth year directing the development of eight Linked Learning Pathways in Antioch. Three of the pathways have received Linked Learning Certification. Mr. Schmitt also manages the categorical funded programs for the district which includes the Title I, homeless and foster programs. Prior to his current position, Mr. Schmitt served in roles as principal of a Title I middle school, principal of extended learning and home schooling, vice principal, high school and middle school science teacher, outdoor school instructor, and consultant. Mr. Schmitt's experience brings a creative view to leveraging funds and programs to most effectively meet the needs of all students in preparing them for today's world. Through his experience Mr. Schmitt holds that as educators and partners, we are responsible to each and every student that walks through our doors.