



**POMS HOCC Mini Conference Program 2026**  
**May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Grand Sierra Resort**  
**2500 E 2nd St, Reno, NV 89595**

8:30 AM	5:00 PM	<b>Mini-conference check-in</b>
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	Lunch (in the conference venue; room <b>Crystal 3-5</b> )
1:15 PM	1:30 PM	<b>Opening Remarks</b> Feyza G. Sahinyazan, Diana Ramirez-Rios, VPs of Meetings, HOCC College
1:30 PM	2:30 PM	<b>Session 1: Serving Populations at Risk</b> <i>This session examines how agencies plan, coordinate, and execute their operations when serving vulnerable populations</i> <b>Moderator:</b> Feyza G. Sahinyazan <b>Panelists:</b> Ayanna McGee, Sacramento Steps Forward Justin Milami, Branch Chief Disaster Logistics, California Office of Emergency Services Kim Eason, Community Disaster Program Manager, American Red Cross of Nevada
2:30 PM	3:00 PM	Break
3:00 PM	4:00 PM	<b>Session 2: Emergency Response within Tribal Communities</b> <i>This session explores how emergency management operates within tribal jurisdictions and what this means for equitable response operations.</i> <b>Moderator:</b> Diana Ramirez-Rios <b>Panelists:</b> Helen Lopez, Deputy Director of Tribal Affairs, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Serrell Smokey, Chairman, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California Ken Quiner, Manager of Emergency Preparedness, Washoe Tribe of Nevada & California Lisa Christensen, Program Manager, Washoe Tribe Preparedness Resource Department
4:00 PM	4:15 PM	Break
4:15 PM	4:30 PM	HOCC Student Video Competition Finalists
4:30 PM	5:30 PM	<b>Interactive session: Roundtable with Practitioners</b> Moderators: Diana Ramirez-Rios and Feyza G. Sahinyazan
5:30 PM	5:45 PM	<b>Closing Remarks</b> Johanna Amaya, President, HOCC College Feyza G. Sahinyazan, Diana Ramirez-Rios, VPs of Meetings, HOCC College
6:00 PM		Reception

**We look forward to seeing you in Reno!**

If you have any questions, please email HOCC President Johanna Amaya ([amayaj@psu.edu](mailto:amayaj@psu.edu)) or VPs of Meetings Diana Ramirez-Rios ([dgramire@buffalo.edu](mailto:dgramire@buffalo.edu)) or Feyza G. Sahinyazan ([fezza\\_sahinyazan@sfu.ca](mailto:fezza_sahinyazan@sfu.ca)).

## INVITED PANELISTS

### Panel 1: Serving Populations At Risk

#### **Ayanna McGee, Director of System Implementation, Sacramento Steps Forward**



Ayanna McGee is a public health professional and consultant who focuses on population health, strategic planning, and facilitation. With over a decade of experience across nonprofit and public sectors, she brings deep expertise in designing and facilitating collaborative learning environments, advancing equity-centered initiatives, and guiding organizations through complex planning processes. Her approach is grounded in equity, real-world implementation, and a commitment to making systems work better for the people they serve.

Ayanna holds a B.A. in Sociology from UC Santa Barbara, a Master of Public Health from George Washington University, and both a Master of Health Administration and Doctor of Education in Health Professions from A.T. Still University of Health Sciences.

#### **Justin Milami, Branch Chief Disaster Logistics, California Office of Emergency Services**

Justin Milami is a senior leader in emergency management and disaster logistics, currently serving as a Branch Chief with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). With over 30 years of public sector experience, he oversees statewide logistics operations supporting disaster response and recovery, including life-sustaining commodities, warehousing, transportation, and large-scale staging site operations. His work directly supports tens of thousands of disaster survivors and ensures the readiness of critical resources for rapid deployment across California. Mr. Milami has led complex, multi-agency logistics efforts during major emergencies, coordinating with federal, state, and local partners to deliver timely and equitable support to communities, particularly populations at risk. His expertise spans supply chain management, fleet and asset oversight, facilities operations, and strategic planning in high-consequence environments. He has also played a key role in advancing data-driven decision-making and system improvements within disaster logistics. He has contributed to statewide training and strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening disaster logistics capabilities. Mr. Milami is passionate about improving how emergency management systems serve vulnerable populations and is committed to advancing innovative, collaborative approaches to crisis response.



### **Kim Eason, Community Disaster Program Manager, American Red Cross of Nevada**



Kim Eason is a disaster preparedness and response professional with nearly two decades of experience supporting communities before, during, and after disasters. She currently serves with the American Red Cross in Northern Nevada, where she works closely with volunteers and community partners to strengthen local preparedness and response capabilities.

Kim began her emergency management journey in 2007 as a volunteer with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the American Red Cross. She has since responded to numerous disasters, worked in emergency management in Texas, and held leadership roles within the Red Cross. In addition to her nonprofit work, Kim has experience in the private sector, co-owning a security and investigations company and advising small businesses on continuity planning during crises.

She has also taught college-level courses in related fields and holds degrees in Anthropology, Emergency and Disaster Management, Criminal Justice, and a PhD in Business Administration.

## **Panel 2: Emergency Response within Tribal Communities**

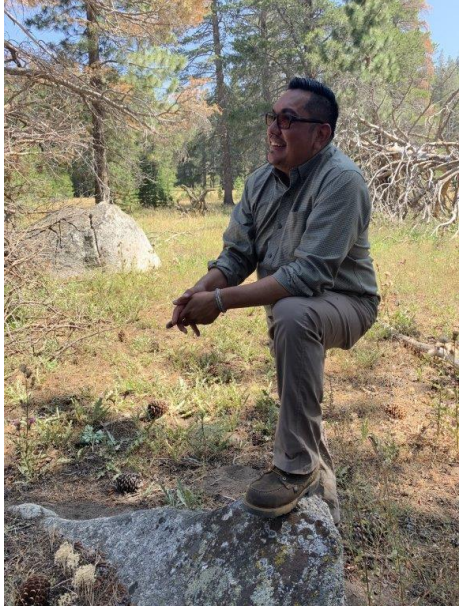
### **Helen Lopez, Deputy Director, Tribal Affairs Program, CAL FIRE**

Helen Lopez was appointed Deputy Director of CAL FIRE's Tribal Affairs Program in March 2024, where she leads efforts to strengthen government-to-government relationships with California Native American Tribes (Tribes). Under her leadership, she ensures CAL FIRE cultivates robust partnerships, fostering trust, and improving communication between CAL FIRE and the Tribes. She aims to build and ensure the meaningful participation and inclusion of tribal governments and communities within the work of CAL FIRE, including supporting the effective integration of these Tribal Nations and community interests in fire protection, public safety, and resource management. She prioritizes increasing cultural awareness and sensitivity within CAL FIRE's Programs, Regions, and 21 Units located statewide to foster a deeper understanding of Tribal heritage by providing training and informational resources throughout the department.



With over 30 years of public service, she has extensive experience in emergency management, tribal relations, finance, and international affairs. Prior to CAL FIRE, she served as Assistant Director of the International Affairs Office and Office of Tribal Coordination at the Governor Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), where she advanced tribal engagement, disaster response efforts, and global partnerships. Deputy Director Lopez holds a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in Accountancy from California State University, Sacramento.

### **Chairman Serrell Smokey, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California**



Washoe Tribe Chairman Serrell Smokey was elected to office in 2018. He was nominated as the President of the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada in 2019 and was appointed as an alternate member of the Department of the Interior's Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee in 2023. He is a graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno. He has an educational background in Psychology, Business, and Tribal Law. Chairman Smokey is a Veteran, serving in the United States Army and the Nevada National Guard. He was deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003-2004) and Operation Spartan Shield (2016-2017). Chairman Smokey actively utilizes the leadership skills acquired in the military to progressively lead the Washoe People. Chairman Smokey serves many functions, such as working towards better economic development opportunities, stable administrative functions, and giving Tribes a bigger voice in the Federal Government. "For too long have Tribes been left out, and the government neglected their trust responsibilities."

Chairman Smokey has also played an integral part in the fight against local racism, with the name change of "squaw" valley resort and fighting the Minden, NV sundowner siren.

### **Ken Quiner, Manager – Emergency Preparedness, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California**

A Proactive learner with proven ability to adapt to and excel in response to dynamic and highly complex or chaotic emergencies. Ken Quiner is an All-Hazards Preparedness and Emergency Management professional with proven executive leadership, aptitude, and experience. His comprehensive Emergency Management expertise has been refined by extensive disaster response operations during real-world emergencies, and humanitarian assistance deployments. Since retiring from the United States Marine Corps in 2008, he has served as the St. Charles Health System Emergency Management Coordinator and Hazardous Materials Officer in Central Oregon. Supporting a Private, nonprofit health system providing direct medical support for three counties and indirect trauma support for an additional five rural counties. Operating: one Level-II Trauma / Medical Center and one Level-III Medical Center, two Critical Access Hospitals, two inpatient behavior health facilities, and Medical Group; comprised of numerous urgent care, family care, and outpatient specialty clinics.



He has also served as the Oregon State, Health Security, Preparedness, & Response Program Liaison for Oregon's Southwestern Region-3. Responsible for integration of ESF-8 preparedness and response efforts between all other state agencies, tribes, healthcare systems, county emergency management, health departments, local federal, and non-governmental organizations. For the past four and half years Ken has been serving as the Manager – Emergency Preparedness & Director of the Preparedness Resources Department, for the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. As he continues to share his broad professional leadership perspective spanning across diverse cultural, governmental, tactical, operational, and strategic arenas.

**Lisa Christensen, Program Manager, Washoe Tribe Preparedness Resource Department**



húŋa ʔumhámuhé-ši? (how are you)

My name is Lisa Christensen, a Huŋalelti Was-siw (Southern Band Washoe). I have lived in three of our four communities and made my home in the Dresslerville Community (Pa Wa lu) for 30 years.

I was introduced into emergency preparedness in 2012 as the Washoe Tribe Emergency Management Coordinator during this time I represented the Washoe Tribe and four communities in the Inter-Tribal Emergency Response Commission and was appointed by Governor Sandoval to represent the 28 tribes on the Nevada Commission on Homeland Security from 2015-2022.

In 2016, I became a cadet for the Washoe Tribe Police Department. I graduated from the Northern Nevada Law Enforcement Academy in 2017, interim Police Chief in 2019,

before I was reassigned by Chairman Smokey to lead our Emergency Operations Center and guide our leadership through the COVID epidemic to allow services to continue for our tribal membership.

I went back into emergency management full time in 2022, as the Planning Chief for the Washoe Tribe and applied to our newest department as the project manager for the Washoe Tribe Preparedness Resource Department in 2024.

Our communities and tribal lands sprawl over six counties within Nevada and California. We value our partnerships with local, tribal, county, state and regional cohorts coordinating efforts to protect our citizens and lands, training our responders, creating and updating emergency plans and shared resources throughout operations in widespread incidences. We do not have words in our Wasiw language for good-bye so I will see you in the future- milí ·gígábagi.