

NC Resilient Communities Funding Forum

Meet the Speakers

Kaine Riggan – Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities:

Kaine Riggan works with town and county governments to develop competitive applications for FEMA's non-disaster grant programs. He learned about government grants while working for the State of Tennessee and now he works with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. He also serves as an annual federal grant panelist for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services.

Nastasha Earle-Young – N.C. Department of Transportation:

Nastasha Earle-Young is the policy director for the chief operating officer with the N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT). She has a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and has been with NCDOT for almost 11 years. In her previous role, she was the project manager for the NCDOT Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, Strategic Transportation Corridor Master Plans and NCDOT Carbon Reduction Program; assisted with the Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan, managed the North Carolina Transportation Innovation Council, and was a member of the NCDOT Core Resilience Team.

Colin Mellor – N.C. Department of Transportation:

Colin Mellor began his career at NCDOT in 1994. Since then, he has worked as a public servant and in private industry as a geologist and a geophysicist, gradually changing paths through environmental coordination and permitting roles to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and environmental policy. Currently with NCDOT's Environmental Policy Unit he oversees NEPA project compliance for the eastern half of the state and is one of NCDOT's technical leads on Governor Cooper's climate change-focused Executive Order 80. He earned a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Wollongong, Australia, and a master's degree in geology from UNC-Chapel Hill. He is a North Carolina Licensed Geologist.

Kevin Hart – N.C. Division of Water Resources:

Kevin Hart is the N.C. Division of Water Resources (DWR) Coastal Infrastructure Grant coordinator for the Shallow Draft Navigation Fund, Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation Fund, and Water Resources Development Grant Program. Kevin began working for the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality as a fisheries biologist with the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries in 2008 as a reviewer of development permits and as a Coastal Habitat Protection Plan author. Kevin then became an environmental specialist with the N.C. Division of Coastal Management in 2014 reviewing habitat alteration permits and issuing development permits. Kevin has a Bachelor of Science in marine sciences with a minor in geology from Rutgers University (2004) and a Master of Science in environmental science from East Carolina University (2008).

Bob Taylor – N.C. Division of Water Infrastructure:

Bob Taylor is a Program Development Coordinator in the Viable Utilities Unit of the N.C. Division of Water Infrastructure. With over 20 years of experience in community and economic development in the private sector and nonprofit organizations, he has worked with communities throughout North Carolina on physical infrastructure needs with an eye toward sustainable development. He holds a master's in public affairs from UNC-Greensboro and a bachelor's degree in geology from Appalachian State University. He enjoys exploring the state's natural beauty and is on a personal quest to discover the best eateries in our rural towns.

Kasey Ginsberg – Golden LEAF Foundation:

Kasey Ginsberg joined Golden LEAF in January 2017 as the first program officer for the Disaster Recovery Grant Program and now serves as vice president/chief of staff. Her responsibilities include leading the strategic development and execution of the external-facing work of Golden LEAF including communications, government relations, and the Golden LEAF Scholarship Program. Kasey provides management support on internal initiatives to increase organizational effectiveness and organization-wide strategic planning efforts. Kasey also fulfills director of programs responsibilities for the state and federally funded programs of the Foundation including the Flood Mitigation Grant Program. Prior to joining Golden LEAF, she served in budget and policy roles for former Gov. Pat McCrory and Speaker Thom Tillis, where she worked on a variety of topics including economic development, education, transportation and disaster recovery.

Hillary Sherman – Economic Development Administration:

Ms. Hillary Sherman is the North Carolina economic development representative for the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). In this capacity, Hillary works with communities across the state to develop and implement economic development projects. Hillary both provides technical assistance to help community partners understand options on how to build capital stacks to successfully implement economic development projects. She serves as the pre-award point of contact for all EDA programs in the state of North Carolina. Prior to this role, Hillary served as lead for the Performance and National Programs office for EDA in Washington, D.C., where she focused on performance assessment and program management. Hillary also worked in several other community and economic development roles, most interestingly serving as an AMERICORPS VISTA member. Hillary holds a Bachelor of Science in biology/English from Elon University and a Master of Laws in international law from the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Chris Baillie – Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape:

Chris Baillie works for the North Carolina Coastal Federation as the resilience/climate adaptation coordinator for the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape (ENCSL). The ENCSL Partnership is a coalition of federal, state, local, NGO and private partners that works to advance efforts that strengthen military readiness, conserve natural resources, bolster agricultural and forestry economies and increase climate change resilience. As resilience/climate adaptation coordinator, Chris, works in coordination with the ENCSL coordinator, committee, partnership and military installations, supports development and implementation of resilience-enhancing projects and is facilitating the development of a Climate Resilience Plan for the ENCSL.

Lindy Betzhold – Lynker/National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration:

Lindy Betzhold currently serves as a senior coastal management specialist at Lynker on contract to the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management (OCM). She's supported OCM for over 17 years in roles that encompass managing national and regional grant programs, serving as the NOAA liaison to coastal management programs, leading development of geospatial tools, designing and facilitating meetings, developing strategic plans, and supporting national and regional resilience efforts. She currently serves as the chair of the Southeast & Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership Advisory Board and has had a leadership role in the effort since its inception in 2016.

Courtney Greene – Throwe Environmental:

Courtney Greene is a policy analyst for Throwe Environmental. Courtney graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a master's in public administration and a focus on policy analysis. Prior to starting her master's program, Courtney completed a Bachelor of Science at URI in health studies with a focus on health promotion and a minor in kinesiology. During the course of her studies, Courtney has helped develop two health promotion campaigns, worked part-time for the Frank Olean Center providing services to adolescents with developmental disabilities, and served as a policy fellow on a stormwater financing report for the Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Network. Currently, Courtney manages the team's two National Fish and Wildlife Foundation projects, including the National Coastal Resilience Fund and Long Island Sound Futures Fund, as well as the team's SNEP Network technical assistance project with Middletown, R.I. She works in a support role on the team's two additional projects with Baltimore County, Md., and The Nature Conservancy in Maryland.

Bronwyn Lucas – NC Rural Center:

Bronwyn Lucas is the senior director of leadership and engagement at the NC Rural Center. In this role, she is responsible for designing and implementing trainings and projects that promote leadership that is inclusive, connected, informed and creative. She is also a graduate of the inaugural class of the Regional Leadership Institute of the Appalachian Regional Commission. Prior to joining the Rural Center, Lucas spent several years working with national supply chains and food systems in the 21 largest urban school districts in America. However, Bronwyn is happy to return to working locally with communities across North Carolina. She has a deep passion for health equity, community engagement, and systemic change. Lucas has an undergraduate degree from Amherst College and a Master of Public Health from the Gillings School of Global Public Health at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Miles Kirksey – NC Rural Center:

Since joining the NC Rural Center in 2018, Miles Kirksey has been tasked with deepening the Center's engagement with its leadership alumni network, small business community, and rural constituents across the state. As an advocacy engagement manager, Miles is responsible for coordinating advocacy recruitment, community mobilization and information services, and capacity building opportunities for the Rural Counts program. Miles is originally from Morganton, N.C., and called western North Carolina home for 24 years. He holds a bachelor's in public administration from Appalachian State University (Go 'Neers). Prior to the joining the Rural Center, Miles served as a family services coordinator with Habitat for Humanity of Durham, where he aided low-income families in their journey towards homeownership. As a rural native – working at the Rural Center allows Miles to apply his passion for public service and outreach to advancing rural communities across the state, like the one he calls home.

Chris Canfield – Conservation Trust for NC:

Chris Canfield is in his sixth year leading Conservation Trust for NC's efforts to build resilient, just communities through a lens of climate resilience, community health, and equity and inclusion. Chris has a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics from Birmingham-Southern College. He earned his Master of Philosophy degree in 20th-century English literature from the University of Oxford. Chris worked for the National Audubon Society for almost two decades, last as the vice president for the Mississippi Flyway.