

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Sarah Goff, sarah@imaginewaterworks.org

Chenier “Klie” Kliebert of New Orleans, LA – Imagine Water Works Announced as New Obama Foundation United States Leader

New Orleans – Today, Imagine Water Works announced that Chenier “Klie” Kliebert is among the first cohort of 100 emerging changemakers selected to participate in the Obama Foundation’s Leaders USA program. The [Obama Leaders program](#) is a six-month virtual program that supports and connects emerging leaders in the United States, Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Europe through a values-based leadership framework inspired by the ideals and legacy of President and Mrs. Obama. Chosen from a highly competitive pool of applications, Klie was selected to join the program for their focus on Creole, Native, and transgender-led climate justice, land stewardship, mutual aid, and disaster readiness and response and is ready to build their skills and expand their impact across public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

The [inaugural cohort](#) of United States “Obama Leaders” is composed of values-driven changemakers from every corner of the country. Hailing from 37 states; Washington, D.C.; American Samoa; Guam; and five tribal nations, these Obama Leaders are united by their passion for building a stronger, more sustainable, and more inclusive world.

Chenier “Klie” Kliebert - As the Founding Executive Director of Imagine Water Works (IWW), Klie has envisioned and led the majority of IWW’s programs from their inception to today. Klie is a multi-generational native New Orleanian with deep family ties to both New Orleans and St. James Parish whose work is rooted in their values and lived experience. They believe in the power of solidarity, communities of care, and autonomy and self determination – especially through crisis. Since 2018 their work has resulted in a variety of hurricane and tornado relief efforts, a Mutual Aid Response Network of nearly 10,000 residents who actively responded to COVID-19 and storms across coastal Louisiana, and the distribution of over \$350,000 to BIPOC and LGBTQ individuals in response to intersecting social and environmental crises. Klie is the creator of Imagine Mutual Aid; the Storm Zine Project; the Trans Clippers Project; and IWW’s former disaster relief funds, including the innovative Hurricane Laura Emergency Cash Program, the Public Health Workers Fund, and IWW’s Hurricane Laura and Ida relief grants.

“I’ve already learned valuable lessons from my Leaders USA cohort, and I look forward to learning so much more over the next six months. This group is incredible and hopeful against all odds. Together we’re practicing compassion that leads to action. I’m excited to bring that energy back to our communities as we seek to live, thrive, and reimagine our future here on the frontlines of the climate crisis,” said Kliebert.

Prior to their time at Imagine Water Works, Klie supported efforts toward climate justice, immigrants’ rights, abolition, housing justice, community science, and more at Foundation for Louisiana and at the Public Laboratory for Open Science and Technology. As part of their ongoing effort to uplift mutual aid

strategies and change the U.S. relief and recovery system to one that is more efficient and equitable, Klie published “Mutual Aid: A Grassroots Model for Justice and Equity in Emergency Management” in 2022.

“We are excited to welcome these 100 changemakers from across the United States into the Obama Foundation family,” said Valerie Jarrett, CEO of the Obama Foundation. “Our newest Obama Leaders are already making a difference in their communities and are ready to take their work to the next level. They embody the values of President and Mrs. Obama, and their impactful work will create positive change in communities across the country.”

The Leaders USA program offers participants a unique and comprehensive experience, including a values-driven leadership curriculum, action labs focused on strengthening democratic institutions and culture in the U.S., community groups for fostering constructive dialogue in a polarized environment, and one-on-one support to help tackle some of the most pressing issues of our time. As part of the six-month program, Klie will convene virtually each week with the United States Obama Leaders cohort for interactive sessions designed to help them drive change by honing their leadership skills, building deep relationships with their peers, and engaging with thought leaders and members of the Obama Foundation community. Klie will also have an opportunity to engage with President Obama, participate in various virtual experiences and special events, including one-on-one conversations with experienced mentors in the Foundation's global network.

To learn more about Imagine Water Works, visit www.imaginewaterworks.org.

To learn more about the program and the individuals who make up the inaugural cohort, visit obama.org/programs/leaders/usa/.

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