



Helping TANF Clients Achieve Long-Term Goals Meetings

Regions I-IV: March 10, 2021
Regions V-VIII: February 23, 2021
Regions IX-X: March 24, 2021

Speaker Biosketches



Tikki Brown, Director of Economic Opportunity and Nutrition Assistance, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Tikki Brown is the Director of Economic Opportunity and Nutrition Assistance at the Minnesota Department of Human Services. This position is responsible for the leadership, oversight, and coordination efforts of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Office of Economic Opportunity. With program oversight of housing and shelter, food shelves, nutrition education, outreach, employment and training, community action and SNAP, Ms. Brown works with her team to deliver programs and strategies designed for counties, tribes, and partner agencies, reaching hundreds of thousands of low-income individuals and families in Minnesota. Ms. Brown lives in Minneapolis with her husband and two children ages 10 and 12.

Elizabeth Carver, Utah TANF State Administrator, Utah Department of Workforce Services

Elizabeth Carver is currently the Director over the Workforce Development Program and Training Division at the Utah Department of Workforce Services. She oversees policy and training for several programs including WIOA and TANF. She is also the liaison for the Governor's State Workforce Development Board. Ms. Carver has a master's degree in Educational Psychology and has over twenty years of experience working with the Department of Workforce Services in a variety of positions. She has successfully implemented many technical and policy-driven projects to help improve workforce programs across the State of Utah.



Mariana Chilton, Ph.D., Director, Building Wealth and Health Network Program, Center for Hunger-Free Communities, Drexel University

Dr. Mariana Chilton is a Professor at Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health. She is the Director of the Center for Hunger-Free Communities and is Co-Principal Investigator of Children's HealthWatch, a national research network that investigates the impact of public assistance programs on the health and wellbeing of young children and their caregivers. Dr. Chilton founded Witnesses to Hunger, a movement to increase women's participation in the national dialogue on hunger and poverty. She is

Founder and Principal Investigator of the Building Wealth and Health Network, which is designed to incentivize entrepreneurship, build resiliency and self-sufficiency in among families with young children. Her research publications address trauma, food insecurity, and the advancement of the human rights framework to advance the right to food in the U.S.

She has testified before the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives on the importance of child nutrition programs and other anti-poverty policies. She has served as an advisor to Sesame Street and to the Institute of Medicine. Her awards include the “Nourish Award” from MANNA, the “Unsung Hero Award” for Improving the Lives of Women and Girls from Women’s Way, and the Young Professional Award in Maternal and Child Health from the American Public Health Association. Her work has been featured in the documentary *A Place at the Table*, and in the *Washington Post*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, public radio, and CBS National News.

Dr. Chilton received her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from the University of Oklahoma, and Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard University.



David Croom, Assistant Director for Postsecondary Achievement and Innovation, Ascend at the Aspen Institute

David Croom is Assistant Director for postsecondary achievement and innovation of Ascend at the Aspen Institute, where he leads the Aspen Postsecondary Success for Parents (PSP) Initiative. Centered on a two-generation (2Gen) approach, which focuses on creating opportunities to address the needs of children and the adults in their lives simultaneously, the PSP Initiative urges postsecondary leaders to identify and meet the needs of student parents and their families, by connecting with policymakers to strengthen political will among states and regions, and bringing innovative family-support models to the forefront.

Prior to joining Ascend, Mr. Croom was HBCU Lead and Higher Education Designer at Education Design Lab, where he led an institutional engagement with UNCF’s Career Pathways Initiative. For over four years, he was a strategy officer in Lumina Foundation’s Washington, D.C. office, where he focused on the Foundation’s work to advance federal policy and pursue issues pertaining to postsecondary finance, both toward the goal of increased attainment of high-quality credentials. Before Lumina, he was a policy analyst focused on federal postsecondary education in ACT’s office of strategic initiatives and, during graduate school, spent a year working at nonprofit PolicyLink with their California Boys and Men of Color Initiative work as well as consulting for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and nonprofit California Competes. His first foray into federal policy was as congressional aide to Congresswoman Maxine Waters, tasked with the member’s education portfolio with a specific emphasis on regulation of for-profit higher education.

Mr. Croom currently serves on the board of [Raise the Barr](#) and [Swipe Out Hunger](#). Native to South Florida but now a resident of Washington, DC, he holds a Master of Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley’s Goldman School of Public Policy and a bachelor’s degree from MIT’s Sloan School of Management with a minor in political science.



Katie Hogarty, Director of External Relations, Climb Wyoming

Katie Hogarty's more than decade of experience in program and relationship cultivation at Climb provide her a wealth of structural knowledge to successfully navigate state and federal partnerships. In addition, she has a keen perspective on the role Climb plays in Wyoming families, communities, and workforce. Prior to joining Climb, Ms. Hogarty worked for Governor Freudenthal's administration as a Health and Human Services Policy Analyst. She speaks nationally on Climb's federally recognized best practices and presented at the *US Department of*

Agriculture SNAP and Employment and Training Participant Engagement Strategies in Times of COVID Webinar, discussing Climb Wyoming's job training and placement program during the current COVID-19 pandemic, and demonstrated the innovation and creativity of new strategies that were incorporated in the organization's service delivery model to successfully continue operations for SNAP Employment and Training participants in their statewide program. She has been invited to share Climb's expertise and input on economic recovery and resilience at the US Council on Economic Mobility as an external employment and training provider. Ms. Hogarty holds a JD from the University of Wyoming and will become Climb's next CEO in the fall of 2021.



Brandi Jahnke, Executive Vice President of Programs, Connections to Success

Brandi Jahnke oversees Connections to Success programs in Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas, ensuring the fidelity of all programs and building community and corporate partnerships. She was responsible for spearheading the expansion of Connections to Success to Kansas, ensuring its holistic model of services could be available for the Greater Kansas City Region. Ms. Jahnke is the face and voice of

Connections in the Kansas City Region and inspires her team daily to embody the passion, hope, collaboration, leadership, excellence, compassion, and inclusion that Connections is known for in the community.

Ms. Jahnke received her bachelor's in Criminal Justice & Sociology from the University of Wyoming and her master's of Public Affairs from Park University. She is also "supermom" and gets her best workouts from chasing her ten-year-old daughter and thirteen-year-old son around the house. She's been married to her awesome husband for over 19 wonderfully long years, and though she's a fan of the Denver Broncos, Kansas City Missouri and Kansas are proud to have her as a driving force toward economic independence for every Connections' participant.



Joseph Jones, Founder and President and CEO, the Center for Urban Families (CFUF)

Joseph T. Jones, Jr. is founder/CEO of the Center for Urban Families (CFUF), a Baltimore, Maryland nonprofit service organization established to empower low-income families by enhancing both the ability of women and men to contribute to their families as wage earners and of men to fulfill their roles as fathers. Mr. Jones is now a national leader in workforce development and fatherhood and family

services programming, and through his professional and civic involvement influences policy direction nationwide.

Mr. Jones' civic engagements include service on the boards of the Open Society Institute-Baltimore, Baltimore Workforce Development Board, and My Brother's Keeper-Baltimore. Mr. Jones has received numerous awards and honors for his leadership and programming, including the Johns Hopkins University Leadership Development Program's Distinguished Leadership Award, a honorary Doctorate in Public Service from Morgan State University, the Walter Sondheim Public Service Award, and the White House Champion of Change. He was a 2004 Weinberg Fellow, a 2013 CNN Hero, and current Aspen Institute Ascend Fellow.

Mr. Jones is a graduate of the University of Maryland Baltimore County. He is happily married and has three children. Follow him on Twitter @Joe_dad_Joe.



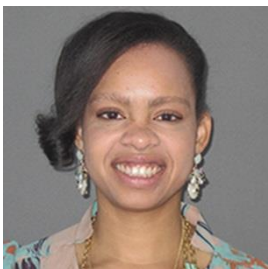
**Megan Kauffmann, Employment and Benefits Division Evaluator,
Colorado Department of Human Services**

Megan Kauffmann is the Division Evaluator within the Employment and Benefits Division at the Colorado Department of Human Services. Ms. Kauffmann has worked for the Department for almost three years providing evaluation, analysis, and performance management support. Prior to working at the Department, she worked at the University of Denver's Butler Institute for Families and at the federal Administration for Children and Families in evaluation roles. Ms. Kauffmann is passionate about utilizing evaluation results to support families and communities.



Kathy Lambert, Co-Founder, Connections to Success

Kathy Lambert is the Co-Founder of Connections to Success (CtS), a nonprofit organization recognized for its evidence-based model for economic stability and mobility. It integrates personal and professional development training, employment training opportunities, life transformation coaching, job development, mentoring, and ongoing support services to equip individuals for long-term success. CtS serves individuals in Missouri, Kansas, and Illinois, along with 13 membership sites in 7 states. Ms. Lambert has led the organization as the CEO for 23 years, and most recently transitioned to consulting and coaching with other individuals, organizations, and programs.



Diana McCallum, Senior Researcher, Mathematica

Diana McCallum is the Project Director for the [Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse](#). At Mathematica, she is a Senior Researcher and Director of Research and Evaluation of the Children, Youth, and Families division. Her topical expertise includes social safety net programs that support families, teen pregnancy prevention, family engagement in education, and educational choice. She has worked closely with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to launch the Pathways Clearinghouse, which assesses the existing evidence for employment-focused programs designed to improve labor market outcomes for individuals with low incomes. She has more than 10 years of experience managing systematic reviews, including overseeing multiple contracts related to the Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse, as well as other high-profile federal projects. She has focused on dissemination to stakeholders, making presentations about the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) for researcher, practitioner, and federal audiences. As a Director

at Mathematica, she also focuses on mentoring, recruitment, and fostering career development for staff. Dr. McCallum has a PhD in Developmental Psychology and a certificate in education policy from Duke University.



Erin Oalican, Director, Vermont Reach Up/TANF Program

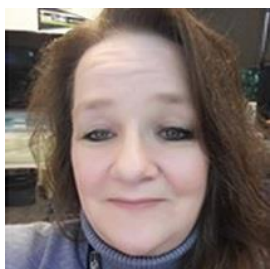
Erin Oalican currently serves as the Director of Reach Up, Vermont’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. In this role, she oversees the state-wide Reach Up and Post-Secondary Education Programs (PSE). Over the last several years, Ms. Oalican has been instrumental in making changes to the program that are informed by brain science and an understanding of trauma-informed care. Major changes to the program have included legislation that increased the asset limit to encourage savings, streamlining program requirements, and moving to a “coaching” model of case management that builds responsive relationships and taps into intrinsic motivation. She helped bring the MOMS Partnership®, a Yale University stress-reduction program for mothers with proven results, to Vermont mothers participating in Reach Up. Ms. Oalican is committed to promoting social and economic justice by providing opportunities within Reach Up to help participants develop skills and resources that support long term financial stability for their families. She has worked for Reach Up for seventeen years, and started her career as a Reach Up Case Manager. What guides Ms. Oalican more than anything is the belief that every person has value can succeed with the right support, and we are all better off when everyone has enough.

Ms. Oalican holds a BA in Sociology from Kenyon College and a Public Manager Certification. Outside of work, she enjoys exploring mountains, lakes, and new cities. She is an avid traveler and hiker and loves the thrill of finding new places without a GPS (much to her children’s consternation), and with the people she loves.



Sara O’Keeffe, Graphic Artist, Center for Public Partnerships and Research, University of Kansas

A graphic artist with the Center for Public Partnerships and Research at the University of Kansas, Sara O’Keeffe creates visual messages that help our partners meet their missions. Ms. O’Keeffe captures and synthesizes the ideas and information shared at meetings and events, from large conferences to organizational strategic planning sessions. Equipped with a blank canvas and a stack of colored markers, in real-time she mirrors the content shared by participants, identifying key themes and capturing conversations through hand-drawn illustrations and text. The result is a visual mural that serves as a testament and inspiration. Ms. O’Keeffe holds a bachelor’s degree in fine arts from Washburn University.



Babs Roberts, Director, Community Services Division, Economic Services Administration, Washington State Department of Health and Social Services

Babs Roberts has served as the Director for the Community Services Division (CSD) within the Economic Services Administration (ESA) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) since December 2009. She has worked for the state of Washington for over 26 years and more than 25 of those years with DSHS. She has worked for several administrations, including Development

Disabilities and Children’s Administration, in various administrative functions, before finally coming to ESA in 2001 as the administration’s Budget Coordinator. She later served as the Administration’s Chief of Fiscal Services, before being asked to step into her current role. “This is the most rewarding, challenging, and satisfying position I’ve ever held” says Ms. Roberts. Ms. Roberts grew up in and around the Boston, Massachusetts area. Having lived many of those formative years in a low-income household, she has a passion for DSHS’ programs and knows their importance to the clients that use them.



Jessica Santos, Ph.D., Director of Community-Engaged Research, Institute for Economic and Racial Equity, Brandeis University

Jessica Santos, PhD is the Director of Community Engaged Research at the Institute for Economic and Racial Equity and a Lecturer at the Heller School for Social Policy & Management at Brandeis University. She is the Principal Investigator on multiple federally and privately funded mixed methods studies focused on examining pathways for economic stability, upward mobility, and equity through social policy. Dr. Santos speaks nationally about Empowerment Economics, Economic and Racial Justice, Workforce Development and Career Pathways, and Immigrant Integration. Most of her research is designed in partnership with community-based organizations, or policy makers, as action research to advance social justice. Dr. Santos holds a PhD in Social Policy from Brandeis University and a master’s degree in Sustainable Development from SIT Institute.



Nycole Tylka, Deputy Director, Utah Department of Workforce Services

Nycole Tylka is the Assistant Director for the Workforce Development Program and Training Division at the Utah Department of Workforce Services. She oversees policy and training for several programs including TANF. Ms. Tylka has a bachelor’s degree in psychology and over ten years of experience working with the Department of Workforce Services in various roles both operationally and administratively. She has a passion for working on projects and processes that help individuals, families, and organizations achieve their goals and find greater success.



Mary Beth Vogel-Ferguson, Ph.D., Research Associate Professor, College of Social Work, University of Utah

For the past 21 years, Dr. Mary Beth Vogel-Ferguson, PhD, CSW has directed research studies and program evaluations with state and regional level government agencies. She is currently the principal investigator of several studies sponsored by Utah’s Department of Workforce Services (DWS). These studies include evaluations of the work-focused cash assistance program, refugee programs, employment for formerly chronically homeless individuals, and implementation of trauma-informed approaches across the state. She has assisted all levels of agency management, from senior leadership to front-line workers, in using data for program and policy development. She also provides workshops for local and national agency administrators, research bodies, and social work groups addressing issues related to welfare policy, trauma-informed approaches, employment issues, poverty, and serving diverse low-income populations.



Monieca West, Program Director, Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative

Monieca West is an experienced economic and community development professional. She retired from AT&T-Arkansas as Director of Economic Development and is now Director of Federal Programs for the Arkansas Division of Higher Education where she manages the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative and the Carl D. Perkins Federal Career and Technical Education Program. As a certified *Bridges Out of Poverty* trainer and poverty simulation facilitator, she is a frequent presenter to colleges and organizations seeking to improve the success of

economically disadvantaged students in achieving a college credential. She is a certified Strategic Doing facilitator and an approved trainer for the National Career Development Association *Facilitating Career Development* curriculum. She is the president of National Association of Career and Technical Education Information, is a past chair of the International Community Development Society, and has received numerous awards for service to community organizations and public education. She has been a board member of the American Indian Center of Arkansas for 30 years, currently serving as secretary and is a former president of the North Little Rock School District Board of Education.



Jamie Woodson, CPI Program Director, Arkansas State University-MidSouth

Jamie Woodson is the Director of Career Pathways at Arkansas State University Mid-South in West Memphis, Arkansas. Ms. Woodson works with Arkansas Parents to improve their quality of life through education, training, and meaningful employment. Her goal for the Career Pathways program is to provide quality wraparound services that work toward overcoming barriers and

empowering participants to achieve their goals. She is a graduate of Arkansas State University with a Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Public Administration. Ms. Woodson has 5 years of previous work experience in social services for the Arkansas Department of Human Services and Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, and has worked the last two years in Higher Education.