

Carmen R. Nazario

**Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**



Until her recent nomination, Carmen R. Nazario was an Assistant Professor at the Inter American University of Puerto Rico, where she taught social policy and coordinated the Social Work Practicum at the School of Social Work. Nazario has vast experience in public service with a focus on improving services to children and families within the United States and around the world, dating back to 1968. From January 2003 – December 2008, she served as Administrator of the Administration for Children and Families for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, where she led an agency of 4,000 staff with a budget of over \$220 million. Prior to that, she served as the Senior Resident Investigator for the Jordan Poverty Alleviation Program, where she developed and implemented a national poverty reduction strategy for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and advised leaders in the nation on the delivery of social services.

During the Clinton Administration, she first served as Associate Commissioner for Child Care in the Administration on Children, Youth and Families and later became the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Nazario joined the Clinton Administration after serving as Secretary of Health and Social Services for the State of Delaware from 1993-1997, and, prior to that, she was the Director of Social Services in Norfolk, Virginia, and Loudoun County, Virginia.

Nazario has held a number of national leadership roles, including Vice President of the Board of Directors of the American Public Welfare Association, President of the National Council of Local Public Welfare Administrators, and Secretary of the National Council of State Human Service Administrators. Nazario is from Bayamon, Puerto Rico. She received a Bachelor of Arts with honors in Sociology from the University of Puerto Rico in 1967, and was awarded her Master of Social Work degree from Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work in 1973.

Diann Dawson

Director, Office of Regional Operations



Diann Dawson serves as the Director of the Office of Regional Operations within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A senior level director and principal advisor to the Assistant Secretary regarding field operations, she provides leadership and direction to ACF's ten regional offices responsible for federal oversight and implementation of more than 60 human service programs to promote the well-being of children and families. Those programs include Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Child Care, Child Support Enforcement, Head Start, Foster Care and Adoption, Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Welfare, and Runaway and Homeless Youth.

A career public servant with over 30 years of Federal executive leadership and State program management experience, Dawson is the recipient of numerous awards including the Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Service which recognizes outstanding achievement by members of the Senior Executive Service. She is the 2008 recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award from the UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work.

With a background in social work, Dawson understands the critical nature of love and support, intangible lessons, and indispensable characteristics that children obtain from their parents. She has been instrumental in helping ACF work to strengthen and rebuild families through the Healthy Marriage Initiative. As part of her present role, Dawson effectively guides regional support of Healthy Marriage Initiative goals across the country. Dawson also provided the leadership to create the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative (AAHMI) along with her executive staff in 2003, laying the foundation of a national family strengthening movement for African Americans. Through culturally competent strategies and collaborations with partners spanning various sectors, she champions efforts to improve child well-being through strengthening healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood to help ensure that all children have access to vital life components needed from their parents.

Ms. Dawson received her J.D. degree from the Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and is admitted to practice law in the District of Columbia and Maryland. She holds a M.S.W. degree with a concentration in community organization and social planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a B.A. from Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina.

Ms. Dawson is married and the mother of one son.



Joyce A. Thomas

Regional Administrator, Region II (New York)



Joyce A. Thomas is the Regional Administrator for the Administration for Children and Families in Region II. The Region comprises New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. In this capacity, Ms. Thomas partners with state, local, community based organizations, and tribes within the Region to promote economic independence and healthy development of children and families.

Ms. Thomas provides executive leadership and direction to ensure coordination and integration of activities among Head Start, child care, foster care and adoption, child support enforcement, youth services and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs. Under Emergency Preparedness and Response, ACF Region II partners with FEMA, state government, grantees and Tribes to ensure coordination of essential Human Services programs during disasters. Ms. Thomas also serves as National Lead Regional Administrator for the Office of Community Services and the Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnership Initiatives within ACF. She is one of the founders and co-chairs of ACF's African American Healthy Marriage Initiative. Prior to coming to Region II in October 2008, Ms. Thomas served as the Regional Administrator for ACF's Region V, which includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin and thirty-five Tribal Nations. While Region V Administrator, Ms. Thomas also led the federal regional Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Prior to her employment with the Administration for Children and Families Ms. Thomas served as the Commissioner of the State of Connecticut's Department of Social Services. As Commissioner, she implemented major changes in the child support enforcement, TANF and Medicaid programs and played a major role in the creation of Connecticut's innovative School Readiness legislation.

A graduate of the University of Northern Iowa, Thomas was awarded a BA in Social Work and an MA in counseling, with a minor in Spanish.

Thomas is married and has one daughter.

Leon R. McCowan

Regional Administrator - Region VI (Dallas)



Leon R. McCowan serves as the ACF Assistant Secretary's representative for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region VI, Dallas, Texas. He provides executive leadership, direction, and coordination for achieving ACF's key national goals, priorities, and special initiatives; advocates for and advances the priorities of the HHS Secretary and ACF Assistant Secretary, and facilitates Administration initiatives to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families, special populations, and distressed communities. He manages and coordinates special sensitive and cross-cutting projects and initiatives such as Healthy Marriage, Fatherhood, and Faith-based Programs in the region, consisting of the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. As Regional Administrator he helps achieve ACF's key national goals and priorities by communicating ACF's regional interests and concerns within HHS, with other Federal agencies, State human service departments and agencies, territorial and tribal governments, and with public and private local organizations that assist children and families. He serves at the Lead Regional Administrator for Positive Youth Development, Child Support Enforcement, Responsible Fatherhood, and ACF's Effective Use of Technology.

With more than 35 years of professional federal service, Mr. McCowan began his career in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. He has held various program and management positions within the Department of Health and Human Services, including: Regional Hub Director, West-Central Hub; Deputy Program Manager for the Office of Family Assistance; and as the Deputy Regional Representative for Child Support Enforcement.

In 2009, Mr. McCowan was awarded the Nancy H. Doherty Special Achievement Award – Federal Employee of the Year. In 2006, he was named "Outstanding Agency Administrator" by the Dallas/Fort Worth 2005 Combined Federal Campaign and presented a Certificate of Appreciation from the HHS Assistant Secretary for his role in the 2005 hurricane relief efforts. He received the HHS Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service in 2005 for his work as a member of the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative Team and the HHS Assistant Secretary's Partnering for Excellence Award as a member of the Positive Youth Development Team. In 2001, he was recognized with the prestigious "Presidential Rank Award" for Meritorious Executives. Mr. McCowan has been recognized throughout his career with numerous certificates and distinguished service awards for his Federal leadership and his service to the local community and other communities within the Region VI area.

Mr. McCowan received his B.A. in Sociology from Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, and his M.A. in Public Administration from the University of North Texas in Denton.

He is married to Curtistene McCowan; they have two married sons and three granddaughters.

Carlis V. Williams, M.A.

Regional Administrator, Region IV (Atlanta)



Carlis V. Williams serves as the Southeast Regional Administrator for the Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF) based in Atlanta, Georgia. The Southeast Region includes 8 states: Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, North and South Carolina, Mississippi and Florida. Carlis provides executive leadership, coordination and direction for ACF human service programs that include Head Start, Child Welfare, Foster Care, Adoption, Child Care, Developmental Disabilities, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Child Support, and Runaway and Homeless Youth. She also serves as the lead Regional Administrator for Healthy Marriage programs and is co-lead for the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program.

Before assuming her present position, Ms. Williams served as the Executive Assistant to the Governor for Human Services in the State of Indiana. She was the Governor's chief policy advisor in these areas and had responsibility for four major agencies: Family and Social Services Administration, the Governor's Council on Disabilities, the Governor's Council on Protection and Advocacy and the Governor's Council on Sports and Fitness. Under her leadership, Indiana registered over 120,000 children during the first year of their Children's Health Insurance Program, Hoosier Healthwise. She has served as Deputy Director for the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Family and Children, and was responsible for programs related to family resources: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Food Stamps, Medicaid, JOBS, Housing and Community Services, and lead responsibility for the design and implementation of welfare reform in the state.

Among her many attributes, Ms. Williams is the recipient of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service and the Hurricane Disaster Response Team; Georgia State University's National Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren prestigious award for untiring efforts in support of grandparent-headed families; Spelman College Innovation Award for the professional development of Head Start and Child Care Teachers in Region IV; Jackson State University College of Public Service School of Social Work Public Service Award; National Partnership for Community Leadership Judge David Gray Ross Award for Strengthening Families and Father Involvement in the Public Sector; Clark Atlanta University Dean's Public Sector Award in recognition of her extraordinary achievements for the well-being of children and families in the southeast community.

Ms. Williams is a graduate of Ball State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology and Master of Art Degrees in Social Psychology and Counseling and Guidance. She is a mother and grandmother and loves reading, music and the theater. If asked her philosophy of life, she will say, "Giving is better than receiving...if we all give, everyone wins!"