

Tuesday, November 14

Opening Plenary – 8:30 – 10:15 AM:

Meeting the Moment: Workforce Vision 2030 – A Historic Opportunity



Molly Bashay is a policy advisor in the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) within the U.S. Department of Labor. Her portfolio ranges from infrastructure and unemployment insurance to climate and youth policy. Molly is a staunch advocate for economic justice and the policies and programs that deliver tangible results--namely, long-term careers, high wages, economic security, and peace of mind--to workers and their families. Prior to joining ETA, she worked with nonprofits large and small, leading initiatives on digital equity, the future of work, community and economic development, eliminating student debt, and embedding equity throughout the education-to-workforce pipeline. Molly received her master's degree in European Union social and economic public policy and a bachelor's degree in government and environmental policy.



Greg Claus is the Federal Program Officer for Illinois with National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)'s BEAD grant program. In this role, Greg coordinates stakeholder engagement, grant management, legislative tracking, and program design as part of Illinois's \$1 billion dollar BEAD allocation. With this funding, Illinois is charged with the mission to connect all households and businesses with high-speed internet and close the digital divide that currently exists. Greg works directly with Illinois's broadband office and the state-level county and municipal associations to ensure comprehensive engagement from all stakeholders in the state on the State's high-speed internet planning and funding process. Prior to joining NTIA, Greg served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Congressman Brad Schneider (IL-10) and he is a resident of the Edgewater neighborhood in Chicago.

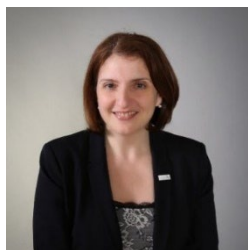


Angela Dayton is a strategic executive, workforce development expert, and successful entrepreneur. Currently, she is the Program Manager of the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency Workforce Development Program Office. She leads the design, direction, and deployment of a \$260M portfolio that was appropriated through BIL and IRA to train the energy industry's workforce in energy efficiency and electrification technologies. Angela is honored to serve on the Department of Energy's Workforce Strategy Council, which provides strategic insight to the 21st Century Energy Workforce Advisory Board (EWAB).

With a career spanning several decades, Angela is renowned for her exceptional ability to translate vision into actionable strategies with high-impact results. Angela has a deep knowledge and experience in navigating the complex landscape of government grants and ensuring compliance with Federal regulations and statutes. She consistently demonstrates her expertise in strategic planning, operations, and execution of business practices by serving in leadership positions in private industry, and as a Federal contractor for the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. Prior to being recruited to the Department of Energy, Angela was the executive of a venture-backed technology company and secured her Master's degree in Instructional Technology at the age of 20.

However, what truly sets Angela apart is her unwavering belief in the power of partnerships. She understands that true success often requires collaboration and has harnessed this philosophy to build bridges and foster connections across various sectors, ensuring that workforce development initiatives are holistic and inclusive. She believes that success is achieved by putting people first and creating opportunities that benefit all parties.

With an extensive portfolio of accomplishments, Angela is a sought-after authority in the field of workforce development, strategic operations, and Federal compliance. She has a remarkable ability to inspire, educate, and lead. But most importantly, she has an unwavering dedication to making a difference.



Pam Gerassimides joined ETA in July 2022 as the Regional Administrator in Chicago. Over her three decades in the workforce development system, Pam has focused on building partnerships and systems change initiatives, developing staff-capacity training, promoting digital transformation, and establishing new initiatives. Prior to joining ETA, she worked for the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), where she held various senior roles – leading policy committees, technical assistance, and large ETA grants. Her most impactful accomplishments include the establishment and operation of the National Labor Exchange (NLx, a public-private partnership delivering to states an unduplicated and refreshed daily job-feed, from vetted employers, and at no cost to the public-sector); and the Workforce IT Support Center (Workforce ITSC, supporting WIOA partner agencies in furthering integrated

digital technology solutions for customer service, reporting, and data insights). Pam began her career at the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, as the Youth Programs Coordinator, later joining USDOL, ETA's Welfare to Work Office.



Lenita Jacobs-Simmons has over 20 years of experience working at the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) serving in numerous executive positions. Currently, Ms. Jacobs-Simmons is ETA's Deputy Assistant Secretary responsible for the offices of Unemployment Insurance, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Policy, Development and Research, as well as oversight of regional operations.

In 2014, Ms. Jacobs-Simmons was appointed as the National Director of Job Corps, responsible for leading and managing the program's 125 Job Corps centers throughout the country. During this period, she provided leadership for the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and system-wide improvements related to safety and security, student career pathways, academic standards, strengthening enrollment services, and providing engagement in support of a national, Job Corps student-led anti-violence initiative.

Additionally, Ms. Jacobs-Simmons served in Regional Administrator positions for ETA's Region 2 (Philadelphia) and Region 3 (Atlanta). As Regional Administrator, she was responsible for oversight of ETA unemployment and reemployment programs administered in these regions and its state and grantee partners in accordance with Workforce Investment Act, Unemployment Insurance, and the Wagner Peyser Act.

Prior to joining ETA, Ms. Jacobs-Simmons had a distinguished history of public service in the State of South Carolina where she served as the Grants Administrator for the Charleston County.



Mary Leary, PhD serves as the Associate Administrator for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Office of Research, Demonstration, and Innovation (TRI). FTA's research mission is to improve America's communities through public transportation by accelerating innovation that enhances everyone's safety, improves equitable mobility, refines transit operations, and fosters clean energy.

Dr. Leary leads a group of transportation specialists, transportation analysts, engineers, and a data scientist who work on FTA's Public Transportation Innovation Research Program, overseeing an active research portfolio of over 200 projects exceeding \$200 million. She also provides executive leadership for FTA's workforce development and training initiatives. One of FTA's flagship workforce development activities was the creation of the Transit Workforce Center (TWC). Launched in 2022, the TWC is FTA's first national technical assistance center for

transit workforce development. The Center helps urban, suburban, tribal, and rural public transportation entities recruit, hire, train, and retain the diverse workforce needed now and in the future. Dr. Leary has helped craft a broad workforce development initiative at FTA during her tenure in the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Innovation, and is dedicated to furthering this important area with expanded agency, state, and local partnerships. With the support of the TWC, FTA just released the first National Transit Workforce Strategic Plan.

Dr. Leary has held executive leadership roles during her 35-year career in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors. She has led many national programs and initiatives in strategic planning; program evaluation and assessment; transportation workforce development; accessible mobility; aging in place; outreach/marketing; technical assistance; and the creation of enterprise business solutions. She has also served as an Adjunct professor teaching several public administration courses while she was pursuing her Doctoral degree.

Dr. Leary holds a PhD from George Mason University (GMU) in Public Policy with a concentration in Organizational Informatics. She also received a Master's certificate in Gerontology from GMU, a Master's Degree in business from Johns Hopkins University, and a Bachelor of Science Degree from James Madison University.



Jessica Nicholson is Senior Advisor for Workforce Strategy in the CHIPS Program Office at the Department of Commerce. Prior to joining the CHIPS team, Mrs. Nicholson spent almost 20 years working in a variety of roles in both the Departments of Commerce and Labor. At Commerce, Mrs. Nicholson led the development of measures to estimate the digital economy's contribution to US growth, and she also supported data-driven policy development in the Office of the Chief Economist. She also served at the White House as a Senior Policy Advisor to the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board. Her portfolio of publications includes analysis on a variety of topics including labor markets, the digital economy, manufacturing, and consumer prices. At Labor, she worked on the development and dissemination of several principal federal economic indicators. Mrs. Nicholson holds an MA in economics from Boston University and a BA in economics from the University of Maryland.



Kimberly G. Staley currently serves as the Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration's Region III, which includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. She provides leadership to ensure regional workforce system efficiency, compliance, and performance in an equitable and inclusive way through comprehensive oversight, management, and technical assistance of ETA's grant investments. This role is one of many in her more than 30 years in the

workforce system where she continues to partner with federal, state, and local government agencies, community-based organizations, and employers to promote workforce development.

Kimberly's past experiences include serving as the Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer for Capital Workforce Partners in Connecticut; the Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Vice President for KRA Corporation. Her workforce development experience has spanned several states, including South Carolina, Virginia, California, Florida and Connecticut.

Breakout Session #1 – 10:30 – 11:30 AM:

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA): From Guidance to Best Practice



Ann Astin has been with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development since 2010, she currently serves as the RESEA Program Coordinator for the Division of Employment and Training/Job Service (DET), a position she has held since 2014. Prior to this role, she served in the TAA (Trade Adjustment Assistance) Program for both DET and the Division of Unemployment Insurance. Ann currently serves as the liaison between DET and UI to ensure field staff are equipped with the most recent Unemployment information as they assist customers.

In March of 2020, Ann quickly moved to transition the RESEA program from large in-person group sessions to tele-sessions due to the pandemic. She was able to coordinate this transition in less than 10 days and Wisconsin UI Claimants were able to continue receiving this valuable service during the time it was needed the most. Ann has since successfully transitioned the program from tele-sessions to one on one virtual and in-person sessions, providing individualized service to all RESEA participants.



Larry Burns, Workforce Development Specialist at the U.S. Department of Labor.



Nicole Gardner is employed by SC Department of Employment and Workforce as director of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program. Nicole's nineteen years of work experience includes with SC DEW includes Work Experience Contract Writer with the WIA program; Assistant Area Director with SCESC; SC DEW Staff Manager; Regional Manager; and RESEA Program Coordinator. In 2023, Nicole Gardner was promoted to the position of RESEA Program Director under the leadership of Lenard Price and assistance of the RESEA Program Manager, Phylicia Thompson.

Nicole Gardner works with UI Leadership and stakeholders to ensure both the agency and federal requirements and policies are practiced to ensure the success of the state's RESEA program.



Tasha Jenkins joined the Wisconsin Department in December 2019 and currently serves as the Director of the Bureau of Job Service for the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. The Job Service Bureau is the largest customer facing side of the Division of Employment and Training with staff in the job centers across Wisconsin. Job Service also manages other job seeker and employer related services, includes Wisconsin's labor exchange system (Job Center of Wisconsin), re-employment services for Unemployment claimants, training for workers impacted by trade, migrant seasonal farmworkers, work opportunity tax credit, and fidelity bonding.

Tasha's brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in creating policies and procedures in the state system in the Department of Health Services and the Department of Corrections, in the local level with the City of Milwaukee Health Department and at the federal level with the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition to her government experience, Tasha also has worked in the non-profit sector when she served as the Director of Fighting Back, Inc. in Milwaukee.



Phylicia Thompson is currently employed with the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce in the Unemployment Insurance division as a RESEA Program Manager. She has been with SC DEW since December 2020. She previously worked for the agency in an Unemployment Insurance Eligibility and Records Reviewer position, giving her the opportunity to have first-hand experience serving individuals filing for Unemployment benefits in South Carolina. She is now working in partnership with RESEA Program Director, Nicole Gardner, to further develop and grow the RESEA Program in South Carolina.

Phylicia assists with coordination of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program within the Workforce development system which includes Wagner-Peyser, the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, and other workforce partners. She oversees the

administration of the day-to-day statewide operation across all 14 SC Comprehensive centers to ensure the consistent success of the program. She serves as the UI RESEA spokesperson and point of contact for programmatic matters within the scope of SC statewide operations. Phylicia plans, organizes, and manages all programmatic activities to ensure high quality customer service, continuous process improvement, compliance with program requirements, and service delivery strategies. Phylicia also provides technical assistance, coaching, and training on standards and requirements by hosting quarterly training events with SC RESEA staff in which she identifies agency goals and presents new strategies and procedures to better serve SC UI claimants.

Breakout Session #2 – 10:30 – 11:30 AM:

Sector Strategies 101



Robin Fernkas is Deputy Administrator for the Office of Workforce Investment within the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) at the U.S. Department of Labor. She provides leadership in developing programs, policy guidance and technical assistance for ETA's competitive investments in skills training and employment programs and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-funded programs. Ms. Fernkas served for a decade as the Director of the Division of Strategic Investments where she managed ETA's portfolio of H-1B Skills Training Grant programs and community college investments. Ms. Fernkas brings a wealth of workforce development knowledge through her work with workforce investment system advisory boards at the local, state, and national levels and working for several Washington, D.C. based intergovernmental organizations on workforce policy issues. She holds a B.A. in international economics from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts and completed executive education at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. She is a working mom who enjoys traveling and cycling with her son and husband.



Shelley Penn is the Senior Vice President and Chief Operations Officer of the Full Employment Council, which connects underserved people to in-demand training with industry-recognized credentials, and connects businesses to those skilled workers. Penn's in-depth experience in workforce development, paired with her commitment to serving the residents of the Kansas City region, allows her to meet the demands of people, businesses, and the community. Penn makes inclusion a cornerstone of her career by focusing on creating ladders of economic opportunity for the underserved.

Penn executes the corporate vision and mission for the designated American Job Centers in Kansas City and Eastern Jackson Counties, operated by the Full Employment Council. The championing of diversity, paired with operational and organizational development that is innovative and strategic, shapes Penn's 25 years in workforce development.

Penn oversees the operations of all employment and training programs operated by the Full Employment council, and focuses on driving strategic business growth in a way that benefits the people she serves and the surrounding business community. She actively engages business and industry partners, creating solutions that target regional employer needs while also increasing access to training, and jobs with family-supporting wages, to those who need that access the most.

As a recognized expert in workforce development, Penn's knowledge of the design and implementation of federal, state, and local employment and training initiatives helped her develop into an active leader in program innovation scopes and business services. She is a proud partner in economic development, closely in-tune with the latest workforce development-related trends, and serves on numerous industry-impact initiatives. She develops processes that become adapted by other organizations because of their success in helping the underserved and underrepresented populations in the Kansas City region and beyond.

Penn's commitment and focus remains on developing a workforce system made up of partnerships that embrace equity, inclusion and diversity.

Penn received her master's degree in Management from Webster University, and a bachelor of arts in Human Resource Management from the University of Kansas. Her executive expertise is in the areas of management, business continuity, corporate and non-profit strategic outsourcing, organizational strategy development, and design and process improvement.



Aleece Smith is the Director of Inclusion and Sector Strategies at KentuckianaWorks, the local workforce development board for Louisville, Kentucky and surrounding counties. In her role at KentuckianaWorks, Aleece leads efforts to make the public workforce system more responsive to employers' needs by identifying shared concerns among sector partners and showcasing potential sector-specific solutions. Her latest projects have

focused on centering the voices of workers in workforce development programming and introducing strategies that attempt to right decades of structural inequities in workforce policy.

All of this work is informed by Aleece's master's degree in Urban Planning and Policy. Connecting employers and workers for their mutual benefit is an extension of Aleece's longtime enthusiasm for cities and the interactions that make them buzz. Prior to spotlighting strategies that advance economic justice, Aleece worked for YMCA of the USA providing technical assistance for healthier communities initiatives.

Breakout Session #3 – 10:30 – 11:30 AM:

Careers Begin at Job Corps: A Panel Discussion with Job Corps Students



Zina Watkins is an energetic public servant with a proven track record of analyzing problems, applying technical knowledge, and producing high quality results. Zina has served at the Regional Director of the Office of Job Corps in Chicago since 2018. Prior to Job Corps, Zina worked for the U.S. Department of Education for 10 years and served in many roles. She was a Program Specialist in the Immediate Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Regional Coordinator to states and territories for the adult education and family literacy program, and an Education Program Specialist in the Office of Correctional Education. Zina is most proud of her contributions that raised the academic bar and reduced national recidivism rates for thousands of young adults and juveniles in the adult correctional system.

Zina entered federal service through the prestigious Presidential Management Fellows program and began her federal career as a Research Specialist with the Congressional Research Service at the Library of Congress. Zina is a graduate of the University of South Carolina and the College of Charleston and was an inductee in the directory of Who's Who Among America's Teachers.



Peni Webster-Lewis has more than 35 years of leadership and management experience including 22 years civilian federal service with the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Much of her civilian federal career has been with the Job Corps Program. She has served in leadership positions at the center, regional and national level of the Job Corps program. She also served in leadership positions including Administrative Contracting Officer and Division Chief for ETA's Office of Contracts Management and as a Division Director for the Office of Foreign Labor Certification. She is currently serving as the Acting Deputy Administrator for Office of Job Corps Regional Operations and she is the permanent Regional Director for Job Corps' Atlanta Region. In her acting capacity, she has oversight of 6 regional offices and 123 Job Corps Centers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Peni is a U.S. Army veteran with more than 25 years of military service. She is married to Samuel Lewis, and is a mother and grandmother.

Plenary Session – 1:00 – 2:05 PM:

Using Strategy to Pave a Way for All Workers



James Bain serves as the Deputy Director of the NCWorks Commission, the State Workforce Development Board for North Carolina. A native of Winston-Salem and a graduate of Gardner-Webb University, James has been working in the field of workforce development for over 15 years in North Carolina. Before coming to the commission, he performed a variety of roles including Job Developer, WIA/WIOA Case Manager, Employment & Training Director, and Director of a Local Area Workforce Development Board.

James is committed to building regional relationships with our workforce, education, and community partners. Additionally, he believes local industry drives the workforce and he is committed to responding to their needs to develop a critical talent pipeline.



Pam Gerassimides joined ETA in July 2022 as the Regional Administrator in Chicago. Over her three decades in the workforce development system, Pam has focused on building partnerships and systems change initiatives, developing staff-capacity training, promoting digital transformation, and establishing new initiatives. Prior to joining ETA, she worked for the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), where she held various senior roles – leading policy committees, technical assistance, and large ETA grants. Her most impactful accomplishments include the establishment and operation of the National Labor Exchange (NLx, a public-private partnership delivering to states an unduplicated and refreshed daily job-feed, from vetted employers, and at no cost to the public-sector); and the Workforce IT Support Center (Workforce ITSC, supporting WIOA partner agencies in furthering integrated digital technology solutions for customer service, reporting, and data insights). Pam began her career at the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, as the Youth Programs Coordinator, later joining USDOL, ETA's Welfare to Work Office.



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student career pathways, academic standards, strengthening enrollment services, and providing engagement in support of a national, Job Corps student-led anti-violence initiative.

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Prior to joining ETA, Ms. Jacobs-Simmons had a distinguished history of public service in the State of South Carolina where she served as the Grants Administrator for the Charleston County.



In March of 2023 Governor Tim Walz appointed **Katie McClelland** to lead the Governor's Workforce Development Board. In this role Katie leads statewide strategies to grow Minnesota's workforce and talent pipelines, preparing the workforce to enter high-growth jobs and family sustaining wages. Katie, a Minnesota native, was most recently the Minnesota Technology Association (MnTech) Director of Public Policy & Research, where she led policy and research initiatives to ensure Minnesota has a thriving tech ecosystem.

Katie spent a decade in Washington, DC where she led workforce development policy for the U.S. House Education & Labor Committee and the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee. Her work included leading the reauthorization of Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, the National Apprenticeship Act, and overseeing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and a range of bills and provisions related to education and workforce preparation. Prior to joining the HELP Committee, Katie served as the Director of Education and Workforce Initiatives at The Manufacturing Institute, the nonprofit affiliate of The National Association of Manufacturers where she led work on strategic partnerships between employers and educators to align education and training programs to in-demand skills, competencies and credentials, and projects on increasing diversity and closing the skills gap in manufacturing. Her additional previous employers include the Lumina Foundation, U.S. Congressman George Miller and AmeriCorps VISTA in the Minneapolis Public Schools and Achieve Twin Cities.



Dr. Stephanie Rodriguez is a Sr. Workforce Fellow at the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, in the Office of the Assistant Secretary. While at ETA Stephanie is coordinating the development and launch of the DOL youth employment strategy focused on centering young people in critical workforce development opportunities. The strategy will empower the workforce system to launch young people into good jobs and high-quality career pathways. This includes helping to connect different offices and programs across the Department of Labor and other federal departments to break down silos and barriers.

Stephanie has prior government experience at the National Science Foundation, working on the computer science education equity portfolio, and then took that focus to the Afterschool Alliance as STEM Policy Director, ensuring access to STEM engagement and computer science learning in the out of school space. She spent several years as VP of Policy and Engagement at AnitaB.org, a global nonprofit advancing women technologists into positions of power in the tech workforce. In this role, Stephanie developed and led the workforce policy portfolio, managing Hill and Executive branch relationships. Most recently, Stephanie served as the Federal Partnership Director at Tech Talent Project, working to increase the ability of the U.S. government to recruit modern technical leaders. An immunologist by training, Dr. Rodriguez brings evidence-based approaches to workforce development, equity, and policy advancement.



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Betsey Stevenson is a professor of public policy and economics at the University of Michigan. She is also a faculty research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research, a visiting associate professor of economics at the University of Sydney, a research fellow of the Centre for Economic Policy Research, a fellow of the Ifo Institute for Economic Research in Munich, and serves on the executive committee of the American Economic Association. She served as a member of the Council of Economic Advisers from 2013 to 2015 where she advised President Obama on social policy, labor market, and trade issues. She served as the chief economist of the U.S. Department of Labor from 2010 to 2011, advising the Secretary of Labor on labor policy and participating as the secretary's deputy to the White House economic team. She has held previous positions at Princeton University and at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

Dr. Stevenson is a labor economist who has published widely in leading economics journals about the labor market and the impact of public policies on outcomes both in the labor market and for families as they adjust to changing labor market opportunities. Her research explores women's labor market experiences, the economic forces shaping the modern family, and how these labor market experiences and economic forces on the family influence each other. She is a columnist for Bloomberg View, and her analysis of economic data and the economy are frequently covered in both print and television media.

Dr Stevenson earned a BA in economics and mathematics from Wellesley College and an MA and PhD in economics from Harvard University.

Breakout Session #4 – 2:15 – 3:15 PM:

Federal Infrastructure Partner Voices “Unplugged”



Greg Claus is the Federal Program Officer for Illinois with National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)'s BEAD grant program. In this role, Greg coordinates stakeholder engagement, grant management, legislative tracking, and program design as part of Illinois's \$1 billion dollar BEAD allocation. With this funding, Illinois is charged with the mission to connect all households and businesses with high-speed internet and close the digital divide that currently exists. Greg works directly with Illinois's broadband office and the state-level county and municipal associations to ensure comprehensive engagement from all stakeholders in the state on the State's high-speed internet planning and funding process. Prior to joining NTIA, Greg served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Congressman Brad Schneider (IL-10) and he is a resident of the Edgewater neighborhood in Chicago.



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also provides executive leadership for FTA's workforce development and training initiatives. One of FTA's flagship workforce development activities was the creation of the Transit Workforce Center (TWC). Launched in 2022, the TWC is FTA's first national technical assistance center for transit workforce development. The Center helps urban, suburban, tribal, and rural public transportation entities recruit, hire, train, and retain the diverse workforce needed now and in the future. Dr. Leary has helped craft a broad workforce development initiative at FTA during her tenure in the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Innovation, and is dedicated to furthering this important area with expanded agency, state, and local partnerships. With the support of the TWC, FTA just released the first National Transit Workforce Strategic Plan.

Dr. Leary has held executive leadership roles during her 35-year career in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors. She has led many national programs and initiatives in strategic planning; program evaluation and assessment; transportation workforce development; accessible mobility; aging in place; outreach/marketing; technical assistance; and the creation of enterprise business solutions. She has also served as an Adjunct professor teaching several public administration courses while she was pursuing her Doctoral degree.

Dr. Leary holds a PhD from George Mason University (GMU) in Public Policy with a concentration in Organizational Informatics. She also received a Master's certificate in Gerontology from GMU, a Master's Degree in business from Johns Hopkins University, and a Bachelor of Science Degree from James Madison University.



Jessica Nicholson is Senior Advisor for Workforce Strategy in the CHIPS Program Office at the Department of Commerce. Prior to joining the CHIPS team, Mrs. Nicholson spent almost 20 years working in a variety of roles in both the Departments of Commerce and Labor. At Commerce, Mrs. Nicholson led the development of measures to estimate the digital economy's contribution to US growth, and she also supported data-driven policy development in the Office of the Chief Economist. She also served at the White House as a Senior Policy Advisor to the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board. Her portfolio of publications includes analysis on a variety of topics including labor markets, the digital economy, manufacturing, and consumer prices. At Labor, she worked on the development and dissemination of several principal federal economic indicators. Mrs. Nicholson holds an MA in economics from Boston University and a BA in economics from the University of Maryland.

Breakout Session #5 – 2:15 – 3:15 PM:

Healthcare Workforce Strategy



Kathleen Brannigan, a Senior Business Relations Project Manager, for the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership) has seventeen (17) plus years' experience working in the field of human resources and workforce development consulting and combines that with her past corporate retail business-focused career prior to that. She completed a master's in human services & counseling at National-Louis University in 2008 and embarked on an encore career path. Working in the healthcare sector human resource space and in her talent acquisition and workforce development role, Kathleen continuously looks for opportunities to connect employers to the Partnership's no-cost business services menu offering federally funded workforce incentives and programs to strengthen employers' talent acquisition and development needs. You may connect with Kathleen at kbrannigan@chicookworks.org.



Michelle McFarland serves as the Deputy Project Director at Equus Workforce Solutions' (EWS) Cook County Healthcare Chicago Office. EWS is a leading provider of comprehensive workforce development services in North America and currently operates The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership's Healthcare Sector Center. During her seven-year tenure at EWS, Michelle has advanced in her positions and currently leads a team of Business Solutions Consultants.

In her role, she oversees and manages business initiatives which are supported by various federally funded programs and grant sources, including Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title 1, National Emergency, and Quest Grants.

She has led sector-based employer workforce solutions by leveraging funded resources to implement tailored integrative business service models. These business services utilize individual occupational training accounts, registered apprenticeships, paid work experience, customized training, incumbent worker, and on-the-job training which help to guide and provide solutions within funded compliance parameters, in addition to supporting recruitment and retention efforts of healthcare businesses. Notable mentions include facilitating partnerships between federally qualified health centers, and large hospital systems to provide business service solutions that aid employers in retaining talent.



Joseph Quintana founded the Native Development Network, Inc. to create a voice in political advocacy, education, and philanthropic giving to support American Indian/ Alaskan Natives (AI/AN) in addressing issues of employment, policy development, housing, healthcare access, racial justice, and equity. During his professional career, he has successfully increased funding allocations to the AI/AN community, and Mr. Quintana's work has improved the physical, behavioral, and economic health outcomes of community members while

ensuring that education and training will increase opportunities for a brighter future for Native peoples. For over 17 years, Mr. Quintana has served Indian Country working on 3 Native Nations: The Navajo Nation, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and his own, Kewa Pueblo before returning to Los Angeles. Joseph has served as the Chairman of the Native American Employment and Training Council and sought to increase the effectiveness of the council's work, while also ensuring that the goals of the council have been met during his term.



Taya Jackson Scott serves as the inaugural Chief Innovation Officer in the Office of Impact and Innovation at Morehouse School of Medicine. She has held a variety of economic impact roles using a health equity lens to create access and advance place-based opportunities throughout her 15+ years at several academic health science centers. In addition to her workforce development experience serving in cities, such as, St. Louis, Atlanta, Durham and Madisonville (KY), Taya oversees the Community Health Workers Research Apprenticeship Program at MSM.

Prior to his career in workforce development, Taya spent two years as the vice dean at Gillings School of Global Public Health working on a community development economic model at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She was born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee and holds a bachelor's degree in Business Management and Finance from Tennessee State University and other terminal degrees. In her spare time Taya enjoys playing tennis, drawing and spending time with her daughters year-round.

Breakout Session #6 – 2:15 – 3:15 PM:

Tapping into the Power of Youth



Jolene Aguilar supports the economic empowerment of Native American Tribes and Tribal organizations as a member of the DOL Division of Indian and Native American Programs. She served seven years as an educator and program manager at the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), a national community college for Native Americans. There, she led several initiatives to help students achieve their academic and career aspirations, such as creating a resource center, developing curricula, and securing grants. Prior to joining SIPI, she worked at the Partnership for Community Action, a nonprofit organization that provides social services to low-income families in New Mexico. She also served as a Grants Management Specialist at the Indian Health Service in Rockville, Maryland, overseeing the Self Governance grant program for tribal health care systems. Jolene is a proud member of the San Ildefonso Pueblo, a Federally Recognized Indian Tribe in New Mexico. She holds a Master of Public

Administration from the University of New Mexico and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Maryland.



Serena Holthe currently serves as Director of Policy at the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF) where she is responsible for implementing CDF’s comprehensive government affairs strategies and policies that proactively center children and youth. She also has internal and external facing responsibilities, ranging from team leadership, project management, coalition-building, and youth engagement and movement building. Additionally, Serena assists with development, finance, communications, and organizational strategy and direction. Prior to joining CDF, Serena was the Senior Director of Programs and Strategy at the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF). Serena transitioned to CDF when CDF and AYPF merged in the summer of 2023. Her role at AYPF was similar to her role at CDF.

Previously, Serena served as Senior Staff Attorney at the National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC). At NJDC, her work primarily focused on outreach, training, and technical assistance to improve the provision and quality of post-disposition and reentry legal representation for delinquency court-involved youth. She developed training programs, publications, and policy strategies to address collateral consequences for youth involved in the legal system, reintegration of youth into their communities and schools, racial and ethnic disparities at the deep end of the system, and juvenile record clearance.

While residing in Seattle, Serena worked at the Center for Children & Youth Justice, where she managed a civil legal services program to help youth surmount hurdles to their successful transition into adulthood. Serena also assisted in policy reform efforts to expand juvenile record clearance laws, broaden extended foster care, and create governmental supports for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. Before moving to Seattle, she was an Assistant Public Defender in Baltimore City and a Staff Attorney at Maryland Legal Aid.

Serena earned her Juris Doctorate from The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law, graduating with magna cum laude honors. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa.



Fausto Alejandro López specializes in mix-method, participatory action research and collaborative evaluation strategies with youth and youth serving systems. He has over 18 years of experience providing support to education and afterschool systems including The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (One Summer Chicago), the New Deal for Youth (CLASP), The Fellowship Initiative (JP Morgan Chase), and My Brothers Keeper (MBK The Obama Foundation). He is a nationally recognized presenter on positive and

critical youth development; social, emotional, and workforce development; youth mentoring; restorative practices; healing centered engagement; and participatory action research. He sits on the board of Prevention First Inc and the Chicago Freedom School. López holds a Master's degree in Education Psychology-Youth and Community Development and is an adjunct faculty at the University of Illinois- Chicago. He is the co-founder of the Praxis Institute that provides training, capacity building, research, and evaluation to initiatives across the country.

Workshop #1 – 3:30 – 5:00 PM:

Follow the Money: Funding Flexibilities and Braiding Funds



Robin Fernkas is Deputy Administrator for the Office of Workforce Investment within the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) at the U.S. Department of Labor. She provides leadership in developing programs, policy guidance and technical assistance for ETA's competitive investments in skills training and employment programs and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-funded programs. Ms. Fernkas served for a decade

as the Director of the Division of Strategic Investments where she managed ETA's portfolio of H-1B Skills Training Grant programs and community college investments. Ms. Fernkas brings a wealth of workforce development knowledge through her work with workforce investment system advisory boards at the local, state, and national levels and working for several Washington, D.C. based intergovernmental organizations on workforce policy issues. She holds a B.A. in international economics from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts and completed executive education at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. She is a working mom who enjoys traveling and cycling with her son and husband.



Anita Harvey is a division director within the Budget Office of the Employment and Training Administration's Office of Financial Administration. She provides leadership, direction and subject matter expertise regarding determination of annual funding levels for grantees through financial models governed by statutory and administrative formulas; development, production, and dissemination of financial reports related to ETA programs, including grantee fund utilization reports; maintenance of financial data available on internal and

external websites; provision of technical assistance regarding funding formulas and financial requirements of authorizing legislation; and responses to requests related to all ETA program funding. She also leads the team responsible for managing the appropriated, transferred, and reimbursable funds associated with federal administration of most of ETA's programs.

Anita has worked for ETA since 2007, initially in performance management, and in various roles in finance since 2009. Before that she worked for the Department of Defense, including serving on active duty in the US Army and deploying to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Anita has a M.S. in Strategic Intelligence from the National Intelligence University and a B.S. in Russian and Spanish languages from the United States Military Academy at West Point.



Chelsea Mates is the Workforce Innovation Team Manager within Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development. Chelsea's team proudly administers the State of Michigan's grants to support the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth workforce development programs, as well as the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment programs. As someone who was born and raised in Michigan and has spent 14 years in workforce development, Chelsea is passionate about expanding economic opportunity and prosperity for all of Michigan's citizens by removing barriers to success in the labor market. She is a staunch advocate for increasing equity and expanding youth access to career exploration, preparation, and placement. Chelsea is a Certified Business Solutions Professional and has a Bachelor of Business Administration and Master of Business Administration from Davenport University.



James Miller currently serves as the Assistant Director for Resource Development for the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), the state's coordinating entity for its fifteen public two-year institutions. In this role, James works alongside MCCB's Assistant Executive Director for Resource Development and other agency staff to locate, procure, and administer public and private grant dollars aligned to the strategic direction of the system, agency, and individual institutions. During his tenure, approximately \$10.6M in grant funds has been awarded for various MCCB initiatives. Prior to his time with MCCB, James benefited from a diverse professional background, with experiences in the nonprofit sector, public and private higher education, and a for-profit corporate setting, each of which has provided him a unique perspective to approaching his work in resource development. James holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Mississippi and a master's degree from Mississippi College with a focus in Higher Education Administration. He is presently working to complete a doctorate in Higher Education Administration from the University of Southern Mississippi.



Zach Nickerson is the Director of Workforce Services for the Workforce Development division at the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW). Mr. Nickerson is a dynamic and dedicated public servant responsible for overseeing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Federal Bonding, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I programs and discretionary grants. During his 12-year tenure at DEW, he has provided technical advice to executive leadership, staff, and stakeholders through his knowledge of laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. Prior to being promoted to his current position, Mr. Nickerson held various state and local roles within the workforce system, including Workforce Investment Act Case Manager, local area Recruiter, and most recently the role of Workforce Support Manager.

Originally from Martinsville, Virginia, and having earned a Bachelor's Degree from Francis Marion University, he has decided to devote his career to enhancing workforce development across South Carolina. Mr. Nickerson was recognized by the State Workforce Investment Board as the Program Year 2012 Outstanding Local SC Works System Employee. He continues to work with Local Workforce Development Areas and state partners to ensure the effective implementation of WIOA. Mr. Nickerson is currently a resident of Camden, SC, enjoys collecting hype sneakers, and spends his free time with his wife and two sons.



The Honorable Errick D. Simmons is the City of Greenville, Mississippi's second African-American Mayor (first black male). First elected as a city councilman on January 2, 2008, Mayor Simmons served on the Greenville City Council for eight (8) years where he served as Vice-Mayor his last year on the city council. As city councilman, Simmons served on the charter and ordinance committee, finance, public safety committee, education, and airport committees. During his tenure as city councilman, Simmons has balanced eight (8) city budgets totaling over 500 million dollars and managed over \$100 million dollars in grants awards. Simmons is a firm believer that a life lived in service to others is a life worth living.

Attorney Simmons matriculated through Greenville Public Schools where he graduated second in his class at T. L. Weston High School in 1995, second to his twin brother and law partner, Mississippi State Senator Derrick T. Simmons. Attorney Simmons later studied at Jackson State University, where he received a Bachelor in Business Administration in Economics in 2000. In 2002, Councilman Simmons received a Masters in Arts in Economics from Howard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and received his Juris Doctorate from Howard University School of Law (HUSL) in 2005. As the team captain of the nationally-acclaimed HUSL Huver I. Brown Trial Advocacy Mock Trial Team, Attorney Simmons led the team to victory defeating two-time reigning champion Harvard Law School to become the first historically black law school to win the American Bar Association International Mock Trial Competition. Attorney Simmons is a recipient of numerous community services awards by local, state, and national organizations and

has been featured in several local, state, and national publications, including but not limited to, Jet Magazine, Dallas Examiner, Chicago Defender, Time, Diversity and the Bar, interviewed by Host Ed Gordon on National Public Radio, congratulated in the United States House of Representatives, and recently featured on the cover of Mississippi's edition of Attorney-at-Law Magazine for being the Attorney of the Month for November 2014.

After graduation from law school, Attorney Simmons returned home to Greenville to use his educational preparation, professionalism, passion, and dedication to serve the people of Greenville, the Mississippi Delta, and the South as a whole.

As a leading Mississippi trial lawyer, Simmons is the co-founder/co-owner of Simmons & Simmons, PLLC in Greenville (www.simmonspllc.com), an aggressive law firm concentrating on the areas of personal injury and criminal defense. As a trial lawyer, Errick leads the civil division of Simmons & Simmons, PLLC and have achieved results in and outside the courtroom for his clients. Notable successes include a seven-figure settlement for individuals receiving personal injuries and property damages from exposure to toxic chemicals that were allowed to migrate offsite from a chemical plant. Simmons also recovered damages for a mother and child while during a traumatic labor the child suffered an Erb's proximal brachial plexus palsy injury.

Simmons' strong advocacy and commitment to our youth have afforded him gubernatorial appointments and national affiliations with some of the leading foundations, non-profits, and private organizations. Attorney Simmons was named by the National Bar Association and IMPACT as one of 2011 Nation's Best Advocates: Top 40 Lawyers Under 40.



Mitzi Woods is the Workforce Director at South Delta Planning and Development District in Greenville, Mississippi; for the Delta Workforce Development Area, having served in her current position for 19 years. Prior to assuming the Workforce Director position, Mitzi worked as a Program Specialist for the District for a year. Before joining South Delta in 2003, Mitzi worked for 24 years at Mid-State Opportunity, a community action agency based in Charleston, Mississippi as program planner and project director for a variety of community-based programs.

Her pet project includes the development of the Electrical Lineman Training Program at MS Delta Community College (MDCC) and the construction of the Lineman Training Facility on MDCC's campus.

She attended Delta State University and is a member of the National Association of Workforce Boards; the Southeastern Employment Training Association; and currently serves as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Mississippi Association of Workforce Areas; is Secretary for the Mississippians United to End Homelessness Board of Directors and serves on the board of the Foundation for the Mid South.



George Wright George Wright became the CEO of The Chicago Cook Workforce (The Partnership) in June 2023. Wright comes to the role after a distinguished career in banking and community investment and after serving as the co-chair of The Partnership's Board of Directors since 2015. In April, he stepped down from The Partnership Board and retired as director of community relations for Citibank's Global Consumer Group. As director of community relations, Wright led all aspects of Citi's community development portfolio in Illinois and across the Central Region.

Previously, Wright served as national director of emerging markets for Washington Mutual, where he was responsible for national home loan sales and operations to emerging market consumers and oversaw a team of more than 200 employees. Earlier in his career, Wright was a senior vice president at GMAC Bank where he was one of the six senior founding bank managers and was responsible for all areas of the bank's Community Reinvestment Act initiatives, as well as customer service and philanthropy. He began his career at Citicorp / Citibank in Illinois as a management associate and was progressively promoted throughout his 30 years there, ultimately rising to become community investment officer where he managed all aspects of community development for the Central Region and national manager of planning and integration.

In addition to his service on The Partnership Board, Wright has also served as Board Chair of Accion Chicago and the Center for Economic Progress, as well as the Greater Englewood CDC. In addition, he is the recipient of numerous community leadership awards including the James Sills Community Reinvestment Act Leadership Award, the YMCA Black / Hispanic Achiever in Industry Award, Englewood "Maker of Men" Award, 100 Black Men Leadership Award, Chicago Defender "Man of Excellence" Award, Executive of the Year for AFP and Chicago "Community Change Maker" Award.

Wright received his BS degree in Psychology from St. Joseph's College and did his graduate studies at Illinois Institute of Technology.

Workshop #2 – 3:30 – 5:00 PM:

Strategic State Planning: Practical Solutions to Building Partnerships



Robert Kight, Division Director, United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Workforce Investment.



Jordan Morang serves as a policy analyst on the Workforce Development and Economic Policy Program of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, where he supports governors' staff by providing technical assistance related to workforce and economic development policy. His work has focused on expanding pathways into the workforce through digital skills development, youth apprenticeship, registered apprenticeship, addressing barriers to entry, and others.

Prior to joining NGA, Jordan has worked in a variety of roles at the local level in Florida, Indiana, and Maine. Each role has focused on improving the economic and social wellbeing of the community through workforce and economic development initiatives. Projects include the North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area for the City of Clearwater, Florida, the Bloomington Urban Enterprise Zone and the COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund for the City of Bloomington, Indiana.

Jordan holds a master's of public affairs degree from Indiana University and a bachelor's of arts degree in political science and communication from the University of Florida.

Workshop #3 – 3:30 – 5:00 PM:

What is the Monitor Advocate System? Why it is Important and How You Can Make a Difference



Gerardo Aranda has been the Michigan State Monitor Advocate (SMA) since 2014, he was assistant SMA for four years. Prior to joining the Office of Michigan's State Monitor Advocate, he was an Outreach Worker for 23 years. As an outreach worker Gerardo was the recipient of the National Outreach Worker Leadership, Unity, Professional Excellence Award (L.U.P.E.). He created, hosted, and produced a farmworker radio show "Programa Del Campesino" in Michigan which aired weekly at local radio stations for fifteen years. Gerardo was born in Weslaco, Texas, to migrant farmworker parents that traveled the West US

migrant stream. In the mid-60's his parents ventured out to the Midwest US migrant stream, Michigan specifically where he has lived since. Gerardo attended school in southwest Michigan, where pre- and post-secondary educational services for migrant farmworker students were limited. Through his participation at farmworker events in Michigan, he exemplifies to farmworkers, that they too can someday be a State Monitor Advocate.

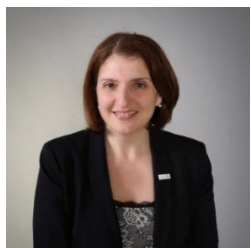


Felipe Pacheco has devoted nearly two decades to aiding Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) in Georgia. His 15-year tenure as an MSFW Outreach Specialist with the Georgia Department of Labor marked the beginning of a distinguished career. In this role, Felipe established a strong rapport with the MSFW community, ensuring they were well-informed about their rights and available services.

Two years ago, Felipe transitioned to the role of State Monitor Advocate with the Technical College System of Georgia. His focus on fostering inter-agency partnerships has furthered the support and resources available to MSFWs.

Outside of his professional sphere, Felipe a Chicago bears fan cherishes his family life with his two daughters, Madison and Mia, and his supportive wife. His personal ethos extends beyond work into creating meaningful connections, making him a respected figure both professionally and personally in the community. His ongoing dedication continues to inspire and create a positive impact within the MSFW community in Georgia.

Closing Plenary – 5:00 – 5:15 PM



Pam Gerassimides joined ETA in July 2022 as the Regional Administrator in Chicago. Over her three decades in the workforce development system, Pam has focused on building partnerships and systems change initiatives, developing staff-capacity training, promoting digital transformation, and establishing new initiatives. Prior to joining ETA, she worked for the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), where she held various senior roles – leading policy committees, technical assistance, and large ETA grants. Her most impactful accomplishments include the establishment and operation of the National Labor Exchange (NLx, a public-private partnership delivering to states an unduplicated and refreshed daily job-feed, from vetted employers, and at no cost to the public-sector); and the Workforce IT Support Center (Workforce ITSC, supporting WIOA partner agencies in furthering integrated digital technology solutions for customer service, reporting, and data insights). Pam began her career at the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, as the Youth Programs Coordinator, later joining USDOL, ETA's Welfare to Work Office.



Kimberly G. Staley currently serves as the Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration's Region III, which includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. She provides leadership to ensure regional workforce system efficiency, compliance, and performance in an equitable and inclusive way through comprehensive oversight, management, and technical assistance of ETA's grant investments. This role is one of many in her more than 30 years in the workforce system where she continues to partner with federal, state, and local government agencies, community-based organizations, and employers to promote workforce development.

Kimberly's past experiences include serving as the Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer for Capital Workforce Partners in Connecticut; the Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Vice President for KRA Corporation. Her workforce development experience has spanned several states, including South Carolina, Virginia, California, Florida and Connecticut.

Wednesday, November 15

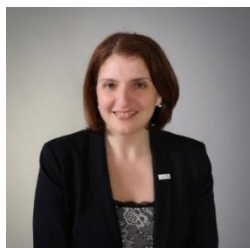
Opening Plenary – 8:00 – 9:45 AM:

The Voices of America's Workers



Dr. Kristen Broady is a Senior Economist, Economic Advisor, and Director of the Economic Mobility Project at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. Kristen is a nonresident senior fellow at Brookings Metro. Before joining the Chicago Fed, Kristen served as a Fellow at Brookings Metro, performing research and analysis on areas that include the racial wealth gap, the return to education investment, and the disparate economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Kristen has conducted research on mortgage foreclosure risk, labor and automation, and racial health disparities.

Kristen is an adjunct professor of economics at Spelman College and has served on the faculties of Alabama A&M University, Dillard University, Dominican University, Fort Valley State University, Howard University, Kentucky State University, and as a visiting faculty member at Jiangsu Normal University in Xuzhou, China. Kristen served as a consultant for the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington, D.C.; a senior research fellow for the Center for Global Policy Solutions in Washington, D.C.; a consultant for the City of East Point, Georgia and as an HBCU consultant for season two of The Quad on Black Entertainment Television (BET) in Atlanta. Kristen earned a B.A. in criminal justice at Alcorn State University and an M.B.A. and Ph.D. in business administration with a major in economics at Jackson State University.



Pam Gerassimides joined ETA in July 2022 as the Regional Administrator in Chicago. Over her three decades in the workforce development system, Pam has focused on building partnerships and systems change initiatives, developing staff-capacity training, promoting digital transformation, and establishing new initiatives. Prior to joining ETA, she worked for the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), where she held various senior roles – leading policy committees, technical assistance, and large ETA grants. Her most impactful accomplishments include the establishment and operation of the National Labor Exchange (NLx, a public-private partnership delivering to states an unduplicated and refreshed daily job-feed, from vetted employers, and at no cost to the public-sector); and the Workforce IT Support Center (Workforce ITSC, supporting WIOA partner agencies in furthering integrated digital technology solutions for customer service, reporting, and data insights). Pam began her career at the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, as the Youth Programs Coordinator, later joining USDOL, ETA's Welfare to Work Office.



Merissa Piazza is a senior community development analyst in the Community Development Department at the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. In her role, she conducts analyses and applied research related to workforce and economic development among other issues affecting low- to moderate-income communities.

Prior to joining the Cleveland Reserve Bank, Dr. Piazza served as a program manager for the Center for Economic Development at Cleveland State University, where she conducted applied research on economic development, entrepreneurship, small businesses, and workforce development.

Dr. Piazza holds a BA in political science and Spanish from Oakland University, an MPIA (public and international affairs) from the University of Pittsburgh, and a PhD in urban studies and public affairs from Cleveland State University.



Kimberly G. Staley currently serves as the Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration's Region III, which includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. She provides leadership to ensure regional workforce system efficiency, compliance, and performance in an equitable and inclusive way through comprehensive oversight, management, and technical assistance of ETA's grant investments. This role is one of many in her more than 30 years in the workforce system where she continues to partner with federal, state, and local government agencies, community-based organizations, and employers to promote workforce development.

Kimberly's past experiences include serving as the Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer for Capital Workforce Partners in Connecticut; the Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Vice President for KRA Corporation. Her workforce development experience has spanned several states, including South Carolina, Virginia, California, Florida and Connecticut.

Plenary Session – 8:00 – 9:45 AM:

Are We There Yet? Where Are We on the EV Landscape?



Paul Bowser has worked with Roush's prototype group to resolve the mobility industry's most technically complex product development challenges for almost 30 years. Having gained experience in Roush's Electronics and Instrumentation groups, Paul now serves as the Director of the company's Garage Services, Wiring and Electrical teams. These groups provide prototype development, system fabrication and short run manufacturing services to the automotive, commercial vehicle and defense segments, integrating hybrid, electrification, DAT, ADAS and autonomous technologies. In addition to leading these technical teams, Paul works with local post-secondary educational institutions to create training curricula that encourages the growth of our current employees as well as providing career pathways in the professional trades. He also oversees the training of existing employees in skills related to electric and autonomous vehicle technologies.

A US Army veteran, Paul plays a key role in the Roush Veterans Initiative Program, recruiting veterans and helping to translate their military skills and experience into the civilian work environment.



Michele Economou Ureste is the Executive Director for the Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA) Workforce Intelligence Network for Southeast Michigan (WIN). The SEMCA WIN division represents the largest workforce collaborative in Michigan which is comprised of ten community colleges and seven Michigan Works! agencies. Michele has served as the WIN Executive Director since 2017, and under her leadership she has written and received over \$50 million in regional workforce training grants and labor market data studies for the southeast Michigan region. Exceeding all performance outcome targets, WIN has recently been recognized as one of the top workforce collaboratives in the nation for both the U.S. Department of Labor American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) and America's Promise robotics and automation training grants.

Michele came to WIN with an extensive leadership background in developing workforce training programs. At the non-profit trade association formed by the automotive OEMs, Automotive Industry Action Group (AIAG), she facilitated over a dozen quality management system committees of industry subject matter experts to develop industry guidelines and training programs to support the implementation of the automotive quality system standards. Michele also worked as vice president of a business system training and consulting firm where she created and established corporate universities for supply chain initiatives.

Michele served two elected four-year terms (2008-2016) as the West Bloomfield Township Supervisor, which is the equivalent of a full-time Mayor, City Manager, and Police and Fire Commissioner, and achieved the e-Cities award by streamlining the building permit process, led a downtown boulevard roadway improvement project, market study, and town center ordinance

amendment that transformed the community gateway to include the first hotel in the township, and new facade upgrades throughout the business corridor.



Karen Kirchler, Deputy Commissioner, Workforce Development
Technical College System of Georgia



Deb Lyzenga is the Industry Engagement Acting Division Administrator within LEO-WD. for the State of Michigan. In her role she is taking her combined 22 years of experience in regional workforce, private sector manufacturing, and education leadership to spearhead state-level projects, and initiatives that promote demand-driven workforce development strategies to help attract, retain, and develop talent in high growth, high wage industry sectors. The division engages employers, the Michigan Works! Network, educational entities, economic development, other local, state, and federal partners to execute programs and initiatives that produce successful recruitment, training, placement, and retention outcomes. Building a skilled talent pipeline of workers requires working with employers to identify and better align their hiring needs to education delivery, along with support services to historically underserved individuals, expands economic opportunity to all Michiganders and Michigan businesses.

Deb is a Talent Pipeline Management Practitioner and Fellow with the U.S. Chamber Foundation, holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Oklahoma State University and a Master of Public Administration, Public and Government Policy from Grand Valley State University.



Governor Bill Lee appointed **Deniece Thomas** as Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development in September 2022.

Before her appointment, Commissioner Thomas had served as the agency's Deputy Commissioner since 2019. She started her career with the state of Tennessee in 2007 working in the Clarksville American Job Center. Over the years, Commissioner Thomas has risen through the ranks of the Department as a Director, Assistant Administrator, Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner.

Commissioner Thomas is a member of the National Association of State Agencies (NASWA) where she serves as co-chair for Workforce ITSC, previous chair of the Employment and Training Committee, past member of both the Veterans Committee since 2015 and the National Apprenticeship Workgroup.

Additionally, she also serves as the State Workforce Liaison for the National Governor's Association where she serves on the Executive Committee. She also serves as a member of the Tennessee Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations.

Commissioner Thomas is a 2014 Graduate of LEAD Tennessee Alliance 5 and Leadership Tennessee Class VIII. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Civic Leadership from Lipscomb University in Nashville and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Alabama Birmingham. She is a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Plenary Session – 9:55 – 10:35 AM:

Setting the Vision



Governor JB Pritzker was sworn in as the 43rd Governor of Illinois on Jan. 14, 2019. Since taking office, he has accomplished one of the most ambitious and consequential policy agendas in state history.

The governor won bipartisan passage for Rebuild Illinois, the largest investment in state history to upgrade roads, bridges, rail, broadband, and schools. He overcame years of fiscal mismanagement in Illinois by proposing and passing a balanced budget every year, eliminating the state's multi-billion dollar bill backlog, reducing the state's pension liability, and achieving six credit upgrades from rating agencies. He took bold action to put state government back on the side of working families by creating jobs, raising the minimum wage to a living wage, protecting reproductive rights, making university and community college education more affordable, and advancing equal pay for women.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Pritzker saved lives and livelihoods by prioritizing the health and safety of Illinois residents while supporting families and businesses through the COVID-induced recession. To protect hardworking families from additional hardship, one of the defining features of the governor's response to the COVID financial crisis was launching the nation's largest pandemic relief grant program for small businesses and the nation's largest housing assistance program.

In 2021, Governor Pritzker proposed and signed a comprehensive clean energy bill, making Illinois a national leader on climate action and the first state in the Midwest to pass a law phasing out fossil fuels.

Before becoming governor, Pritzker founded 1871, the non-profit small business incubator in Chicago. Since its creation, Chicago has been named one of the top ten technology startup hubs in the world, and 1871 was named the best incubator in the world. As governor, he continues to expand support for new business creation throughout the state and cut taxes for hundreds of

thousands of small businesses while incentivizing job creation. Since 2019, annual new business startups in Illinois have grown by nearly 70%. Illinois now has the largest growth in small business creation among the largest states in the nation, beating states like California, Texas, Florida and New York.

Governor Pritzker and his wife, MK, have been married for more than 25 years, and they are the proud parents of daughter, Teddi, and son, Don.



Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su assumed her role on March 11, 2023. She was previously confirmed by the Senate to serve as the deputy secretary of labor on July 13, 2021. As deputy secretary, she served as the de-facto chief operating officer for the department, overseeing its workforce, managing its budget and executing the priorities of the secretary of labor.

Prior to joining the U.S. Department of Labor, Deputy Secretary Su served as the secretary for the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. The LWDA enforces workplace laws, combats wage theft, ensures health and safety on the job, connects Californians to quality jobs and career pathways, and administers unemployment insurance, workers compensation and paid family leave.

Su is a nationally recognized expert on workers' rights and civil rights who has dedicated her distinguished legal career to advancing justice on behalf of poor and disenfranchised communities and is a past recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant.

As California labor commissioner from 2011 through 2018, Su enforced the state's labor laws to ensure a fair and just workplace for both employees and employers. A report on her tenure released in May 2013 found that her leadership resulted in a renaissance in enforcement activity and record-setting results. In 2014, she launched the first "Wage Theft Is a Crime" multimedia, multilingual statewide campaign to reach out to low-wage workers and their employers to help them understand their rights and feel safe speaking up about labor law abuses.

Prior to her appointment as California labor commissioner, Deputy Secretary Su was the litigation director at Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles, the nation's largest non-profit civil rights organization devoted to issues affecting the Asian American community. Su is known for pioneering a multi-strategy approach that combines successful impact litigation with multiracial organizing, community education, policy reform, coalition building and media work.

Frequently named to top-lawyer lists such as the *Daily Journal's* "Top 75 Women Litigators" in California and *California Lawyer's* "Super Lawyers," she was the first labor commissioner to be included among the *Daily Journal's* "Top 75 Labor and Employment Lawyers." She has also been named one of the 50 most noteworthy women alumni of Harvard Law School and one of the 100 most influential people in Los Angeles in *Los Angeles Magazine*.

Su has taught at UCLA Law School and Northeastern Law School. She is a graduate of Stanford University and Harvard Law School and began her career with a Skadden Fellowship. Su speaks Mandarin and Spanish.

Breakout Session #7 – 10:45 – 11:45 AM:

Developing a Talent Pipeline: Successful Strategies from Electric Vehicle (EV) & Green Energy Manufacturing



Joining Elliott in 1999, **Don Adkins** worked as an Apprentice Lineman, Journeyman Lineman, and served as Field Safety Director until his promotion to Managing Director of Safety and Training in 2005 and promotion to VP of Safety and Training in 2021. He attended business administration courses at University of Kentucky and holds a wide range of certifications, including Certified Loss Control Professional, Certified Utility Safety Professional, Certified Environmental Safety and Health Trainer, Safety Management Specialist, Construction Health and Safety Technician, and Occupational Health and Safety Technologist. Don has over 27 years working in the Transmission and Distribution and Electrical industries.

Don has worn many hats throughout his career. Before joining Elliot he was a groundman for Pike Electric, manager of a sporting goods store, and held positions in residential construction, pharmacy tech, and retail.

An active member in his community, Don is a member of Family Worship Centre in Lexington. He is also chairman of the Bluegrass chapter of Friends of NRA, and a member of the Steering Team with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Strategic Power Partnership. Don lives in Lexington with his wife, Justine, and has three grown children, Jasmine, Jade, and Gabrielle



Sue Smith is Vice President for the award-winning school of Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering, and Applied Science (AMEAS) at Ivy Tech Community College. Ms. Smith has been with the college for 33 years in various roles including Corporate College, and Workforce Development both at the campus and state level. Her expertise is in consulting, workforce and economic development, program and partnership development, and advanced manufacturing. She works routinely with employers to ensure the programs in the school of AMEAS align with industry needs. Smith has also represented Ivy Tech in state, national, and international organizations. As a recognized expert in smart manufacturing and apprenticeship, she regularly presents at conferences across the US and in other countries. She participates in numerous national and international partnerships and events as a speaker and

host. Most recently, she delivered a keynote address at the European Educational Congress in San Sebastian, Spain. She is past president of the American Technical Education Association (ATEA) and currently serves on their board and the board of the National Council for Workforce Education (NCWE) and on the board for Transatlantic 3 (TA3). Most recently Smith was nationally recognized by ATEA Jean Koch Outstanding Technical Education Achievement Award for her contributions in postsecondary technical education.

Breakout Session #8 – 10:45 – 11:45 AM:

Education Workforce Sector



Dr. Erin Crisp leads the Tennessee Grow Your Own Center at the University of Tennessee System as the inaugural executive director. The GYO Center coordinates all Registered Teacher Apprenticeship programs in Tennessee. Prior to joining the GYO Center, Crisp held the chief academic officer's role for a software development startup. Crisp has 20 years of experience in K-12 and postsecondary education and has held roles including middle school

language arts teacher, consultant in K-12 schools, instructional designer for online programs, director of assessment and accreditation, and associate vice president of innovation where she cleared institutional pathways for innovative programs including competency-based education, micro-credentialing, and programs to better serve working adult learners. Erin's research interests revolve around the design of curriculum and program structures that improve the learner's experience. Her framework for designing feedback has been used to program AI tools and was published in a journal special issue in the fall of 2023. When she isn't thinking about teaching and learning, she is probably visiting one of her 3 adult sons, camping, backpacking, or enjoying downtown Knoxville with her spouse.



Prior to his current role, **Jason Graves** worked for 16 years in secondary education as a teacher, administrator, mentor and CTE coordinator in the Louisville /Southern Indiana area. While working on his first masters, Jason developed the University of Louisville Project Graduate program, helping hundreds of adult learners and returning veterans reenroll in college and complete degrees that they had previously started. This work inspired his passion for helping people choose their path in both education and life. As a

member of the original WBL steering committee and academy coach, he championed the implementation of the Ford Next Generation Learning model at Greater Clark County Schools and the transition to high school career education. As the Regional Director of the Indiana Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship, he developed secondary to higher education pathways

that utilized the apprenticeship model to increase student participation and curriculum rigor. Jason is now the Senior Director at OWBLA and is working to connect many different groups to Registered Apprenticeship and its benefits.

Breakout Session #9 – 10:45 – 11:45 AM:

Youth Apprenticeships – “TRY it, You’ll Like it! (Train. Retain. Youth.)



John Keckhaver is a Milwaukee native and a graduate of Beloit College and the University of Wisconsin Law School. Between the two, he served in the Army’s Military Intelligence Corps. After briefly practicing law, John began his career in public policy in 2000. He has worked in the State Capitol, for a U.S. Congressman, and conducted public policy analysis at the University of Wisconsin—Madison and the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.

John then operated a lobbying and public policy consulting practice for ten years, conducting work for state and national organizations. He joined DWD in 2016 and currently serves as the Youth Apprenticeship Section Chief in the Department's Division of Employment and Training. John has served on a number of state and local boards and commissions, including the Legislative Council Special Study Committee on Building Wisconsin’s Workforce.



Lynn Rippy has been the President/CEO of YouthBuild Louisville since 2001. YouthBuild Louisville has grown to offer youth services not only in education, job training, case management, and job placement, but also in violence interruption, housing placement, summer employment, and environmental education and action.

Over the past 47 years, Lynn has administered Youth and Community Development programs and planning in Louisville and across the country. She started her career as a Recreation Administrator for Metro Parks managing urban community centers and summer camp programs. She owned and managed two childcare centers for infants and toddlers. Youth GLUE, Lynn’s consulting business, specializes in youth staff, program, and organizational development for local and national foundations. This work led to the conceptualization and partner development for YouthBuild Louisville (YBL) in 2000. The rest is history and she founded and has managed YouthBuild Louisville for the past 22 years.

Lynn attended JCC and the University of Louisville majoring in Political Science. Most recently Lynn graduated from the University of Louisville Social Justice Youth Development Program.

Breakout Session #10 – 1:15 – 2:15 PM:

Pitch Perfect! How to Grow and Maintain Infrastructure Partnerships Across Government



With a Kennesaw State University public and social services degree fresh in hand, a very green **John Helton** began his career as a DFCS child protective services investigator 30 years ago, ultimately learning the ins and outs of human services by serving in progressive roles managing childcare, volunteer, and community development and workforce programs before being appointed deputy director of Cobb County Department of Family and Children Services. Discovering his passion for helping create opportunities for people, John then spent 19 years as the founding president and CEO of CobbWorks, Inc. and WorkSource Cobb, the local workforce development board, until assuming leadership of CareerRise, Inc. in June 2019. John has served on boards of numerous workforce development and civic organizations at the local, state, and national levels including president of the Southeastern Employment & Training Association (SETA). John currently serves as chair of the Metro Atlanta eXchange (MAX) for Workforce Solutions, a board member for the Grant Park Conservancy, and president of his neighborhood association in the historic Summerhill neighborhood of Atlanta. John is an avid traveler, but when home, he enjoys cooking a good meal for family and friends and caretaking his neurotic and frequently aggressive rescue poodle, Duncan.



Deb Lyzenga is the Industry Engagement Acting Division Administrator within LEO-WD. for the State of Michigan. In her role she is taking her combined 22 years of experience in regional workforce, private sector manufacturing, and education leadership to spearhead state-level projects, and initiatives that promote demand-driven workforce development strategies to help attract, retain, and develop talent in high growth, high wage industry sectors. The division engages employers, the Michigan Works! Network, educational entities, economic development, other local, state, and federal partners to execute programs and initiatives that produce successful recruitment, training, placement, and retention outcomes. Building a skilled talent pipeline of workers requires working with employers to identify and better align their hiring needs to education delivery, along with support services to historically underserved individuals, expands economic opportunity to all Michiganders and Michigan businesses.

Deb is a Talent Pipeline Management Practitioner and Fellow with the U.S. Chamber Foundation, holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Oklahoma State University and a Master of Public Administration, Public and Government Policy from Grand Valley State University.



Anne Pentiak is a graduate of Michigan State University, where she earned her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. Ms. Pentiak's background includes higher education administration and workforce development. She currently serves as the Administrative Manager for the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Sector Strategies section. Sector strategies are regional, industry-focused approaches to building skilled workforces and are among the most effective ways to align public and private resources to address the talent needs of employers. Ms. Pentiak has a broad range of experience in building coalitions to address workforce challenges facing the mobility and information technology industries. With seven years of workforce development experience, Ms. Pentiak's goal is to collaborate, coordinate and convene key stakeholders to overcome talent recruitment and retention challenges.

Breakout Session #11 – 1:15 – 2:15 PM:

Advancing Digital Literacy in Underserved Communities



Mike Beene currently serves as an Assistant Secretary for the Kansas Department of Commerce. His duties include oversight of all workforce programs and grants, in addition to the 26 workforce centers located across the state. Mike received a Master's degree in Education from Kansas State University and prior to his career with the Department of Commerce, he was an educator and administrator in both secondary and postsecondary institutions in Kansas.



Triscia McGuinness is an experienced non-profit leader committed to serving members through strategic programs and partnerships. Her experience in non-profit management includes program development and implementation, member engagement, product development, and leading cross-functional teams. In her current role as Director, Programs for AARP Foundation, Ms. McGuinness leads special initiatives and projects that support AARP Foundation's mission to end senior poverty by helping vulnerable people over 50 build economic opportunity.

Prior to joining AARP Foundation, Ms. McGuinness was the Director of Strategic Initiatives with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) where she led program and engagement strategy for the SHRM Executive Network, an exclusive network of HR leaders focused on the intersection of people and strategy. In her 20+ years at SHRM, Ms. McGuinness held multiple roles across the organization spanning education, events, business development, and marketing.

Ms. McGuinness holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication from George Mason University.



Megan Steckly has more than 15+ years of experience working in private and nonprofit organizations in the US, Canada, Australia, and Japan. Through her career, she has worked in the education, technology, arts, and consumer product sectors. Currently she serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Compudopt, a national nonprofit organization which solves the digital divide. Under her leadership, Compudopt has grown from a \$230,000 operating budget to over \$36M, expanded from 1 location to 40+ cities and 19 states across the US, and increased service from 700 community members annually to over 100,000, all in just 8 years. Megan holds a Master's degree from the University of Queensland and a Bachelor's degree from the University of British Columbia and is a Senior Fellow of the American Leadership Forum. She has been featured on the Today Show, CNN, AP, and was selected as a 2022 Houston Business Journal 40 under 40 honoree.



Parnell Turner, Assistant Director, Workforce Services,
American Job Center.

Breakout Session #12 – 1:15 – 2:15 PM:

Addressing the Youth Mental Health Crisis



Mary Ann (Mimi) Haley, PhD is the Executive Director of the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC.org), an organization dedicated to improving the lives of young people who are out of school and out of work. With her team and partners, NYEC recently launched the National Alliance of Youth and Young Adults Advocates (nayyaa.org), a policy hub created to promote policy alignment and strategies, improve national and local data systems, facilitate narrative change, and create sustainable youth leadership. Prior to joining NYEC, Haley served as Deputy Director/Interim CEO of the CT Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) and was the lead for the agency on ending youth homelessness. She spearheaded improving statewide systems to serve young people, which resulted in a 50% reduction in youth homelessness in two years.

She has developed and led statewide community impact teams and led projects in areas such as reentry, juvenile justice, foster care youth, flexible funding, childcare assistance, youth leadership, and housing interventions. In addition to her 20 years of non-profit management, she has taught

courses in race and politics, comparative politics, development, and political theory. She's a published author (political economy) and taught at Fairfield University for many years. She has an undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame and a doctorate from New York University. She also currently chairs the Governor's Office of Workforce Strategies Taskforce in CT, DEIA Youth Subcommittee.



Morgan Seiler, M.Ed., Ed.S. is Regional Behavioral Health Advisor for SAMHSA – Region 8. Morgan is an accomplished mental health professional with nearly 15 years' experience in research, clinical practice, program coordination, and a creative and strategic approach to solving complex systemic challenges within systems of mental health care. Morgan holds an Ed.S. (Education Specialist) and M.Ed. in Mental Health Counseling from the University of Florida and a BA in Psychology from Flagler College. Prior to joining SAMHSA, Morgan worked for the Colorado Department of Education managing Colorado's Project AWARE grants where she led numerous interdepartmental and interagency efforts to improve school-based mental health infrastructure at state and local levels. Morgan has held positions overseeing the implementation of other federally funded health focused grant programs, coordinating research efforts in university settings, developing training, and delivering therapeutic service to children and families.



Marissa Thomas is the Regional Behavioral Health Advisor for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the Region 7 Office. In this role, she works to advance the agency's mission and to improve the delivery of behavioral health services in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska and the nine federally recognized tribes in this area.

Prior to joining SAMHSA, Ms. Thomas served as a Public Health Analyst for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Washington Office. In this capacity, she provided support to the CDC Director and interacted with Congressional health partners and other government officials. She joined CDC in 2015 as a Public Health Associate working on tobacco prevention and control policy in Madison, Wisconsin following two years as a Health Promotion Specialist for a local health department in Bloomington, Illinois. Prior to this, Ms. Thomas worked for the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency in logistics and emergency human services roles. She began her career in public service working as an AmeriCorps member for the Illinois Public Health Association.

Ms. Thomas received her Bachelor of Arts in sociology and health from Illinois Wesleyan University and a Master of Public Health degree with a concentration in health promotion and policy from the University of Missouri.

Plenary Session – 2:25 – 3:20 PM:

AI, The Future of the Labor Market and Implications for the Workforce



Ashwin Bharath serves as the CEO and Co-Founder of Revature, the premier workforce development and enablement enterprise in the United States. Anchored by his unwavering commitment to bridging the Skills and Opportunity Gap, Ashwin has facilitated meaningful employment for more than 30,000 individuals globally. This feat has been accomplished through the provision of holistic technology education, amassing over four million training hours.

A cornerstone of Ashwin's acumen resides in his nuanced understanding of the symbiotic relationship between technological advancements and workforce dynamics. Utilizing the transformative capabilities of generative AI, he is forging collaborative partnerships with technology pioneers, scholars, and educational institutions to investigate the far-reaching implications of AI on employment landscapes. Central to his initiatives is the exploration of how AI can generate novel employment avenues and catalyze upward mobility, especially for individuals hailing from diverse and underserved communities.



Manny Lamaree has vast experience at the intersection of workforce and education policy, research, and practice across federal, state, and local levels. He's served as a Governor and now Presidential appointee leading on key workforce policies and strategies such as sector-based initiatives, registered apprenticeships, postsecondary pathways, industry engagement, and others. From 2015-2019, Manny led the implementation of Nevada's workforce vision, with the passage of critical workforce legislation while serving as the

Founding Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation. He also managed and served as the Governor's Designee on the State's 33-member Workforce Board and led the revamping of the State's Registered Apprenticeship system that saw a 45% increase in apprentices and expansion into 14 new occupations. Manny has represented the U.S. in Geneva at the International Labor Conference setting international standards on apprenticeships.

Manny holds a B.A. in Political Science with honors from Wittenberg University, and a Master's in Education Policy and Management from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Manny began his career as a classroom teacher and has led technical assistance efforts at organizations such as WestEd. He has authored several reports, studied, and presented on workforce nationally and internationally.



DWD Assistant Deputy Secretary **Jennifer Sereno** joined the agency in July 2021 as communications director. She previously served as public affairs program manager at the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority and strategic communications manager for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. She also brings two decades of experience in the news business, including roles as business editor and assignment editor at the Wisconsin State Journal.

Jennifer holds undergraduate degrees in political science and journalism as well as a master's degree in journalism from UW–Madison. Her work has focused on advancing equity, opportunity, and sustainability. She welcomes opportunities to learn from customers, listen to stakeholders, and collaborate on solutions.



Daniel Serota is the Vice President of Government and Public Affairs at Aon. He is responsible for creating meaningful and sustainable connections with a wide variety of stakeholders to further Aon's public service mission and community outreach activities. Daniel's responsibilities include leading US public policy and political initiatives for Aon at the federal, state, and regulatory level. Daniel is the Director of Aon's Political Action Committee and an Executive Sponsor for the Latino Professional Network within Aon. He also

helped create the Chicago Apprentice Network, an employer driven initiative designed to create apprenticeship opportunities within organizations across Chicago.

Daniel was appointed to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board by Governor J.B. Pritzker of Illinois and sits as the chair of the Apprentice Illinois Committee, which is focused on growth of apprenticeship programs in Illinois.

Among civic leadership roles, Daniel is the Treasurer for the Chicagoland Chamber PAC, serves on the JDRF Illinois Chapter Board, is a graduate of the Edgar Fellows program class of 2022.

Daniel has a degree in Political Science from Bradley University and resides in Libertyville Illinois with his wife Chloe and two son's Dean (7) and Owen (5).

Workshop #4 – 3:30 – 5:00 PM:

Region 5: Listening Session with Workforce System Stakeholders



Pam Gerassimides joined ETA in July 2022 as the Regional Administrator in Chicago. Over her three decades in the workforce development system, Pam has focused on building partnerships and systems change initiatives, developing staff-capacity training, promoting digital transformation, and establishing new initiatives. Prior to joining ETA, she worked for the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), where she held various senior roles – leading policy committees, technical assistance, and large ETA grants. Her most impactful accomplishments include the establishment and operation of the National Labor Exchange (NLx, a public-private partnership delivering to states an unduplicated and refreshed daily job-feed, from vetted employers, and at no cost to the public-sector); and the Workforce IT Support Center (Workforce ITSC, supporting WIOA partner agencies in furthering integrated digital technology solutions for customer service, reporting, and data insights). Pam began her career at the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, as the Youth Programs Coordinator, later joining USDOL, ETA’s Welfare to Work Office.

Workshop #5 – 3:30 – 5:00 PM

Region 3: Listening Session with Workforce System Stakeholders



Kimberly G. Staley currently serves as the Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration’s Region III, which includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. She provides leadership to ensure regional workforce system efficiency, compliance, and performance in an equitable and inclusive way through comprehensive oversight, management, and technical assistance of ETA’s grant investments. This role is one of many in her more than 30 years in the workforce system where she continues to partner with federal, state, and local government agencies, community-based organizations, and employers to promote workforce development.

Kimberly’s past experiences include serving as the Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer for Capital Workforce Partners in Connecticut; the Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Vice President for KRA Corporation. Her workforce development experience has spanned several states, including South Carolina, Virginia, California, Florida and Connecticut.

Workshop #6 – 3:30 – 5:00 PM

Effectively Leveraging Partnerships and Tools to Expand Registered Apprenticeship



Katie Adams oversees Safal Partners' workforce practice which provides technical assistance, training, strategic planning, and program management expertise to public sector clients including the US Department of Labor (DOL). Katie is a nationally recognized subject matter expert (SME) in Registered Apprenticeship (RA) and workforce development and leads the DOL RA Technical Assistance Center of Excellence on Strategic Partnerships and System Alignment and a national Industry Intermediary contract. Over the past 13 years she has led, managed, and served as SME on several DOL and National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education (NSF ATE) contracts and grants which have built industry-driven, secondary and post-secondary academic-aligned apprenticeship programs registering thousands of new youth and adult apprentices in high-demand occupations across several sectors. She is a frequent speaker at national workforce and education conferences and currently serves as the co-chair of the NIST National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) Apprenticeship Community of Interest, as well as on the Information Security System Association (ISSA) Apprenticeship, Internship and Mentorship Committee. Katie is a graduate of the College of William & Mary and resides outside of Washington, D.C.



Melissa Aguilar-Southard is a Project Director Safal Partners. She currently leads U.S. DOL's newest Technical Assistance Collaborative, has served under multiple Governors in multiple states on both sides of the isle, has led multiple workforce oriented

boards, and provided consultation services to local, state and federal level entities. Before Melissa joined the non-profit and government-oriented world, she started her career in the private industry where she was an industry trainer and occupation profiler, designing training and education programs for multiple industries, including Fortune 500 companies.



Chytania Brown, President & CEO, Employ Milwaukee.

Closing Plenary – 5:00 – 5:15 PM



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