



20

DELTA SUMMIT

23

NAVIGATING THE CURRENTS OF OPPORTUNITY

2023 DELTA SUMMIT



DRA.GOV

ALABAMA | ARKANSAS | ILLINOIS | KENTUCKY | LOUISIANA | MISSISSIPPI | MISSOURI | TENNESSEE



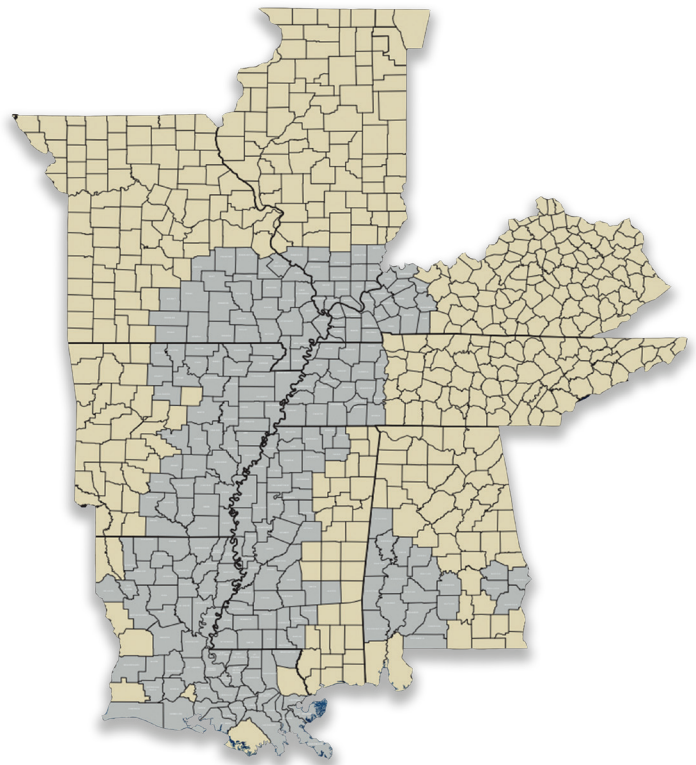
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ABOUT THE DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) was established in 2000 as a federal framework for joint federal-state collaboration to promote and encourage the economic development of the lower Mississippi River and Alabama Black Belt regions. To fulfill this purpose, DRA invests in projects supporting transportation infrastructure, basic public infrastructure, workforce training, and business development. DRA works to create jobs, build communities, and improve the lives of those that reside in the region. DRA's region encompasses 252 counties and parishes in parts of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee.



WHAT WE DO

DRA supports and promotes economic development within the lower Mississippi Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions through its programming opportunities. Designed to make strategic investments in critical and human infrastructure and capacity building, DRA's programming aims to impact economic growth and opportunity in economically distressed communities.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS

Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) Programs

CIF complements SEDAP with investments in public infrastructure such as water and sewer and flood mitigation.

States' Economic Development Assistance (SEDAP) Program

SEDAP is DRA's main investment tool used to fund basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, business development with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, and workforce development.

Public Works & Economic Adjustment Assistance (PWEAA)

PWEAA helps distressed communities revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure.





HUMAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS

Health Programs

Through partnerships with the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of State, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, DRA supports the following programs, Delta Doctors, Innovative Readiness Training, Delta Region Community Health Systems Development Program, and Delta Region Rural Hospital Workforce Training Program.

Workforce Programs

DRA's Delta Workforce Grant Program (DWP) invests in workforce training programs that meet local industry needs to build talent pipelines, which support industry clusters and helps accelerate local, state, and regional economic development. DRA also works in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor to support its Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) program.

Delta Leadership Institute

The Delta Leadership Institute is a 10-month leadership development program for regional leaders that prepares them to collaborate and address the most pressing issues of the Delta region.

CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMS

LDD Community Support Pilot Program

The LDD Community Support Pilot Program is a non-competitive grant program open to the 45 Local Development Districts (LDDs) in DRA's service area. This program targets capacity-building and community support resources to LDDs.

Strategic Planning Program

The Strategic Planning Program gives public entities access to strategic planning funds to address long-standing issues and develop a roadmap for economic growth and opportunity.





DRA LEADERSHIP

DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY LEADERSHIP

Dr. Corey Wiggins
Federal Co-Chair

JB Pritzker
States' Co-Chair

DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY BOARD MEMBERS

Governor Kay Ivey
Alabama Governor

Kenneth Boswell
Alabama Designee

Crystal Talley
Alabama Alternate

Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Arkansas Governor

Clint O'Neal
Arkansas Designee

Amy Williams
Arkansas Alternate

Governor JB Pritzker
Illinois Governor, States' Co-Chair

Brandi Bradley
Illinois Designee

Lynne Chambers
Illinois Alternate

Governor Andy Beshear
Kentucky Governor

Dennis Keene
Kentucky Designee

Governor John Bel Edwards
Louisiana Governor

Roderick Scott
Louisiana Designee

Governor Tate Reeves
Mississippi Governor

Sam Andrews
Mississippi Designee

Governor Michael L. Parson
Missouri Governor

Robert J. Knodell
Missouri Alternate

Governor Bill Lee
Tennessee Governor

Brooxie Carlton
Tennessee Designee

WELCOME FROM DRA LEADERSHIP

On behalf of the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), States' Co-Chair, and our Board of Governors, we welcome you to New Orleans, Louisiana, and the 2023 Delta Summit.

We are thrilled to return to New Orleans for our second annual Delta Summit, themed Navigating Currents of Opportunity, around DRA's Regional Development Plan IV. It only seems fitting to be back in New Orleans, a city defined by its historical, cultural, and economic opportunities, as well as its resiliency.

DRA's Regional Development Plan IV is not just a statement of our priorities but a driver of the actions that we will embark on for the next four years to capitalize on tremendous opportunities, focus on rural and distressed communities, and strengthen regional economic development.

The plan establishes ambitious new goals, strategies, action steps, and guiding principles to achieve our vision for the future. However, we know we cannot do it alone, which is why this gathering of change-makers and visionaries from across our eight-state region will play a pivotal role as we navigate shifting currents together.

Over the next few days, we hope you take the opportunity to immerse yourself in all this Summit offers: inspiring keynote speakers, engaging sessions and workshops, enhanced technical assistance, networking opportunities, and perhaps a chance to *laissez les bon temps rouler*. Like the City of New Orleans and its rich tapestry of residents, only together can we navigate the currents of opportunity and strengthen our dynamic, culturally diverse, and economically significant region.

The DRA team is here for you throughout the Summit, ready to help with any questions or concerns. Please do not hesitate to reach out or stop by to say hello. We sincerely appreciate your participation and support for the 2023 Delta Summit and look forward to continued engagement.

Sincerely,
Dr. Corey Wiggins
Federal Co-Chair



SUMMIT AGENDA

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2023

12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Delta Summit Registration | Ballroom pre-function

2:00 – 2:15 p.m.

Welcome | Ballroom

Dr. Corey Wiggins, Federal Co-Chair, Delta Regional Authority; Governor JB Pritzker, State of Illinois, Delta Regional Authority States' Co Chair

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Plenary | Cultivating Growth: Addressing Challenges and Nurturing Opportunities | Ballroom

Moderator: Deidre Deculus Robert, State Director, Louisiana USDA Rural Development
Governor John Bel Edwards, State of Louisiana, tentative
Tom Vilsack, United States Secretary of Agriculture, tentative
Dr. Corey Wiggins, Federal Co-Chair, Delta Regional Authority

The opening plenary of the 2023 Delta Summit will welcome attendees and initiate discussions around addressing socio-economic challenges in distressed and rural communities while emphasizing the opportunities for regional investment and economic prosperity.

3:15 – 3:30 p.m.

Break

3:30 – 4:45 p.m.

Plenary | Building Bridges to Progress: Empowering Communities Through Infrastructure, Workforce, Entrepreneurship, and Creative Placemaking | Ballroom

Moderator: Shad Burner, Principal, KBS Group
Dwight Norton, Senior Director of Strategic Planning, New Orleans Regional Transportation Authority; Dr. Cindy Kelley, President, Madisonville Community College, Madisonville, Kentucky; Ernest Strickland, President, Black Business Association of Memphis; Felecia Lucky, Executive Director, Black Belt Community Foundation

This year's Summit theme highlights DRA's commitment to infrastructure, job creation, business expansion, and local economies. In this plenary, community and institutional voices from the region will share insights on creating vibrant, sustainable, and resilient communities with increased access to economic opportunities.

4:45 – 6:00 p.m.

Opening Reception | Ballroom pre-function

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2023

7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Delta Summit Registration | Ballroom pre-function

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Networking Breakfast | Ballroom pre-function

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Plenary | Beyond Limits: Unleashing Community Power and Prosperity | Ballroom

Moderator: Brooxie Carlton, Assistant Commissioner of Community and Rural Development, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development
Brandi Bradley, Laborers' International Union, Local 773, Marion, Illinois; Michael Stubblefield, Vice Chancellor, Research & Strategic Initiatives, Southern University at New Orleans; Marshall Pierite, Chairman, Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana
Rhea Williams-Bishop, Director of Mississippi and New Orleans Programming, Kellogg Foundation

This thought-provoking plenary will bring together leaders from different sectors to share and discuss big ideas for unleashing community power and economic resilience.

10:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Break

10:15 – 11:15 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Navigating Delta Regional Authority's (DRA) Human Infrastructure Programs: Workforce Programs & Delta Leadership Institute | St. Jerome

In this workshop, participants will learn about DRA's two workforce grant programs, the Delta Workforce Grant Program and Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities, along with the Delta Leadership Institute. There will be a Q&A session for in-depth program information, including eligibility and the application process.

Cheyton Pendley, Workforce Programs Analyst, Delta Regional Authority; L. Nicole Stringfellow, Leadership Development Program Manager, Delta Regional Authority

Community Planning: Beyond Today's Potholes and Pitfalls | St. Claude/Rosalie

Communities, regardless of size, grapple with local challenges essential for success and sustainability. Discover successful revitalization and economic growth strategies through two case studies on bringing downtowns back to life.

Thomas Gregory, Executive Director, Mississippi Main Street Association; Alex Lawson, Commissioner/Chairman, Jackson Redevelopment Authority

Philanthropy: Their Role in Economic Resilience and Revitalization | Maurepas

The Southern United States is rich in history, culture, and opportunities, but philanthropic and investment in the South, particularly the Delta region, has been historically overlooked. In this session, discover how foundations are sowing new seeds of growth in the region by promoting economic resilience and rejuvenation in the South.

Sanci Richardson, Consultant, The BRIDGE Consulting Group
Abe Hudson, Program Officer, Home Region Program, Walton Family Foundation ; Sherra Bennett, Equity Officer, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation; Jamie Schmill, VP of Programs, Foundation for Louisiana

Shaping Tomorrow's Workforce: Paving the Path Forward | Frontenac

Examine current stats of how the DRA region compares to the national average in unemployment, labor force participation, and population growth. Identify partners, goals, and collaboration strategies for future business growth and a stronger workforce. Join the conversation to explore solutions for workforce challenges!

Vickey Bonney, Community Development Lead Specialist, Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development; Tamika Green, Community Development Senior Specialist, Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development

Office Hours: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) | Orleans

Participants can engage in one-on-one discussions with FEMA and EPA representatives about resources and opportunities. No formal presentations are scheduled during these office hours.

This time aims to connect organizations unfamiliar with FEMA and EPA to their valuable resources.

Alison Lorence, Federal Disaster Recovery Officer, Federal Emergency Management Agency; Karen Stafford, Deputy Federal Disaster Recovery Officer, Federal Emergency Management Agency; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, tentative

**11:15 – 11:30 a.m.
Break**

**11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions**

Navigating Delta Regional Authority's (DRA) Health Programs: Delta Doctors Program | St. Jerome

In this workshop, participants will learn about the Delta Doctors Program, which enhances healthcare access in DRA communities by allowing foreign physicians trained in the United States to work in underserved areas through J-1 visa waivers. A Q&A session will provide program-specific details, including eligibility and the application process.

Christina Wooden, Health Programs Manager, Delta Regional Authority; Barry Walker, Principal, Walker Immigration Law Firm

Breathing New Life into Neighborhoods through Community Revitalization | St. Claude/Rosalie

Architects Belinda Stewart and Ryan Biles discuss strategies for rural communities leveraging thoughtful design and research to highlight forgotten narratives and places that make up the fabric of our towns. Attendees will learn about projects, funding mechanisms, and organizational structures that have been used throughout the Delta to spark economic impact and community revitalization.

Ryan Biles, Director of Development, Thrive
Belinda Stewart, Principal, Belinda Stewart Architects

Brownfields: Economic Gems in the Making | Maurepas

Explore the Brownfields program and discover how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Grants and Technical Assistance Program contributes to community revitalization. Gain insight into the role of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in EPA's funding opportunities.

Adam Tatar, Brownfield Program Coordinator, New Orleans Regional Planning Commission; Michael Kennedy, Brownfields Project Officer & Regional Smart Growth Coordinator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Navigating Delta Regional Authority's (DRA) Critical Infrastructure Programs: Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF), States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP), and Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (PWEAA) | Frontenac

In this workshop, participants will learn about DRA's CIF, SEDAP, and PWEAA programs. There will be a Q&A session for in-depth program information, including eligibility and the application process.

Darci Malam, States' Economic Development Assistance Programs Manager, Delta Regional Authority; Daniel Musgrave, States' Economic Development Assistance Programs Analyst, Delta Regional Authority

Office Hours: Communities Unlimited and Louisiana Infrastructure Technical Assistance Corporation (LITA Corp) | Orleans

Participants can engage in one-on-one discussions with Communities Unlimited and LITA Corp representatives about resources and opportunities. No formal presentations are scheduled during these office hours. This time aims to connect organizations unfamiliar with Communities Unlimited and LITA Corp to their valuable resources.

Russ Garner, Community Facilitator, Communities Unlimited
Courtney Paige, Louisiana Infrastructure Technical Assistance Corporation (LITA Corp)

**12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
Lunch | Ballroom pre-function**

**1:45 – 2:45 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions**

This Little Light of Ours: Producing the Mississippi Delta Civil Rights Heritage Tourism Summit | St. Jerome

In this session, learn how to boost regional capacity through a case study on cultural heritage tourism with effective strategies and valuable insights. Gain a behind-the-scenes look at event production, including capacity-building approaches, community needs assessment, stakeholder engagement, and social capital network development.

Rolando Herts, Ph.D., Director, Delta Center for Culture and Learning, Delta State University; Keena Graham, Superintendent, Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument; Malika Polk-Lee, Executive Director, BB King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center; John Spann, Program & Outreach Officer, Mississippi Humanities Council

Energizing Communities through the Power of Clean Energy | St. Claude/Rosalie

Clean energy is vital for the environment, public health, and long-term economic sustainability. Explore initiatives and opportunities for transformational investments that support clean energy and resilience while creating good-paying jobs in communities across the region.

Katrina Pielli, Director, Engagement Office, Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations, U.S. Department of Energy; Alex Jones, Director, Build Back Better Regional Challenge, U.S. Economic Development Administration, tentative; Lacy McManus, Executive Director of Future Energy, GNO, Inc.

Navigating Delta Regional Authority's (DRA) Capacity-Building Programs: Strategic Planning Program and Local Development District (LDD) Community Support Pilot Program | Maurepas

In this workshop, participants will learn about DRA's Strategic Planning Program and LDD Community Support Pilot Program. There will be a Q&A session for in-depth program information, including eligibility and the application process.

Matthew Campbell, Strategic Partnerships Program Manager, Delta Regional Authority

Small Business Synergy: Igniting Entrepreneurial Growth | Frontenac

Fostering a resilient small business community that can thrive in changing economies requires creating a supportive ecosystem. Learn how to empower local entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources, knowledge, and networks they need to drive long-term regional economic growth and prosperity.

Michael Ricks, District Director, Louisiana Small Business Association; Veranesha Thompson, Executive Director, Capital Access, Funds 17; Bryan Greenwood, State Director, Louisiana Small Business Development Center

Office Hours: State Economic Development (EDA) Offices | Alabama | Arkansas | Orleans

Participants can engage in one-on-one discussions with their respective state EDA offices. No formal presentations are scheduled during these office hours. This time aims to connect organizations unfamiliar with their state EDA offices to their valuable resources.

Crystal Talley, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs; Amy Williams, Arkansas Economic Development Commission

**2:45 – 3:15 p.m.
Networking Break**

**3:15 – 4:15 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions**

Navigating Delta Regional Authority's (DRA) Health Programs: Delta Region Rural Hospital Workforce Training Program and Delta Region Community Health Systems Development Program | St. Jerome

In this workshop, participants will learn about the Delta Region Rural Hospital Workforce Training Program and Delta Region Community Health Systems Development Program. A Q&A session will provide in-depth program details, including eligibility and the application process.

Christina Wooden, Health Programs Manager, Delta Regional Authority; Alyssa Meller, Chief Operating Officer, National Rural Health Resource Center, Health Resources & Services Administration; Suzanne Snyder, Public Health Analyst, Hospital State Division, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Accelerating Community Potential through Transportation Transformation | St. Claude/Rosalie

Transportation infrastructure is vital for economic growth, accessibility, safety, and sustainability. Explore the U.S. Department of Transportation's initiatives and opportunities that aim to connect communities with the technical tools and resources to advance transformative infrastructure projects.

Alex Clegg, Transportation Specialist, Office of the Under Secretary for Transportation Policy, U.S. Department of Transportation; Ray Fulmer, Osceola Port Authority Chairman, Thriving Communities Program; 2023 RAISE Award Recipient, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, tentative

Applying for Delta Regional Authority (DRA) Grants: The How, What, and When | Maurepas

DRA is committed to equitable access, transparency, and accountability of federal resources. To fulfill this commitment, DRA has launched a NEW comprehensive grants management system. In this workshop, get an introduction and overview of the system, and explore its user-friendly modules firsthand.

Moderator: Staresha Hoskins, Monitoring and Compliance Coordinator, Delta Regional Authority; Jasmine Bell, ENNCloud
Glen Johnson, Founder, ENNCloud

Disaster Recovery: Beyond the Storm | Frontenac

The Federal Emergency Management Agency declared 233 disasters in the eight DRA states in the last five years. This session delves into the crucial and often overlooked phase of post-disaster recovery, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for long-term resilience, rebuilding, and community renewal once the immediate storm has passed.

Alison Lorence, Federal Disaster Recovery Officer, Federal Emergency Management Agency; Karen Stafford, Federal Emergency Management Agency; Warren Miller, Senior Advisor, Office of Disaster Recovery & Resilience, Small Business Administration

Office Hours: State Economic Development (EDA) Offices | (Louisiana, Mississippi) | Orleans

Participants can engage in one-on-one discussions with their respective state EDA offices. No formal presentations are scheduled during these office hours. This time aims to connect organizations unfamiliar with their EDA offices to their valuable resources.

Tim Climer, Manager of Programs & Services, Mississippi Development Authority; Stacey Duvic, Senior Director, Community Competitiveness, Louisiana Economic Development

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2023

**8:00 – 9:00 a.m.
Breakfast | Ballroom pre-function**

**9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
Plenary | Economic Development in the Delta Region | Ballroom**

Moderator: Lee Jones, Executive Director, Rural Partners Network
Bill Bynum, Founder & CEO, HOPE Enterprise Corporation/ HOPE Credit Union; Ileana Ledet, Economic Development Representative, Austin Regional Office, Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

In this plenary, join experts dedicated to transforming the Delta region into a vibrant economic hub as we delve into the critical theme of economic growth and revitalization in this historically rich yet economically challenged region of the United States.

**10:00 – 10:15 a.m.
Break**

**10:15 – 11:15 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions**

Innovative Readiness Training: Hosting a Successful Mission | Frontenac

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense and military reserves, DRA's Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program provides medical, dental, and optical care to residents in need. In this session, gain insights on successful application and mission execution from a community partner and military professional.

Joel Evans, President & CEO, Delta Area Economic Opportunity Corporation; Andrew Adamich, Lt. Col, USAF, BSC, United States Air National Guard Innovative Readiness Training Program Manager

USDA Rural Director panel: (Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky) | St. Claude/Rosalie

Participants will have the opportunity to receive firsthand information from their state's Rural Directors regarding available grant opportunities and strategies for positioning themselves for successful applications.

Jill Floyd, State Director, Arkansas USDA Rural Development; Thomas Carew, State Director, Kentucky USDA Rural Development; Betsey Dirksen Londrigan, State Director, Illinois USDA Rural Development

USDA Rural Director panel: (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee) | Maurepas

Participants will have the opportunity to receive firsthand information from their state's Rural Directors regarding available grant opportunities and strategies for positioning themselves for successful applications.

Nivory Gordon, Jr., State Director, Alabama USDA Rural Development; Deidre Deculus Robert, State Director, Louisiana USDA Rural Development; Dr. Trina N. George, State Director, Mississippi USDA Rural Development; Arlisa Armstrong, State Director, Tennessee USDA Rural Development

11:15 – 11:30 a.m.
Break

11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Closing Plenary | Impact of Equitable Infrastructure Investments | Ballroom

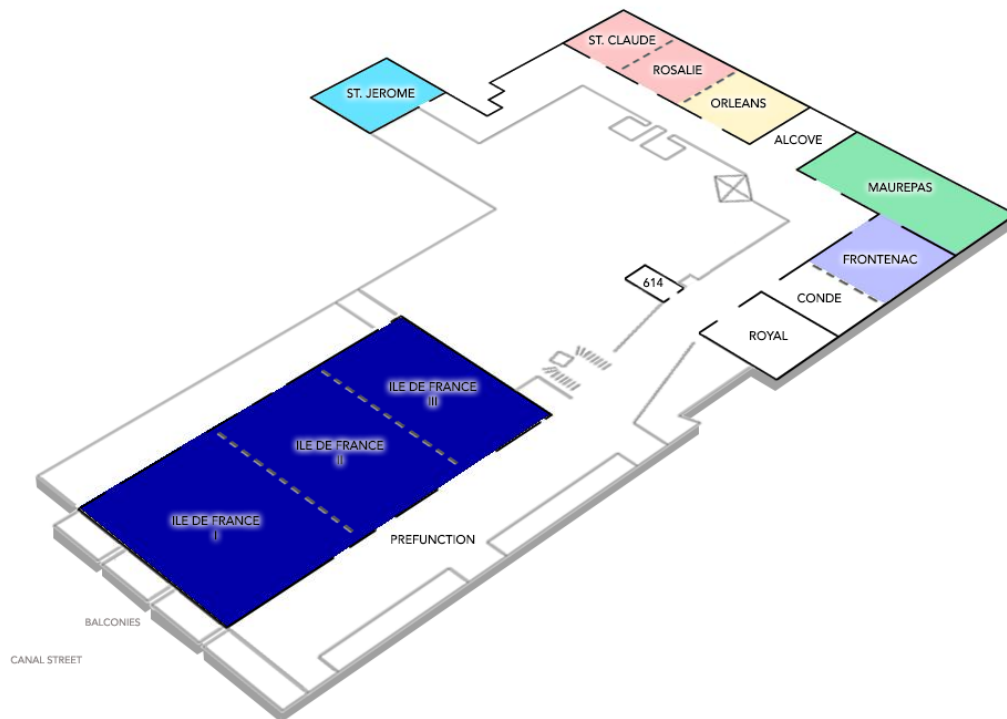
Mitch Landrieu, Senior Advisor to U.S. President, tentative

After two idea-packed days as a community, the closing plenary will bring the Summit's key messages together, inspiring and mobilizing us as we persist in working toward fulfilling our shared vision of the region – one characterized by vibrant, sustainable, and resilient communities with boundless economic opportunities.

12:15 – 12:30 p.m.
Closing & Adjournment



HOTEL FLOOR PLAN





**CREATING JOBS.
BUILDING COMMUNITY.
IMPROVING LIVES.**



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