



WEBINAR GUEST BIOS

Rural communities and economic resilience

November 18, 2025



Julianna Dodson
Executive director

Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurship

Julianna Dodson spent the beginning of her career teaching English in Pakistan and Rwanda, after which she worked in finance and conducted her small business on the side for 10 years. Dodson joined the Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurship in 2021 as the director of its national rural ecosystem building programming, Radically Rural, and is now the executive director of the organization. She is passionate about continuing to cultivate essential endeavors and regional economies that are resilient, regenerative, and distributive in design.

Outside of work, Dodson serves on the advisory board for her local newspaper, a committee for a brownfields remediation project, as a corporator for her local mutual bank, and volunteers with organizations supporting asylum seekers and queer folks. For fun, she enjoys dancing, reading to her kids, tending the land, thrifting, surfing, and practicing Spanish.



Bonita Robertson-Hardy
Executive director
Aspen Institute

Bonita Robertson-Hardy is a workforce and economic development professional committed to connecting the public sector, private sector, and nonprofit communities. Through her work, Robertson-Hardy builds relationships, utilizes her voice to influence policy, and advocates for equity and opportunity in public and private organizations. Since joining the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group in 2021 and becoming the co-executive director in 2022, she has worked to highlight the importance of equitable rural prosperity by lifting up the diverse voices of rural

practitioners and researchers.

Prior to joining the Aspen Institute, Robertson-Hardy worked at the Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF), a community foundation serving 13 rural and urban parishes in southeast Louisiana. During her time at GNOF, she served as director of workforce Initiatives as well as director of civic leadership. In these roles, she developed employer-led workforce partnerships to train jobseekers and incumbent workers, established an initiative to provide post-hire supportive services for employees at their worksites, led the strategic planning process for the equitable revitalization of an economic development zone within downtown New Orleans, and worked to support and catalyze progressive initiatives to promote growth and equity throughout the region.

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

Building a Culture of Health, County by County

Robertson-Hardy holds a Bachelor of Science degree in healthcare management from Howard University and a Juris Doctorate from Loyola University College of Law.

A native of New Orleans, she currently serves as a board member of Louise S. McGehee School, is a past fellow of the Association for Black Foundation Executives Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program, and previously served as a commissioner of the Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority. In her spare time, Robertson-Hardy enjoys playing the ancient game of mahjong. She currently resides outside of Washington, DC with her husband Bradley, and their sons Luke and Jack.