

BEMETRA L. SIMMONS

President & CEO, Tampa Bay Partnership | Co-Founder, Corporate Homie, LLC



Change agent, economic driver, and civic leader are a few words that could be used to describe the President of the Tampa Bay Partnership, **Bemetra Simmons**. Upon accepting the role in September of 2021, Simmons became the organizations' first female CEO and first African-American CEO. She leads this coalition of regional business leaders, who work together to improve the personal and economic well-being of others, in finding new and innovative ways to help residents become economically successful, achieve racial equity, and create more living-wage jobs.

Bemetra is the daughter of an Air Force Chaplain and has lived in ten states and two countries. She attributes her upbringing as the foundation for her drive and success. Her parents expected her to always give her best, and as a twin, teamwork, compromise, and the power of persuasion became character must-haves. Simmons's educational background includes a B.S. in Business Administration earned at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee, while on a basketball scholarship, and an MBA from Wake Forest University.

Bemetra, along with her identical twin sister Demetra Liggins, is a co-founder of Corporate Homie, an organization that seeks to help professional women and minorities advance in corporate America. In addition to speaking at conferences and events, the sisters also engage their audience with a weekly advice-based podcast. In over 130 episodes, the sisters encourage listeners with stories of their "corporate struggles" while providing tips and tools to overcome hurdles in the workplace that are unique to women and people of color.

Bemetra is active in the community serving on the board of commissioners for the Tampa Housing Authority. She is a board member for the St. Pete Free Clinic, and foundation board member for St. Petersburg College. Simmons is a 2013 Leadership Tampa graduate and a member of Leadership Florida Cornerstone Class XXXVIII. The *Tampa Bay Business Journal* named her an "Up and Comer" in 2013, and she was a finalist for its businesswoman of the year award in 2017. She is also a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Currently residing in Tampa, Florida, with her lovely wife, Abeba, and their dog, Charlie, Bemetra enjoys golfing, cooking, traveling, and attending concerts.

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