

## **Vannessa Dorantes, DCF Commissioner**

Vannessa Dorantes joined the Department of Children and Families nearly 27 years ago, one of the scores of social workers hired to bolster an understaffed DCF at the insistence of a federal court monitor. Today, she leads that agency as Commissioner.

Gov.-elect Ned Lamont said he ended a national search for the next DCF commissioner and chose Dorantes at the urging of former Supreme Court Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers, a transition team member who had interviewed Dorantes and other stakeholders in search of policy ideas for the child-welfare agency.

Commissioner Dorantes was a regional administrator who oversaw three offices and 500 employees in 44 communities ranging from Danbury to Waterbury to the Litchfield hills. She is the first African-American leader of an agency that employs 3,200 and handles 108,000 calls reporting neglect and seeking assistance every year.

Commissioner Dorantes has a bachelor's degree from Teikyo Post University and a master's degree in social work from the University of Connecticut. She was also an adjunct professor at Central Connecticut State University, up until this Appointment, where she has taught social work elective and core competency courses for 14 years.

Over the course of her career with DCF, she has played an integral role in promoting workforce development, change management and continuous quality improvement in the child welfare arena. Dorantes chaired the DCF Statewide Racial Justice Workgroup. It is her mission to reinforce the expectation that the Department's staff Practice with Pride, Passion and Purpose together with People and Partners as a part of the larger child welfare service delivery system.

"The urgency of ChildTime is real. We must all work together to improve outcomes for the 14,500 families that the Department are involved with on any given day and for all CT's children's to thrive in resilient families as a part of supportive communities.

She has most recently been a Panelist at **Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab** Government convening: *Using Data to Drive Performance: CT's Enhanced Service Coordination* (Feb 2018)

She has been a featured presenter at **National Webinar - National Child Welfare Workforce Institute ( NCWWI) webinar and follow up learning exchange series **Dismantling Racial Inequity #4 Slow & Steady Wins the Race in Child Welfare Equity**** (Feb 2018).

She has presented at an Alliance 4 Racial Equity: **Starting with the Numbers: The Importance of Data Collection & Analysis In System Efforts to Eliminate Racial /Ethnic Disparities** (May 2016).

She has presented at the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) webinar **Making a Difference: Impact and Lessons Learned**, series session #3 *Child Welfare IS Change Management: Coaching Up For Managing Up* (May 2014)