

Breakout and Workshop Sessions

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Breakout Sessions: 10:30–11:30

INFRASTRUCTURE: Breakout #3: Scaling Pre-Apprenticeship to Support Equity in Infrastructure



Nicole Schwartz is the Executive Director of TradesFutures and leads with ample experience in education and workforce development. Most recently, Schwartz served as North America’s Building Trades Union’s (NABTU) Apprenticeship Readiness Program Coordinator, overseeing nearly 200 ARP programs across the U.S. in conjunction with state and local Building and Construction Trades Councils and their partner community-based organizations.

Prior to her time at TradesFutures, Nicole spent nearly a decade educating youth as a High School and Middle School Social Studies and Spanish Teacher in Milwaukee Public Schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Outside of the classroom, Nicole worked on several initiatives, including Restorative Practices, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Potter’s Forest – Ropes and Challenge Course. After moving to DC in 2015, Nicole worked as a Pastry Cook and Urban Farmer before deciding to focus her efforts on workforce development and broadening pathways to family-sustaining careers for all.

Nicole graduated with a BA from Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI in International Affairs and Spanish for the Professions in 2004. In 2007, Nicole received her Master’s in Education from the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse.



As the Executive Director of the Missouri Works Initiative, a nonprofit sponsored and supported by the Missouri AFL-CIO, **Megan Price** leads three Apprentice Ready Programs which have successfully placed over 200 individuals into life-sustaining careers in the construction trades through Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeships. She leverages state workforce and joint-labor management board memberships and community partnerships to address barriers preventing individuals and the state from reaching their full economic potential.

Having previously served as a Chief of Staff in the Missouri State Senate, Megan brings her workforce development policy and mastery of governmental challenges to support the state in addressing its skilled workforce shortage, aligning the mission of policymakers with that of the labor movement, to forge a path for Missouri as it becomes a leader in apprenticeship expansion.

Megan was raised in southwest MO and earned a Bachelor's degree in economics and management at Webster University in St. Louis. These experiences guide her strategy at MWI as it expands the pathway to construction careers through growing and improving Apprentice Ready Programs.



Traci R. Scott leads the National Urban League’s Workforce Development Division as its Vice President, overseeing programs that serve the entire labor force, from youth to mature workers. NUL’s Workforce Development Division also serves specific populations and industries such as reentry, apprenticeships, and tech. Prior to NUL, she led the Education and Workforce departments at Covenant House New York, one of the nation’s largest shelters for homeless youth and young adults, as Director. Other accomplishments include serving as Managing Program Officer for a New Jersey statewide funder of out-of-school time programs and expansion of a new workforce within the state. Her work in creating NJ’s first district-wide youth program was published in *The Foundation Review* and earned her an appointment on the Mayor of Trenton’s Youth Development Task Force. Ms. Scott holds a BA Kenyon College (OH) and a MPA from CUNY-Baruch as a National Urban Fellow.

SECTOR: Breakout Session #3: Sector Strategies – What do we Know and Where are we Headed?



As the Managing Director of the Colorado Workforce Development Council Office, **Lee Wheeler-Berliner** manages the execution of strategies to develop and sustain an industry-led talent development system in Colorado. By forging relationships with industry and public partners at the local and state level, Lee helps to ensure the alignment of talent development efforts statewide. Lee has been with the CWDC since 2014 and brings extensive project management and leadership experience to this role. He previously worked as an independent consultant for mission-driven for-profit and nonprofit entities, as well as holding senior leadership positions with Hunger Free Colorado and Colorado Court Appointed Special Advocates. Lee holds an MBA with a concentration in social entrepreneurship from the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University and is an active coffee drinker at his local Edgewater coffee shop.



Julie Parks is the Dean of Workforce Training and the Interim Dean for Business & Industry at Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) in Michigan. She has over 20years’ experience developing programming and innovation services in workforce development. Under her leadership, since 2010, GRCC has been awarded 31 grants (federal, state and foundation grants) for workforce development programs, many of which focused on low-income neighborhoods and skill trades careers. Over 17,821 people have been served through those projects. She and her team won the 2022 National Association of Workforce Board’s Partnership Award for their work with their local workforce board West Michigan Works! In addition, in 2022, GRCC was chosen by Intel as one of the 15 community colleges in the US for an Artificial Intelligence network and curriculum. The team she leads focuses on empowering individuals to find the career that best fits their aspirations and then works to help break down barriers so they can

succeed. She has a degree in History from Michigan State University and a M.A. in Education focused on Training and Development from Central Michigan University.



Adine Forman has over 30 years of managerial experience with Los Angeles based social service, workforce development and governmental organizations. She is currently the Executive Director of the Hospitality Training Academy (HTA), a non-profit institution and a labor-management partnership/Taft-Hartley fund that provides benefits to both contributing employers and the UNITE HERE Local 11 labor union, serving Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties and the entire State of Arizona.

The HTA trains and upgrades the skills of UNITE HERE Local 11 hospitality and food service workers, who are predominantly women and people of color, and hail from all corners of the planet. The HTA works not only to upskill existing employees that are represented by the union, but also provides a variety of workforce services, registered apprenticeships, vocational ESL, and training programs that are funded by foundations and government agencies to train homeless, justice-involved, foster youth, veterans, transgender, and low income, marginalized individuals for good union jobs with benefits, career pathways and worker voice.

YOUTH AND YOUNG WORKERS: *Breakout #3: Harnessing the Voices and Expertise of Young People*



Alexandra “Zandy” Wong (she/her/hers) is a senior at Johns Hopkins University studying public health. At Hopkins, her research focuses on exploring the intersection of public health and neuroscience to inform hearing healthcare policies. When she’s not in the lab, she can be found sharing her story of growing up with hearing loss on the TEDx stage, with podcasts, and on industry panels to encourage acceptance of those with disabilities. She is also involved with various disability advocacy projects. She is the founder of the NextGen Accessibility Initiative where she partners with Gen Z organizations to make their digital content fully accessible for disabled youth. Her work to improve digital accessibility within the NextGen Accessibility Initiative has reached over 200,000 youth in 119 countries. She also advises federal and

state policymakers on creating policies to help disabled youth transition into higher education and workplace environments as a member of the CAPE-Youth Working Group (Council of State Governments).

In 2022, the American Association for People with Disabilities awarded her the Heumann-Armstrong Award, recognizing her as one of the top 6 youth disability advocates nationally. Her story and advocacy efforts have also been featured in international news coverage from Teen Vogue and the Washington Post. In her free time, she enjoys running, composing piano music, and watching figure skating.



Pearl Matthews, a proud member of the Oglala and Hunkpapa Lakota Nations, is a skilled healthcare professional and dedicated community advocate. Raised in downtown Denver, Colorado, Pearl is an alumna of YouthBuild USA at Mile High Youth Corps, where she earned both her High School Equivalency Diploma and Certified Nurse Aide Certificate. This educational foundation enabled her to serve in a variety of healthcare roles across Colorado and New Mexico, as well as to contribute as a frontline first responder throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Witnessing the profound need for care within Native communities, Pearl became deeply passionate about making a difference.

Pearl has since taken her commitment to supporting Native communities even further by working with a variety of Native-serving non-profit and community organizations. She is currently taking a break from healthcare to work on the Administration and Operations team at First Nations Development Institute, a Native regranting non-profit organization.



Christian Sutton is a Public speaker, Artist, Servant-leader youth and community activist from Washington, DC. Christian is a graduate of the University Of The District Of Columbia earning his associates and bachelors degree. He is a new deal for youth change maker (ND4Y) and he also represents grassroot organizations such as Serve your city dc and One DC.



Ann Vadakkan is a native Austinite, and a senior at McNeil High School in Austin, Texas. She currently serves as the elected Member of the City of Austin's district 6 where she discusses with City representative to design solutions for her district.

She was appointed by the President of the National League of Cities to serve as one of the four youth delegates to serve on the Institute of Youth, Education, and Families. At NLC conferences that occur twice a year, she is responsible for planning youth workshops and noting concerns from the youth across the nation. At these conferences, Ann advocates not just for youth empowerment, but also for youth mental wellness, raising awareness to help reduce any stigma.

Ann is passionate about the nexus of business and public policy. She is the Vice President of the DECA District 5, where she oversees over 30 high school chapters and supervises community projects, chapter officers, and chapter advisors.

Ann participated in the German-American Sister Cities Youth Forum as a delegate and was published in the International Youth Service of Germany. This summer she will be leaving to Germany to connect with

students in Koblenz, Germany to discuss issues in the respective cities and exchanging interesting means of solving the issues as youth.

Ann is headed to the University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business. Ann's hobbies include traditional and modern dance, trying different cuisines, and spending time with her dog, Maya.



Dr. Stephanie McGencey is a results-driven manager and staunch advocate for children, youth, families, and communities. She is the Executive Director of the American Youth Policy Forum, a national, nonprofit organization that works to educate, engage, and inform policymakers and practitioners about education, youth, and workforce policies to improve the lives and outcomes of traditionally underserved youth.

She has over 26 years of progressive experience in public health (health education), community and organizational development, and program management. Her work with youth, women, community coalitions, and underserved populations on issues such as HIV/AIDS prevention, mental health, early childhood, youth development and substance abuse prevention has enabled her to develop a unique understanding of the types of supports needed to meet the needs of vulnerable children, youth, and families.

Dr. McGencey has served as Executive Director of Grantmakers for Children Youth and Families, Senior Director of Private Philanthropy at the Council on Foundations and, most recently, as the Senior Director of the Ready Reentry Project for the Convergence Center for Policy Resolution, an organization focused on solving social challenges through collaboration. She is also founder and president of the Women's Equity Center and Action Network.

During her career, Dr. McGencey served in senior -staff positions for two national membership associations providing membership support, training, technical assistance, research, and policy analysis support to their national networks. She has also worked in a local health department, community-based organizations, local government, and the private sector, yielding a unique perspective on how to build cross-sector collaborations that best leverage limited resources.

DATA: Breakout #3: Workforce Research on Equity, Job Quality, and the Future of Work



Kathleen Christensen, Ph.D., is a Faculty Fellow at Boston College's Center for Social Innovation. At the Center, she co-leads Work Equity, a major new initiative to address and mitigate the gender, racial, and stage-in-life inequities that are baked into the structure of work. She previously served as Program Director, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Contributing Research Scholar, Stanford University, and Professor of Psychology, Graduate Center, City University of New York.

She is a pioneering leader in research and policy on the changing workforce, including the work- family needs of the U.S. workforce. Over two decades with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, she led innovative and multidisciplinary

programs that inspired, accelerated, and produced lasting impact. Her expertise in working with academic, governmental, and business communities fostered innovation and built research capacity through programs and networks. Her accomplishments include the establishment of programs that were ahead of their times, focused on work-family, workplace flexibility, faculty career flexibility, aging and work, and the impacts of outsourcing on the U.S. workforce. As a Professor of Psychology, she conducted some of the earliest research in the 1990s on contingent work and home-based work, foreshadowing current interest in the gig economy and work from home (WFH).

Recognized for her expertise in job design, career flexibility, and caregiving, Dr. Christensen worked closely with the White House on its 2010 *Forum on Workplace Flexibility* and its 2014 *Summit on Working Families*. She has been recognized as one of the “Seven Wonders” of the work-life field and selected by her peers as one of the 10 Extraordinary Contributors to Work-Family Research. The Work Family Researchers Network (WFRN) has endowed a dissertation fellowship in her name. Her academic honors include Danforth, Mellon, and National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships. Dr. Christensen is the author/editor of seven books and a number of articles.

Dr. Christensen received her Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University in geography and philosophy of science and her B.S., summa cum laude, from the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay in urban studies and psychology.



Greg Wright is a Fellow at Brookings in the Global Economy and Development Program where he leads the Workforce of the Future initiative. The initiative produces [analysis](#) and [data-driven tools](#) to help steer local economic development policy toward strategies that increase the quality of jobs and promote career pathways out of low-wage work. Wright is also an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of California, Merced.

His academic work has appeared in top Economics journals and is focused on the labor market impacts of globalization, immigration, and technological change. Recent papers have estimated the impact of offshoring and immigration on U.S. jobs, the impact of investments in Information and Communications Technologies on wage inequality, and the historical impact of globalization on labor markets. He has also written for a wide range of media outlets.

Wright has a B.A. in Astrophysics from UC Berkeley and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics from UC Davis.

Breakout Sessions: 11:30–12:30

INFRASTRUCTURE: *Breakout #4: Strategic State Planning*



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.



Cami Feek was appointed commissioner for the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) by Gov. Jay Inslee in June 2021. Prior to that, she served as ESD’s acting commissioner, deputy commissioner and chief operating officer. Cami originally joined the agency in 2017 to design and stand up the nation’s best Paid Family and Medical Leave program. Prior to coming to ESD, Cami worked at the Department of Financial Institutions, General Administration (now Department of Enterprise Services), Washington State Patrol and the Attorney General’s Office. She got her start in state government 25 years ago in a non-permanent role in a mail room. She rose to executive leadership through hard work, dedication to public service and living her values of teamwork and servant leadership. Cami fosters diversity, equity

and inclusion in the workplace and founded the first LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group at ESD. This resulted in the agency earning the Outstanding Agency Award from the Rainbow and Inclusion Network, the state’s LGBTQ+ and ally Business Resource Group. Cami has a Bachelor of Arts in business and public administration from The Evergreen State College, where she also earned a four-year varsity letter in soccer. She lives in Tumwater with her husband and son, while her daughter is completing her masters at UNC.

SECTOR: Breakout Session #4: Sector Strategies in the Care Economy



Randi Wolfe, Ph.D., is the Founder and Executive Director of Early Care and Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS), a California-based organization nationally recognized as a trailblazer in designing and expanding Registered Apprenticeships for the ECE industry. Dr. Wolfe has worked in ECE for more than 40 years, including 10 years as a tenured professor of Early Childhood Education at Northern Illinois University. Since moving to California in 2007, her work has focused on large-scale ECE workforce development initiatives, engaging diverse stakeholder groups, and advancing systemic efforts to strengthen the impact of early learning and care. Under Dr. Wolfe’s leadership, ECEPTS has registered and administered apprenticeships for new and incumbent childcare center workers, HEAD START teachers, family childcare providers, home visitors, expanded learning program leaders, and high school youth. As a Sector Intermediary, ECEPTS currently supports the development, implementation, and sustainability of 15 RAP partnerships in nine counties, in collaboration with 35 employers and 13 community colleges, and engaging over 325 active apprentices. Dr. Wolfe is an appointed member of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship. She has an Ed.M. in Instructional Leadership from the University of Illinois-Chicago, and a Ph.D. in Human Development and Social Policy from Northwestern University.



Daniel Bustillo is Deputy Executive Director of the 1199SEIU Training and Employment Funds (TEF), a labor-management organization that provides training, job placement, and quality improvement programs to over 700 healthcare employers and 275,000 workers in New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maryland, Washington, DC, and Florida.

Prior to joining TEF, Daniel was Executive Director of the Healthcare Career Advancement Program (H-CAP), a national organization of SEIU union locals and healthcare employers who are partnering in support of developing quality healthcare career education models for high road jobs that increase equity in the healthcare workforce. During his time at H-CAP, Daniel led a number of policy and programmatic initiatives designed to support healthcare workers and caregivers, such as the Center for Advancing Racial Equity and Job Quality in Long-Term Care (Center for Equity) and the National Center for Healthcare Apprenticeships (NCHA).

Daniel presently serves as a member of the US Department of Labor’s Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (ACA), the Board of Directors for the National Skills Coalition and was a 2022-23 Aspen Institute Job Quality Fellow.



Danielle Copeland is the Interim Executive Director of the Healthcare Career Advancement Program (H-CAP). For over 20 years, Danielle has been instrumental in working with unions, labor-management partnerships and nonprofits with strategic planning and organization and program development. With a background in adult education, curriculum development, and facilitation, Danielle has been able to build and execute programs that support racial justice as well as workforce and skill development.

Before joining H-CAP, Danielle was the Director of Leadership Empowerment and Workforce Development for SEIU (Service Employees International Union) Local 2015, representing 400,000 long-term care workers in the state of California. Ms. Copeland led the local's Leadership Empowerment System that is grounded in a culture of learning for the members and staff that develop talent and leaders. In addition, she drove the local's vision to provide access to workplace skill trainings and career pathway opportunities.

Danielle has supported local programs and organizations across the country, working with diverse organizations to identify creative strategies on organizational and program development service to build capacity in the healthcare sector.

She has been a board member of the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board, Maryland Association of Adult Community and Continuing Education, Board of Directors for the Maryland Workforce Corporation, and SEIU Local 2015 Long Term Care Workers Education and Training Trust Fund.



Laura Hopkins became the SEIU 1199 NW Multi Employer & Education Fund's (Training Fund) executive director in August of 2018. The Training Fund is the sponsor of the Health Care Apprentices Consortium (HCAC). Before coming to the Training Fund, she held the position of Vice President of Instruction at South Seattle College. She brought to the Training Fund with a wealth of experience, sound knowledge of the community college system, and expertise in apprenticeships with unions and management. Before transitioning to a career in education, she worked in aerospace mechanics and manufacturing. She founded and was the Executive Director of the Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC) for 5 years. She has a Master's degree in Applied Behavioral Science.

Laura is recognized for her visionary leadership and strategic business development. She is also a respected leader – Laura is known as a skillful change agent with a remarkable record of bringing groups of diverse peoples together to achieve meaningful goals.

As part of her career, Laura has received many distinguished honors and awards. In 2012, Laura received the 21ST CENTURY APPRENTICESHIP TRAILBLAZER AND INNOVATOR AWARD from the US Department of Labor for demonstrating innovation and pioneering efforts resulting in positive impacts on U.S. apprenticeship. Also in 2012, she received the WOMEN OF VALOR AWARD from US Senator Cantwell. This was presented to her in honor of women who have dedicated their lives to investing in jobs in Washington State.

When she isn't innovating professionally, Laura can be found spending time with her family in their West Seattle home, doing outdoor adventures and making time to travel when possible.



Teresa Collins is a highly accomplished and respected executive in the field of workforce development and education. With more than 30 years of experience in the industry, she currently serves as the Executive Director of the District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, a leading workforce development organization that provides resources and training to healthcare and early childhood education workers in the Philadelphia area.

Prior to her current role, Teresa held various leadership positions in the early childhood education sector. In addition, she served as a National Consultant for Child Welfare and Early Care and Education, where she identified and acquired diverse funding opportunities for a variety of education programs including health and safety, school readiness, human resources, and family services. She also worked as a Consultant for the Juvenile Justice Center of Philadelphia to provide clinical supervision and coaching, launched initiatives to achieve state-wide compliance measures, and successfully partnered with DHS to produce positive outcomes for families and children in the child welfare system.

Teresa holds a M.S. from Clayton College of Natural Health and a B.S. in Individual and Family Studies, Infancy and Early Childhood Development from The Pennsylvania State University. She also professionally certified with many healthcare and early childhood education organizations.

Throughout her career, Teresa has been a champion for workforce development and early childhood education. She has collaborated with community organizations, government agencies, and employers to create innovative training programs that meet the needs of workers and employers alike. As the Executive Director of the District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, Teresa continues to lead the organization in its mission to provide high-quality training to healthcare and early childcare education workers, improve the quality of care, and strengthen the workforce in the Philadelphia area.

YOUTH AND YOUNG WORKERS: *Breakout #4: Mental Health and Trauma Informed Care for Youth and Youth Serving Professionals*



Ericka Page is a compassionate and results-focused youth development practitioner with over 20 years of experience in workforce development. She has a proven track record of fertilizing meaningful partnerships between government, non-profit and corporate entities. Ericka currently serves as the Director of Youth Services for Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation, which is the administrative and fiduciary entity that provides public workforce services for the City of Detroit. Her passion is infusing healing-centered restorative practices into the work she leads. Most recently, Ms. Page has worked to develop a sustainable system of pathways into postsecondary credentials and careers for Opportunity Youth.



Fayette M. Blake is the founder and Executive Director of Pathways to Success, Inc. She is also an entrepreneur with several businesses throughout Delaware and Maryland. Fay started her career about forty years ago in the Lending industry with Security Pacific National Bank where she worked as a loan officer for five years. She then enjoyed a 20-year banking career at All First Financial. Fay held various positions of increasing authority at All First Financial. In 1995, she was appointed as Sr. Vice President of Operations and was the first African American to be appointed to that level in the bank's 200-year history. During that time, she had global oversight of all Operations units in the Mid-Atlantic region. In 1998, Fay was recognized by this banking institution for Quality Assurance as well as being recognized in the industry by Visa USA for Quality Service and Outstanding Customer Service.

Pathways to Success, Inc. was established in 2006 by Fay Blake. The work that Fay does as the Executive Director is indeed her calling and passion. It embodies her need to give back to the community.

In 2015 she was recognized for her efforts to aid and assist the underserved communities throughout Sussex County with the Jefferson Award, and in 2018 she was one of Delaware Today's top Women in Business. In 2020, Fay was inducted into the Delaware Women's Hall of Fame and the Indian River Hall of Fame. In 2021, she became an appointed member of the Public/Private Partnership Board of Directors to serve at the pleasure of the Governor. She is a board member for Lewes Historical Society, a member of the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice and the DTCC Development Council. She is also a Chairperson of the DANA Public Policy Board as well as a Fund for Women Founder. She was recently appointed as Chairperson of EARNs (Expanding, Access for Retirement and Necessary Saving) Board.

She holds a BS degree in Behavioral Science proudly from Wilmington University where she is a member of Phi Gamma Mu, International Honor Society for Social Sciences. Fay is also a wife, a mother and grandmother.



Kristen M. Patterson, MBA, GCDF is a graduate from University of North Carolina-Greensboro, where she obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and the University of Maryland University College with a Master's in Business Administration. The majority of her professional career has been centered around workforce development and positive youth development. Kristen has worked alongside a diverse population of individuals with barriers to employment to obtain their GED's, enroll in Post-Secondary education, and obtain employment. She truly believes that assisting individuals to improve their essential skills, technical skills, occupational skills, or basic skills is an opportunity to make a generational impact. These beliefs have been cultivated throughout her career whether assisting individuals experiencing homelessness in

Washington DC to move into housing and obtain employment, during her time as a WIA/WIOA Title 1 Youth Provider and have carried on to current position at the Maryland Department of Labor where she is the State Coordinator for Disability and Youth Services. This position allows Kristen to provide oversight, training, and technical assistance to the Local Areas as they implement WIOA Youth Services and ensures that individuals with disabilities have access to the services provided.



Gerrie Cotter manages the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Office of Workforce Development which integrates Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding. CCMEP serves opportunity youth, ages 14-24 by providing employment, education, and wrap-around supportive services to help youth enter an in-demand career and achieve self-sufficiency.

During Cotter's 13-year career with ODJFS, she developed policy as the former Director of Policy, Strategy and Performance in the Director's Office and managed OhioMeansJobs.com projects with the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Higher Education as well as

Cotter has her B.A. in International Studies and French from West Virginia University as well as her J.D. from Loyola University, New Orleans.

DATA: Breakout #4: Data Quality Campaign: Leveraging Data Systems for Education and Workforce Pathways



Kate Tromble leads the work of the Data Champions Collaborative for DQC, reaching out and listening to state and national organizations who understand the role high-quality, accurate, secure and timely state data systems play in resolving the most pressing problems facing students, families, and communities today. She guides the Collaborative in developing a shared vision for how federal policy can promote improved data systems in a manner that supports innovative work in states that improves students' educational and career pathways. Prior to joining DQC, Kate was Vice President of The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) and Vice President for Federal Policy at Results for America where her work focused on supporting governments at all levels in using evidence and data to advance economic mobility. Before Results

for America, Kate served as the pastoral associate for social justice at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Washington, DC, and the Director of Legislative Affairs at the Education Trust. Before Ed Trust, Kate practiced law at Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP and Williams & Connolly. She also served as Legislative Counsel to Senator Paul S. Sarbanes (D-MD) and as Legislative and Policy Advisory to Maryland Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend.

Kate holds a juris doctor from Vanderbilt Law School and a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University.



Dr. Kate Shirley Akers joined the State System in January of 2019 as the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Advanced Data Analytics. In this role, she serves as an advisor to the Chancellor and oversees the work of the Advanced Data Analytics Shared Service team. She and her team work closely with university staff and faculty to collect accurate, timely data and create actionable research and reports for the System.

Prior to joining the State System, Dr. Akers led the work of the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYStats), Kentucky’s comprehensive, centralized, longitudinal data system. KYStats is responsible for producing meaningful, actionable statistics on Kentucky’s education and workforce system. She received national recognition as an education data strategist and thought leader in the areas of longitudinal data and data governance.

Dr. Akers began her postsecondary experience at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky where she earned a BA in Mathematics. Discovering her passion for institution and education research, she then pursued a MEd in Higher Education and a graduate certificate in college teaching and learning from the University of Kentucky. She received her PhD in educational policy studies and evaluation with an emphasis in quantitative research methods, measurement, and evaluation from the University of Kentucky.



Nick Moore serves as the director of the Governor’s Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) under the leadership of Alabama Governor Kay Ivey. Moore is focused on aligning Alabama’s education and workforce programs, implementing Alabama’s state longitudinal database system, establishing Alabama’s non-degree credential quality and transparency system, and curating a competency-based education and skills-based hiring system in Alabama. Under Nick’s leadership, the GOEWT is working to establish a learning and employment record, a skills-based job description generator, and a human-centered public workforce system designed to assist Alabamians with overcoming benefits cliffs and other barriers to entering the workforce.

Moore is a native of Enterprise, Alabama. He served as a Teach for America corps member in Lowndes County, Alabama where he had the privilege of teaching secondary social studies, government, and economics at Central High School. After completing his tenure in Lowndes County, Nick received a Teach for America Capitol Hill Fellowship. During and after his fellowship, he covered education, health care, and workforce development in the Office of Representative Martha Roby (AL-02). Nick later served as Senator Luther Strange’s Legislative Assistant for healthcare, education, and labor. Nick and his wife, Emily, live in Montgomery, Alabama.



Mary Ann Bates is Executive Director of the State of California’s new Cradle-to-Career Data System. This statewide data system will provide tools to help students reach their goals and deliver information on education and workforce outcomes. Its vision is to foster evidence-based decision-making to help Californians build more equitable futures and empower individuals to reach their full potential.

Mary Ann recently served as a senior fellow at the White House Office of Management and Budget, where she supported efforts to advance evidence-based policy and learning agendas that identify priority research questions. Prior to that she was the Executive Director of J-PAL North America at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which aims to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. She began her life in Ohio’s Amish community and started her college experience via dual enrollment at Kent State University Tuscarawas. She holds a Master of Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley.

Workshops: 3:00–5:00

YOUTH AND YOUNG WORKERS WORKSHOP: Implementing Practices, Tools, and Resources to Create a No-Wrong-Door System for Youth

No Wrong Door Models

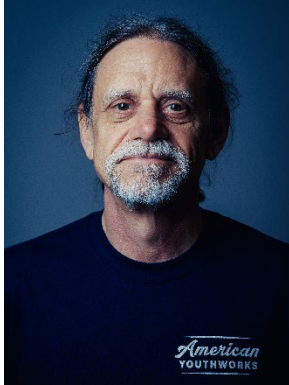


Tim Probst is the Grants Director for the Washington States Employment Security Department, co-chairs Governor Jay Inslee’s Poverty Reduction Work Group, and is the author of *Joe Lake Journal: A Better America After the Corona Crisis*, available on Amazon. Previously, Tim served as the Governor’s advisor for welfare reform and workforce development in Illinois, CEO of Washington State’s workforce association, a state legislator in the Washington State House of Representatives, and Vice-chair of Appropriations for Education in the State House.

Tim is the designer and prime sponsor of the Washington State Opportunity Scholarships Act, which is the nation’s largest public-private college scholarship for low- and middle-income families. It has provided \$128 million in scholarships to 14,000 students; 70% are students of color, 57% are women, and 67% are first-generation college students.

Having spent two years studying the politics and economics of the European Union in Innsbruck, Austria, Tim enjoys working at the intersection of economics, workforce development, education, and social services. Working closely with local workforce boards, people experiencing poverty, and the Governor’s office, his team designed Economic Security for All, which uses federal WIOA funding in a new way to create a more comprehensive and equitable poverty reduction model.

Tim and his wife Tahira have four children and enjoy hiking, skiing, camping, and traveling.



David Clauss, LMSW, has worked with American YouthWorks for over 25 years and is currently the Workforce Development Director, managing AYW's YouthBuild and pre-apprenticeship Programs. Before becoming Director, David worked as a YouthBuild Counselor and Case Manager for over 12 years, has been honored by YouthBuild USA as both a Counseling and Directors Fellow, and is a recipient of the YouthBuild USA Innovator of the Year award and the President's Award for Support of Young Leaders. He was named a 2011 Workforce Champion by Workforce Solutions Capitol Area Workforce Board and served on the review panel for the Department of Labor's randomized-control study of YouthBuild programs. Since the mid-90's, when both YouthBuild and AmeriCorps became federal programs, David has worked to integrate National Service and Workforce Development into mutually reinforcing systems that work to benefit communities, where participants are learning new skills, practicing them through helping others, and preparing to meet critical labor market needs. As a consultant he has led trainings on experiential learning, working with adjudicated youth, and assisted with staff training and program design for new YouthBuild grantees.



As Chief Operations Officer for the Spokane Workforce Council (local workforce board), **Dawn Karber** is responsible for guiding teams and strategies to best position the organization to receive funding to be deployed in support of economic mobility and career advancement. She teaches teams how to use human-centered design principles to create offerings that work for those being served, leverages Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding with other public and private investments to expand the breadth of services typically available through a local public workforce system, and she is passionate about advancing public service systems and processes with a focus on equity. She serves as Equal Opportunity Officer as well as the all-around cheerleader for those serving customers at the region's American Job Center, youth employment and education center, social services one-stop and 20 affiliated sites. She has been in the workforce development industry and public service for 21 years and has held positions ranging from job coach ,while supporting individuals with disabilities, to creating a mentoring program for children of incarcerated parents. Most recently, she was part of team that created the WorkforceNerd podcast where she is still learning how to host but proudly uses the medium to promote topics like childcare accessibility, aligning public health and workforce development, and career attainment and advancement strategies. She has a graduate degree in public administration, is certified in and teaches Human-Centered Design principles and was a Marano Fellow at the Aspen Institute.



Jason Perkins-Cohen was appointed Deputy Secretary of the Department of Labor in March 2023. The Department supports the economic stability of the state by providing businesses, the workforce and the public with high-quality customer-focused employment and training services. MD DOL promotes economic growth through collaborative, comprehensive programs that best ensure Maryland workers have the skills Maryland employers need to succeed and grow into the future.

Prior to joining the state, Jason was the Director of the Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) leading the implementation of workforce development initiatives responsive to the needs of Baltimore's businesses, citizens and youth. During his tenure at MOED, Jason led the agency to help over 30,000 adults secure a job and expanded the city's summer jobs program by over 60% to become one of the largest and most successful in the country. Jason developed several, highly acclaimed city-wide job training strategies including One Baltimore for Jobs, Grads2Careers, and Train Up helping thousands of residents obtain the skills they need to advance to a high wage career. Determined to expand access to neighborhoods that have been historically disconnected, he launched Community Job Hubs in partnership with trusted neighborhood nonprofits and rolled out Mobile Navigators program to meet residents literally "where they are." Jason developed multiple transitional jobs programs including Baltimore Health Corps, Hire Up, and Clean Corps that created paid public service jobs for residents while they received additional assistance to determine their chosen career path. He created the framework for a coordinated workforce system that has included making the largest public workforce investment in the city's history in industry-led partnership as well as in legal, behavioral health and financial empowerment services.

Prior to joining MOED, Jason was the Executive Director for the Job Opportunities Task Force, a nonprofit workforce intermediary. At JOTF Jason developed and assisted in the creation of a wide range of workforce programs both sector specific and targeted to those that have barriers to employment. Previously, Jason managed the Welfare-to-Work program for the city of Washington DC where he designed the TANF Employment Program that helped several thousand residents leave welfare for work. Jason also served as a lead analyst on employment issues for the US Department of Health and Human Services during the development and early implementation of the 1996 Federal Welfare Reform law. Jason was awarded an Atlantic Fellowship by the British Council in 2001.

Jason has served on the state's Unemployment Insurance Task Force, its Task Force on Prisoner Reentry and the Maryland Adult Literacy Advisory Council. He also served as a trustee for the Baltimore City Community College and as a Board member for the US Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council, the Maryland Workforce Alliance and the Baltimore Civic Fund.

Jason holds a Bachelor's degree from Washington University in St. Louis and a Master's degree in Policy Analysis from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He lives in Baltimore city with his wife and two children.

Job and Work Experience Quality



Sara Hastings is a Unit Chief in the Division of Youth Services at the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA). In her role, Sara oversees the development and delivery of policy guidance and technical assistance of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program aimed at improving the performance of the nation’s youth workforce system. Prior to joining DOLETA, Sara worked at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) focusing on youth workforce development, education and community collaboration. She has also worked as a practitioner in numerous social service agencies supporting homeless and low-income children and families. She holds Masters Degrees in Social Work (MSW) and Public Policy (MPP) from the University of Minnesota.



Monica Mean, PhD, is a Senior Evaluation Specialist at the U.S. Department of Labor’s Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) where she manages research and evaluation efforts in employment and training, including programs through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), apprenticeships, career navigation, and workforce development programs in community colleges and the reentry space. She has expertise in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research in workforce development and policies that affect the intersection between education, training, and employment. Prior to joining CEO, Dr. Mean was an education research analyst in the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) where she helped shape the research and evaluation priorities for career and technical education and adult education. She served as the OCTAE liaison for the Career and Technical Education Research Network and provided guidance on evaluations of adult education models under WIOA. Dr. Mean received her PhD in public policy from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.



Rukku Singla is a Policy Advisor for the Good Jobs Initiative, in the Department of Labor’s Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy. Previously, Rukku was the head of policy for Douglas Emhoff, Second Gentleman of the United States. Before that, she was the Special Assistant to Chair Catherine E. Lhamon at the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Prior to joining the Commission, Rukku served as Associate Counsel for Presidential Personnel at the Obama White House and was an Associate Attorney at Jenner & Block LLP. Rukku clerked for the Hon. Andre Davis of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and the Hon. James G. Carr of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio. She earned her J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School and her B.A. from The Ohio State University.



Deena Schwartz is a Senior Associate at Abt with over 15 years of experience evaluating programs related to family self-sufficiency and economic well-being. She has expertise in sectoral employment strategies and career pathways programs, having directed the Department of Labor’s Career Pathways Design Study and Descriptive and Analytical Career Pathways Project. The latter included a meta-analysis of career pathways evaluations and an analysis of workers’ real-world career trajectories over ten years. Ms. Schwartz authored or coauthored numerous publications related to that work, including *A Meta-Analysis of 46 Career Pathways Impact Evaluations*, *New Insights on Career Pathways: Evidence from a Meta-Analysis*, *Building Better Pathways: An Analysis of Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions*, and *Wage Growth Disparities by Gender and Race/Ethnicity Among Entrants to Mid-Level Occupations*. Ms. Schwartz also holds key research roles on evaluations of programs that integrate employment services and services for substance use disorder, evaluations of coaching interventions and a study of racial bias in employment processes. She holds a masters degree in public administrations from New York University’s Wagner School of Public Service.

Apprenticeship



Zach Boren is a senior policy program manager in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, where he leads various apprenticeship-focused projects, including youth apprenticeship, and is a technical expert on registered apprenticeship and equal employment opportunity. Before working at Urban, Boren spent 11 years with the US Department of Labor, where he was the director of registered apprenticeship and policy.

Boren worked with US Coast Guard on congressional affairs and on Capitol Hill. Boren was selected by the Aspen Institute as a Marano Fellow, participating in the Sector Skills Academy. Boren received a bachelor’s in public affairs from Indiana University and a master’s in congressional and presidential studies from the Catholic University of America.



Bridget Brown serves as ICF’s Director of Workforce Innovations and has over 30 years of experience in workforce development, specializing in work-based learning, apprenticeships, and ensuring equity and access for underserved populations in workforce and economic development efforts.

Prior to ICF, Bridget was the Executive Director of the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals, served as the National Skill Standards Board’s Director of Program Development at the U.S. Department of Labor and was the co-director of the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council. She has served on several advisory boards related to improving employment outcomes and ensuring equity for individuals in non-traditional occupations.



John Shortt is the Senior Director, Apprenticeship and Career Development with net.America. In this role he is responsible for the implementation of the DOL Office of Apprenticeship Youth Apprenticeship Intermediary contract and serves as a subject matter expert for all net.America apprenticeship programs. A passionate advocate for apprenticeship and workforce development, he completed an electrical apprenticeship, spent several years in Djibouti, East Africa teaching Ethiopian refugees and Djiboutian nationals an electrical training program as a volunteer for the Irish government. He has thirty years' experience in the workforce development industry. John submitted standards of apprenticeship to US DOL and State Apprenticeship Agencies on behalf of homebuilders and the hospitality sector, developed registered apprenticeship programs with employers and managed federal, state and foundation grants and contracts to support pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs among others. John also spearheaded the development of online testing for residential construction trades with NOCTI. Candidates are assessed at the entry, semi-professional and professional levels. He graduated from Salisbury University, magna cum laude, majoring in Political Science. In his spare time, he can be found chasing and hitting a little ball with implements ill designed for the purpose across the countryside in Virginia.



Jonathan Payne is a Director at Jobs for the Future. His work focuses on youth apprenticeship and educator apprenticeship. His youth apprenticeship duties include collaborating with community partners to connect education to industry and create talent development solutions that help young people develop skills that are in demand in the labor market. His work in educator apprenticeship is helping to address K-12 teacher and paraprofessional shortage and diversity issues through Registered Apprenticeship. Jonathan has designed and conducted two return on investment studies of Registered Apprenticeships sponsors. He is also one of the authors and a subject matter expert for JFF's Possible Futures project, a middle-grades STEM career awareness and exploration program designed to help young people explore their postsecondary options.

Before joining JFF, Jonathan served as a public educator. Most recently, he was a technology integrator at a high school in Maine. In that role, he helped integrate technology into daily classroom instruction and student assessments. He also supported the district's deployment of Chromebooks to students, facilitated the creation of the district's K-6 technology scope and sequence, and coordinated technology professional development programs for district staff. Jonathan also served as a science teacher and helped create a STEM diploma endorsement while working in that role.

Additionally, he has been an enthusiastic educational activist, participating in local, state, and national educational policy discussions as a union president and elected union leader at the state and national levels. Before entering education, he was an apprentice preservation and restoration carpenter and a field biologist.

Jonathan has a PhD in public policy with a concentration in educational leadership and a master's degree in teaching and learning from the University of Southern Maine. He also holds a bachelor's degree in marine and freshwater biology from the University of New Hampshire.

Supportive Services and Programs



Dr. Amethyste Sanchez has vast experience with programmatic oversight while working within DOL ETA's Job Corps Program as well as the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. She has extensive knowledge of contracts including developing plans to review systems or programs, performing on site monitoring and evaluation, and supporting monitoring via the use of data analysis. Throughout her career, Dr. Sanchez has worked with numerous grant stakeholders including Workforce Development Boards and Career Centers for numerous veteran programs. She also brings a strong knowledge reviewing financial aspects of programs. Dr. Sanchez has a background in education as a teacher and is a proud combat veteran of the United States Army.



Jeff Hunt is the YouthBuild Program Director at the US Department of Labor, where he works in the Division of Youth Services within the Employment and Training Administration. YouthBuild is a community-based pre-apprenticeship program that provides job training and education for opportunity youth ages 16-24 who have previously dropped out of high school. Jeff and his team collaborate with other DOL offices throughout the country, overseeing the annual competition for YouthBuild grants (\$93m awarded in April 2023), providing training and technical assistance to grantee staff, and assessing data to inform and adjust program planning. YouthBuild serves more than 5,000 youth in approximately 200 YouthBuild programs in more than 40 states.

Prior to joining DOL in 2015, Jeff spent eight years teaching at a large public high school in Nashville, TN, which sparked his passion for equitable access to opportunity.



Kaitlyn Jones is a Social Science Analyst in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) Office of Human Services Policy. Her portfolio includes policy analysis, research, and related support on youth employment, opportunity youth, youth and family homelessness, LGBTQ+ youth, and the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP) which operates [Youth.gov](https://www.youth.gov) and [Youth Engaged 4 Change \(YE4C\)](https://www.youth.gov/youth-engaged-4-change). As a Bloomberg Fellow, she earned a Master of Public Health with a concentration in Risks to Adolescent Health and a Certificate in Maternal and Child Health from Johns Hopkins University. Earlier in her career, she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Botswana and completed her B.S. in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Wisconsin.



Maria-Lana Queen has served as a proud and passionate staff member for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for 33 years, advocating for the well-being of young people living in poverty. In her current role, she is a Public Housing Program Manager in the Office of Public and Indian Housing. She is responsible for managing priority programs and initiatives that enable low-income families to achieve their economic mobility goals with high concentration employment, education, wealth building, and health. She also serves as the HUD Liaison for federal and non-profit interagency youth initiatives, collaborating with several entities to support the needs of low-income young people. Additional work includes leading the *HUD Strong Families Initiative*, providing the nation's 3000+ Public Housing Authorities

with equitable access to resources that support the needs of all families living in public housing. Her HUD career accomplishments have earned her the HUD Secretary's Distinguished Service Award for excellence in supporting the improvement of educational outcomes for low-income young people.



Jennifer Thomas joined the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at the U.S. Department of Labor as a policy advisor in August 2019. Jennifer works with partners at the local, state, and federal levels to develop policies that promote the employment of youth with disabilities. She manages Federal Partners in Transition and leads the youth development and leadership strand of work for the Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth, ODEP's youth policy development center.



Kirk A. Lew is the Director of Youth Initiatives for the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. Kirk currently oversees investments intended to research, evaluate, implement, and test initiatives that will improve the employment outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities. Kirk currently leads five policy advisors with concentrations in workforce development, career pathways, youth, and family engagement, education, and systems coordination. Kirk participates in several workforce-related policy initiatives that involve key federal partners and national organizations like the Federal Partners in Transition working group. Before coming to ODEP, Kirk has had the privilege of providing case management, job coaching, and mentoring services to New Jersey-based youth and adults

transitioning from education and training programs to competitive integrated employment settings. Kirk has worked with various youth populations since starting his professional career as a residential counselor at NJ's Edison Job Corps center. Kirk has managed a supported employment vendor, created several school transition-related programs and transitioned young adults out of foster care services. Most recently, Kirk served as a policy advisor for the State of New Jersey's State Workforce Development

Board. Kirk concentrated on the policy development and system collaboration around employment topics on youth, disability, and adult literacy.



Andrea Bizzell is a policy analyst with the Department of Labor. She is a member of the Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) unit of the Office of Workforce Investment – Division of Youth Services. The REO unit affords grant-funded opportunities for projects assisting justice-involved adults and young adults, ages 18-24 years old. She provides technical assistance, guidance and policies for youth development and employment programs. Prior to coming to DOL, she was employed by the District of Columbia where she served as a center manager operating a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) American Job Center. She worked in local government for nine years while in California, serving the last four years as a program manager in the employment services division. Ms. Bizzell has many years of experience working with non-profit organizations that serve adults, youth and the reentry community.



Ga (Amy) Kim is the Community Outreach & Resource Planning Specialist (CORPS) for the Baltimore District Office of the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division. The Baltimore District Office covers approximately 5.5 million workers and encompasses 21 counties in Maryland, 14 counties in northern Virginia, and Washington, DC. While the district responds to many actionable complaints, especially in the government contract program areas and the home care and food services industries, agency also focus on reaching the most underserved populations through strategic enforcement initiatives and outreach activities.

As Community Outreach Specialist, she is committed to have herself available to the employer and employee advocacy groups, students, community organizations, and government agencies, to promote and provide education and assistant with the various law under the department’s purview. The Wage and Hour (WHD) enforces and administers federal minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and child labor requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Additionally, WHD administers and enforces the prevailing wage requirements of the Davis Bacon Act (DBA) and the Service Contract Act (SCA), the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA), the Employee Polygraph Protection Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), wage garnishment provisions of the Consumer Credit Protection Act, and a number of employment standards and worker protections as provided in several immigration related statutes.

Prior to her role as a CORPS, Ms. Kim’s primary role was that of a Wage and Hour Investigator. As a Wage & Hour Investigator, she conducted numerous compliance checks, enforcing the federal labor standards.

SECTOR: *Workshop: Ideas into Action – Putting it all Together to Further Refine Your Own Sector Initiatives*



Jennifer Pirtle is a principal technical assistance consultant at AIR with 25 years of experience in the workforce and economic development field. She serves as project director for several projects in AIR's Workforce Development Program and Policy Division, including the U.S. Department of Labor's Competency Model TA initiative and the H-1B One Workforce and Rural Healthcare Grant TA as well as managing AIR's PROMISE Center.

Jen has extensive experience in the workforce development system working with workforce development policy, economic development, labor market information, electronic tools, state plans, sector strategies, business engagement, reemployment, integrated service delivery, work-based learning, and human-centered design. She has experience working with the public workforce system in developing and implementing evidence-based service delivery interventions. She has been involved in the Workforce Development System since 1996, first taking unemployment claims and then serving as a labor economist for the State of Idaho. She previously served as Boise City's economic development director and served several roles at the U.S. Department of Labor, including as older worker unit chief in the Employment and Training Administration's Office of Workforce Investment. Jen has an MBA from Boise State University and a BA in Economics and Business Administration from the College of Idaho.



Matt Grattan is a seasoned economic and workforce development professional with over 30 years of experience in all aspects of the intersection of these critical disciplines. He currently serves as Plug Power's Workforce Development Manager where he leads the workforce development policy and strategy development for the world's leading provider of turn-key hydrogen energy solutions. In this capacity he works with executive leadership to cultivate and advance a talent development agenda across Plug's ever-expanding applications, products, and solutions portfolio to continue to build out the green hydrogen ecosystem.

Prior to his position at Plug Power, Matt has led policy guidance, business development and technology integration within the workforce development system throughout New York State and within NY's Capital Region. His public sector experience includes 19 years with the New York State Department of Labor in a variety of business development and policy roles in addition to 11 years in higher education administration within the State University of New York (SUNY) system at SUNY Schenectady County Community College and the University at Albany. It is his diverse experience and mixture of public and private sector workforce development strategic planning and analysis, that makes him a thought leader in the field.

Matt currently serves on several boards and leadership roles including the co-chair of the Workforce Development workgroup for the Capital Region Economic Development Council, Board Member of the Capital Region Workforce Development Board, Secretary/Treasurer of the Capital Region Chamber Foundation Board, the leadership team of the Capital Region STEM Hub Alliance and member of SUNY

Schenectady's Workforce Development Advisory Board. He holds an A.A.S. degree in Business Administration from Hudson Valley Community College and a B.S. degree in Business Administration from the College of St. Rose.



Mr. Mike Russo is the President and CEO of the National Institute for Innovation and Technology (“NIIT”), a 501c3 with a mission, which is to identify risks to innovation in strategic industry sectors and ensure they are eliminated. Under his leadership, the NIIT is responsible for executing the strategy to develop the nation’s talent pipeline for tech-based industries and advanced manufacturing with a major focus on the semiconductor sector and nanotechnology related industries.

Prior to the NIIT, Mr. Russo served for more than a decade in senior leadership positions in the semiconductor industry in policy development, government affairs and the development and execution of strategies to support infrastructure and workforce development.

Mr. Russo has also served as a private sector advisor to the U.S. government in the areas of manufacturing and industrial base policy, and lead the private sector advisory group for the National Network of Manufacturing Innovation Institute (now Manufacturing USA) under the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (AMP). Mr. Russo has also served as a senior staffer in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

With more than 3 decades experience in manufacturing, Mr. Russo is a subject matter expert in skills-based learning and has extensive experience in workforce and organizational development, supply chain innovation and security, and infrastructure development.



Robert Weinman is the Director of Workforce Innovation at the National Institute for Innovation and Technology, where he is responsible for program development intended to grow the nation’s talent pipeline for strategic industry sectors. A subject matter expert in the development and deployment of industry training programs and competency-based learning, Robert is a principal in the development of the NIIT’s National Talent Hub, a portal to connect talent with careers and education programs aligned with job competency requirements.

Robert has over 20 years of experience in technical workforce development with a specific focus in developing technicians for Advanced Manufacturing and the Electronics Design and Manufacturing Sector. He has worked for community colleges, universities, and industry employers, giving him the unique experience to fully understand how each entity operates internally and where are the best opportunities to facilitate a stronger intersection between employers, talent, and academia.

An innovator in workforce development programs, strategies, and enterprise level software platforms, Robert also has experience in grant writing, project management, instructional design, instruction for both technical and leadership development, collaboration and partnerships, and competency-based skills gap assessment and analysis.

Robert has served as a certified instructor and coordinator for the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council Certified Production Technician program and is a Certified Coach with the International Coaching Federation (ICF).



Clayton Nagel is the Deputy Director Technical Training for GLOBALFOUNDRIES. GF is one of the world’s leading semiconductor manufacturers and the only one with a truly global footprint. GF is redefining innovation and semiconductor manufacturing by developing feature-rich process technology solutions that provide leadership performance in pervasive high growth markets. Clayton has been with GLOBALFOUNDRIES since 2012. He has more than 25 years of technical training and training management experience. His role at GLOBALFOUNDRIES includes working with local colleges and universities to develop programs that help build a pipeline of qualified employment candidates.

Clayton Previously worked at Hewlett-Packard as National Training Manger. He worked with external customers to implement technology solutions and train staff on new technology solutions.

Clayton has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Training and Development from the State University of New York in Oswego. Clayton lives near Saratoga Springs, NY.

Yes, WIOA Can: YES, WIOA CAN Workshop Session #2: Unleashing the Full Power of WIOA for Local Workshops



Melanie Anderson has 20 years of experience leading strategic initiatives to advance workforce and education policy and programming. As Executive Vice President for the National Association of Workforce Boards, Melanie is responsible for overseeing operations and maintaining and developing strategic relationships with nonprofit, government, education, and corporate partners. She has provided strategic and thought leadership on workforce development issues and has led national and regional discussions on the workforce development system, governance, policy, work-based learning, emerging technology, apprenticeships, industry engagement, and opportunity youth engagement.

Previously, Melanie served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development at the U.S. Department of Education. She also held senior-level government affairs positions with the American Library Association, Educational Testing Service and Opportunity Nation where she developed strategy on a wide variety of federal and state education and workforce issues. Melanie is a graduate of Iowa State University and holds a B.A. in political science.



Dr. Ricardo Villalobos serves as the Chief Programs Officer for Workforce Connections, Southern Nevada’s Local Workforce Development Board, which oversees Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Programs. In his role, he provides leadership and oversight for a variety of workforce development programs and initiatives aimed at connecting employers to a ready workforce.

Ricardo previously worked for the College of Southern Nevada as Executive Director for the self-supporting Division of Workforce & Economic Development where he also focused on working with the region’s business and key industry sectors in the assessment, design, and implementation of customized curricula and training programs.

Ricardo has a B.S. in Organizational Leadership from BIOLA University and an M.A. in Counseling (emphasis in student development) from the University of San Diego. He also received his Ph.D. in Workforce Development & Organizational Leadership (Dissertation: "Focus On Success: An Explanatory Embedded Multiple-Case Study On How Youth Successfully Navigate Workforce Development Programs In Southern Nevada") from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.



Seth Lentz serves as the Executive Director and CEO for the Workforce Development of South Central Wisconsin (WDBSCW). In this role, Lentz works to advance the WDBSCW’s mission to forge public and private partnerships that support innovation and excellence in workforce development and to develop and deliver workforce strategies with education, economic and workforce system partners to ensure our local workforce is prepared to meet the needs of business in the six counties of south central Wisconsin: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, Marquette and Sauk.

Lentz brings over 25 years of experience in developing, administering and operating workforce development strategies. Throughout his career, Lentz has participated in successfully implementing workforce system prototypes, with many translating into major workforce system changes addressing industry and community challenges. The WDBSCW is the administrator of the WIOA Title I programs, regional Youth Apprenticeship Consortium, regional Independent Living program consortium (foster care youth). He focuses on delivering innovative workforce development strategies using a career pathways approach via strong industry, education and community partnerships at local, State and Federal levels.

Lentz serves on: Governor Council on Workforce Investment (CWI), State of Wisconsin’s Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards Advisory Committee, Madison Area Regional Economic Partnership (MadREP) Board of Directors, City of Madison’s Economic Development Committee, United Way of Dane County’s Community Solutions Team and Journey Home Delegation, and Workforce Transformation Policy Council (JFF & NAWB).