

## **USAID colleagues seek continued opportunities for public service in elected office .**

Three former USAID staff have launched campaigns for elected office at all levels of government in Maryland. Alicia Contreras-Donello, Tracy Starr, and Allison Eriksen each spent their careers in international development, working to strengthen communities, manage crises, and deliver results for the populations USAID served, and the American people. Now they are running for office to continue that work here at home.

Alicia Contreras-Donello, a daughter of immigrants, working mother, and former U.S. diplomat with nearly 20 years at USAID, is running for the Maryland House of Delegates in District 14 because public service has been her life's calling. Shaped by decades of service coordinating economic development and humanitarian response across Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, she is running to lower costs for families, strengthen education and workforce development, grow thriving healthy and safe communities, and build an economy that works for everyone. If elected, she would bring proven leadership, lived experience, and a deep commitment to equity and opportunity to the Maryland General Assembly—and become the first Latina to represent this district in Annapolis.

Tracy Starr, a former federal employee at both the Department of Commerce and USAID, is running for Congress in Maryland's 5th Congressional District. Starr lost her job during mass federal layoffs and USAID's dismantling, an experience that shaped her decision to run. Representing Southern Maryland and parts of Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties, her campaign centers on standing up for federal workers, contractors, and families facing rising costs and economic insecurity—bringing the voice of someone who has lived the consequences of decisions made in Washington.

Allison Eriksen, a disaster preparedness and response professional formerly with USAID, is running for Montgomery County Council District 3. After being abruptly fired amid federal program cuts, Eriksen turned to local government as a place where real, immediate action is still possible. Drawing on her background in emergency management, she is focused on disaster readiness, housing affordability, healthcare access, public education, and protecting immigrant communities—ensuring Montgomery County is prepared for the future.

*Note: UAA is a nonpartisan organization and this does not constitute an endorsement of candidates, simply sharing information on what USAID alumni are doing now. If you are a USAID alumn(a) running for elected office, please share your story with us so we can highlight it to UAA membership.*