



Client Success Through Partnership: 2010 State TANF and Workforce Meeting



Speaker Biographies

John Allen

Manpower Development Specialist
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John Allen has assisted State and local grantees for more than 35 years while working for the U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration in the Dallas Regional Office. He has worked as a Contract Compliance Specialist, Special Assistant to the Regional Administrator, Inter-Agency Project Coordinator, Federal Project Officer for workforce programs, and Unemployment Insurance Specialist. John retired in 2008, and has returned to the ETA Regional Office to assist with Recovery Act policy implementation and reporting. John is also a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the U. S. Army Reserve. John received Bachelors and Masters degrees in Political Science from the University of Texas in Austin and has completed additional graduate studies in Workforce Economics and Public Administration from the University of North Texas.

Allen Applegate

Regional Emergency Management Specialist
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Allen Applegate serves as the Regional Emergency Management Specialist for the Administration for Children and Families, Region VI in Dallas, TX. Allen has over 7 years of experience in emergency management and public health preparedness having served as the Bioterrorism Coordinator and Metropolitan Medial Response System Coordinator in 2 large North Texas jurisdictions. Allen holds a Bachelor of Science in Emergency Administration from the University of North Texas and a Master of Public Health in Health Policy from the University of North Texas Health Science Center. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Public Health in Public Health Practice at the University of North Texas Health Science Center. Allen has served at ACF for 2 years as the Regional Emergency Management Specialist and has responded to several major disasters in our Region including Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.





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Speaker Biographies

Dr. Peggy Badlato

Mentoring Program Manager
Family Pathfinders of Tarrant County
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Peggy Badlato received her Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Linguistics from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She pursued a career in Information Technology during which time she attained a Master's degree in Software Engineering from Texas Christian University. After 22 years in IT, she began graduate work in Linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin, receiving her PhD in 2000. She conducted dissertation research on the Mosquito Coast of Honduras and has taught Linguistics at Texas Wesleyan University.

After completing her studies, Peggy chose a career in social services to have more of a connection with people and their struggles. She is currently employed by Family Pathfinders of Tarrant County managing its Mentoring program. The program matches trained volunteer mentors with a family striving to break the cycle of poverty and become financially stable. Her responsibilities include recruiting and training mentors, connecting clients to resources and ensuring that mentors and staff support the clients as they make decisions and set goals for the future.

Del Bock

TANF Program Manager
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Ms. Bock is the TANF Program Manager for the State of Montana, Department of Public Health and Human Services and has worked for the State of Montana for 18 years in the human services field. She began her career in 1992 as an eligibility specialist for TANF, Food Stamps and Medicaid in a county office, moving to a position as a program officer in the Central Office in 1997. In 1999, Ms. Bock took the position of Project Director for the Economic Assistance Management System, or TEAMS, a public assistance eligibility system. She moved back into the policy arena in April 2006 as the TANF Policy Specialist and then onto the program manager position. Ms. Bock received her B.A. in social work with a minor in psychology from Carroll College in Helena, Montana in 1984.





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Speaker Biographies

Charlotte Bristow

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Charlotte Bristow is a TANF program specialist in the ACF Office of Family Assistance, Dallas Regional Office, and she works primarily with state agencies in Arkansas and Texas. From 1986 to 1998, she was an analyst in the ACF Office of Legislative Affairs and Budget in Washington, DC. She closely tracked federal legislation on multiple programs, including TANF, Child Care, Community Services Block Grants, and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance. Over a period of 12 years, she served as the primary ACF staff contact on welfare-related legislation, including the Family Support Act of 1988 and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Ms. Bristow earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the College of William and Mary and a Master of Public Affairs degree from the University of Texas at Dallas.

Janice D. Caldwell

Team Leader
Mandatory Grants
Regional Grants Management Unit
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Janice D. Caldwell currently serves as the Team Leader for Mandatory Grants within the Regional Grants Management Unit of the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. In her role as Team Leader, Ms. Caldwell provides technical assistance, training, and oversight to the Mandatory Grants Team, which has responsibility for administering the various formula, block and entitlement programs from the regional office level totaling over \$3.4 billion annually.

Ms. Caldwell had been with the Administration for Children and Families for 19 years and has worked in various capacities, from Financial Operations Specialist for the Child Welfare Programs to Team Leader for the Developmental Disabilities Program. Ms. Caldwell has her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Accounting from Queens College in Charlotte, North Carolina, and her Masters of Business Administration from Dallas Baptist University in Dallas, Texas.





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Speaker Biographies

David Claus, LCSW

YouthBuild Program Director

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David Claus, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, is the YouthBuild Program Director for American YouthWorks, where he manages several YouthBuild Programs, including Casa Verde Builders (Affordable Housing/Green Building), Green Energy Corps (Weatherization/Energy Audits) and Computer Corps (Computer Refurbishing). Before becoming director, David worked as a YouthBuild Counselor for over 12 years and has been honored by YouthBuild USA as both a Counseling and Directors Fellow. As a private consultant he has led trainings on experiential learning, working with adjudicated youth and assisted with staff training and program design for new YouthBuild grantees.

Carol Cartledge

Director of Public Assistance

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Carol Cartledge has been employed with North Dakota Department of Human Services for 20 years and as Director of Public Assistance for four years. As Director of Public Assistance, she oversees Basic Care Assistance, Child Care Assistance and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) /Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) programs. Prior to working in for the Department of Human Services, Carol was employed as an Eligibility Worker and responsible for the administration of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Food Stamp, and Medicaid Programs. Carol graduated from University of Mary with a degree in social work and from University of North Dakota with a master's degree in social work.





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Speaker Biographies

Reverend Jay Cole

Associate Minister/Minister
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John Wallace Cole, III, “Jay” was born in the Baylor Hospital in Dallas, Texas. Jay was baptized at FUMC, Dallas. He graduated from Hillcrest High School in Dallas, and he received his Bachelor of Arts with an economics major and minor in math from the University of Texas, Austin. He worked with his grandparents on a 1400-acre cattle ranch in East Texas through high school and for five years after graduating from U.T. Jay was an insurance agent in Dallas before receiving his call to ordained ministry. Jay earned a Masters in Divinity from Perkins School of Theology where he received the B’Nai B’Rith Award for academic excellence in ethical studies and his social justice work in Dallas. Jay also received the Certificate of Specialization in Urban Ministry from Perkins.

Jay is associate minister at First United Methodist Church in downtown Dallas, where he directs the church’s outreach program, Crossroads Community Services (CCS). CCS opened its doors in May of 2001 and this past year CCS became the largest distributor out of 400 agencies the North Texas Food Bank. In 2006, Crossroads Community Services distributed 1,100,000 pounds of food or 1.1 million meals to 3,464 households or 11,000 children, women and men. Also, in 2006 CCS became the largest dispenser of homeless prevention funds for the City of Dallas. Each month, 110 passionate volunteers make this effective ministry possible.

Peggy Crist

Director
Office of Planning and Program Development
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Ms. Crist has thirty years of experience in the project planning, environmental review and the grant development programs of the Federal Transit Administration. Ms. Crist received her bachelor’s degree from Butler University and her master’s degree in Urban and Regional Affairs from the University of Texas at Arlington.





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Speaker Biographies

Susan P. Curnan

Professor

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Susan P. Curnan is a professor of Social Policy and Management at the Heller School, Brandeis University, chair of the MBA and MPP concentration in children, youth and families, and longtime Director of the Center for Youth and Communities, one of the nation's premier evaluation research and capacity building centers dedicated to preparing young people for education, work and life. A graduate of Yale University with advanced degrees in policy and management, Curnan joined the Brandeis faculty in 1983.

Throughout her career, Professor Curnan has worked in all three sectors of society, with all states and commonwealths from Alaska to Puerto Rico, and in more than 200 communities in the USA; she has traveled to South Africa, Europe and Southeast Asia to consult on education, workforce development, management and policy issues. She has been a director and trustee of a family foundation, served on many national task forces on policy, performance management and program quality for the U.S. Department of Labor and Department of Education as well as work groups for the National Academy of Sciences. During the 1990s (and before), Curnan was involved with virtually all major youth employability initiatives sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and served as Principal Investigator (PI) and National Study Leader for the national Youth Research and Technical Assistance Project. During this period, she was also evaluation and learning partner for several national youth initiatives, including Summer Beginnings, Youth Employment Competency Systems, Youth Fair Chance, and Youth Opportunities. Today, she is PI of the USDOL 2009 summer study, "Innovating Under Pressure", co-PI for the Gates Foundation "Post Secondary Success Initiative", co-PI on The Skillman Foundation's comprehensive community change initiative, and Faculty Scholar at the Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy focusing on public-private partnerships and organizational effectiveness.





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Speaker Biographies

Kajuana Donahue

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Kajuana Donahue is employed as a Federal Project Officer with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration (ETA) in the Dallas Regional Office. Ms. Donahue has worked for ETA since 1997 on major reforms and initiatives of the nation's job training system and on guidance to state and local workforce investment systems, which are intended to help the underemployed and unemployed find jobs, and to provide U.S. companies with skilled workers. Ms. Donahue currently serves as ETA's liaison to the State of Arkansas and leads the Dallas Region's Rapid Response Initiative, which seeks to support state workforce agencies as they respond to mass layoff notices in a coordinated, seamless manner.

Elizabeth Ehrlich

Director, Program Operations and Client Services
Parks Opportunity Program
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
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Elizabeth (Liza) Ehrlich joined the New York City's Department of Parks and Recreation in 2002, and has dedicated her career there to the Parks Opportunity Program (POP), one of the nation's largest and most successful transitional employment programs. In her current role of Director of Program Operations and Client Services, Ms. Ehrlich helps to create services and opportunities for POP trainees to prepare them for self-sufficiency. This is her fourth position within POP, and in each role she has worked to create innovative partnerships with other NYC agencies and private organizations to provide services for trainees in areas including education, vocational training, financial empowerment, housing, childcare and benefits assistance, and emergency intervention.

Ms. Ehrlich has participated in the 2009 and 2010 Cross-Atlantic Welfare-to-Work Conferences in Rotterdam, Netherlands where she shared strategies with European Social Service agencies to assist in their efforts to transition their citizens to self-sufficiency, as well as OFA's 2009 Rural Communities Initiative Economic Roundtable in Portland, Maine. Ms. Ehrlich holds a Bachelor's Degree in American History and Government from the University of Delaware, and lives in Manhattan.





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Speaker Biographies

Charles Eldridge

Grants Administrator

Public Housing

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Mr. Eldridge has over 25 years of professional and volunteer experience in the social services field working with children, youth and adults. Mr. Eldridge has used his passion of helping individuals and families living in homelessness; domestic violence; substance abuse; criminal justice; and low-income situations to become self-supporting and to realize their potential for success. He has worked for several non-profit organizations in management and currently is employed with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as a Grant Administrator/ Public Housing Revitalization Specialist where he assist low-income families to obtain quality housing, to become self-sufficient and achieve the American Dream of owning their own home.

Mr. Eldridge earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with an emphasis on Mental Health from East Texas State University. His Master of Management degree is from the University of Phoenix.

Felicia Gaither

Regional TANF Program Manager

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Felicia Gaither is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program Manager in Region VIII of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance. Ms. Gaither is responsible for providing technical assistance and guidance to states and tribes administering the TANF program in Region VIII.

Ms. Gaither has years of experience working in human services. She has served in many capacities working for a variety of organizations at the local, state, and Federal levels.

Ms. Gaither received her B.A in Political Science from the University of Nebraska, earned a Master's degree in Public Administration from Wichita State University and is currently pursuing a PhD in Public Service Leadership.





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Speaker Biographies

Mark H. Greenberg

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Before joining HHS, Mark H. Greenberg directed the Georgetown University Center on Poverty, Inequality and Public Policy, a joint initiative of the Georgetown University Law Center and the Georgetown Public Policy Institute. In addition, he was a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress (CAP) and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). He previously served as the Executive Director of CAP's Task Force on Poverty and as CLASP's Director of Policy. During his career, Mr. Greenberg has written extensively on issues relating to federal and state welfare reform efforts; workforce policy issues affecting low-income families; child care and early education policy; tax policy; poverty measurement; and a range of other low-income issues. In addition, he frequently provided technical assistance to state and local governments regarding poverty reduction strategies. Prior to coming to D.C., Mr. Greenberg worked at Jacksonville Area Legal Aid in Florida and the Western Center on Law and Poverty in Los Angeles, California. Mr. Greenberg is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

Eva Greenwalt

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Eva is the WorkFirst Program Manager at the Washington State Department of Commerce. She oversees \$28 million in contracts that provide transitional jobs for TANF recipients who are considered the hardest to serve. Washington is considered a national model for helping TANF parents overcome barriers to employment through transitional jobs. Her team's efforts were recognized with a CSG Innovations Award in 2001.

Currently Eva represents her agency at the Washington State WorkFirst Partnership which brings state agencies and the Governor's Office together to improve statewide employment outcomes for TANF families. Prior to her work at Commerce, Eva coordinated community service programs for the Washington State Department of Corrections at their McNeil Island facility.





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Speaker Biographies

Trina Gress

Chief Operations Officer

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Trina Gress attained a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from the University of Mary and a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Utah State University. She is a Licensed Social Worker and a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. She has worked in the Human Services and Rehabilitation fields for 13 years in Bismarck/Mandan and the surrounding communities. Trina has been the Chief Operations Officer for Community Options, Inc since Jan 2007.

Susan Gunsch

Manager, Workforce Programs

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Susan Gunsch currently holds the position of Manager of Workforce Programs with Job Service North Dakota. Her educational background is in elementary education and education of the hearing impaired. Susan has worked with a variety of customers in her work history. Directly out of Minot State University, she worked with mildly handicapped individuals in securing and maintaining employment. She has worked with other clientele including Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, Older Workers and Job Corps recruits. Susan started working at Job Service giving direct service under the Job Training Partnership Act and then Workforce Investment Act. Today, her area manages and administers various federal and state funded programs including Workforce Investment Act, WOTC, Wagner Peyser, Alien Labor Certification, a state funded Incumbent worker training program and specific to today PRIDE.





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Speaker Biographies

Phil Harris

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Phil Harris serves as the Assistant Director for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program at the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (DWS). Under Harris' leadership, his office oversees the development and implementation of program policy, staff development training, quality assurance, and contract administration.

He is responsible for developing partnerships that provide employment, training, and other services for Arkansas's TANF customers. The DWS-TANF program employs approximately 240 employees statewide and has an annual budget of \$62 million dollars. Harris began with DWS as a Project Administrator in August of 2007 and also continues to provide support to the TANF Oversight Board.

Prior to joining DWS, Phil spent 13 years in higher education as a business & economic developer, as well as an adjunct faculty member. Harris holds a B.A. degree in Business from Philander Smith College and earned an MBA from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He has numerous awards and certifications for his work in education and economic development.

Michael Hayes

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Child Support Division

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Michael Hayes is the Deputy for Family Initiatives in the Child Support Division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG). He has extensive experience in the development of policy, partnerships, and projects that support family stability, paternity establishment, father involvement, and child support program improvement. He has led the implementation of numerous child support demonstration projects and helped establish statewide initiatives educating teens about parental responsibility, providing legal services to parents with visitation and custody issues, and directing unemployed non-custodial parents to workforce services.

Immediately prior to his work with the OAG, Michael helped create and was director of the





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Texas Fragile Families Initiative (TFF), a state-wide initiative bringing together more than 30 private foundations, multiple state agencies and community/faith-based organizations in 12 sites across Texas to support fragile families.

Patrick Heiman

Senior Research Associate

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Mr. Patrick Heiman is a Senior Associate in ICF International's Division of Community, Family, and Education Studies. Mr. Heiman has seven years of experience researching public policy issues and is experienced in program design, evaluation, and project management, with a focus on workforce development, youth development, and educational organizations both domestically and in developing countries. Mr. Heiman has extensive experience designing and implementing technical assistance efforts around building greater self-sufficiency to organizations serving low-income and marginalized populations, including rural, Tribal, refugee, and immigrant families. His previous training and research includes studies on methods for engaging previously marginalized populations, programs for assisting individuals with multiple barriers to employment, migration, and children's health systems. Mr. Heiman holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

Joyce Hill

TANF Program Supervisor

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Joyce Hill is the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services TANF Program Supervisor for the Phillips County Local Office in Helena-West Helena, Arkansas. Ms. Hill has worked with the TANF program for the past 2 1/2 years. She has a Bachelor of Science and Criminal Justice from Mississippi Valley State University as well as a Masters Degree in Business Administration from Colorado Tech University, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Prior to joining DWS, Ms. Hill was a certified Parent Educator for the Coahoma Families First Resource Center in Clarksdale, Mississippi for a number of years. Additionally, Ms. Hill worked with TANF participants in attaining their GED at Coahoma Community College in Clarksdale, Mississippi.





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Since she began working at DWS, she has received her Arkansas Governmental Manager (AGM) certification and, recently completed the certification requirements for designation as a Career Development Facilitator (CDF) in KUDER.

Annika Holder

Chief

Parks Opportunity Program

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Annika Holder is the Chief of the Parks Opportunity Program (POP). POP is one of the nation's largest and most successful welfare-to-work transitional employment programs. In her role, Ms. Holder designs and implements innovative programming which allows participants to perform valuable work for the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation, increasing civic pride and greening city neighborhoods, while pursuing sustainable employment and financial self-sufficiency.

Ms. Holder has been a committed contributor to all facets of welfare initiatives executed by the New York City Parks Department. She has held several key positions since starting her career with the agency nearly 10 years ago. Since her promotion to Chief in 2006, Ms. Holder has expanded POP's offerings to address the ever-evolving needs of New York City's unemployed through employment sector-specific initiatives, professional mentoring, adult literacy courses and led efforts to respond to labor market trends by creating Business Connect, a service for employers. Her leadership and accomplishments were recognized by the Commissioner's "Manager of the Year" award in 2007 and are also evidenced by the more than 4,400 people who have transitioned from welfare to self-sufficiency since becoming the Chief of POP.

Annika Holder earned a Master's Degree in Urban Affairs from The City University of New York (CUNY)/Queens College and holds a B.S. in Psychology from CUNY/Brooklyn College.

Linda Hughes

TANF Program Director

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Ms. Hughes has been employed by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services for 36 years. For the past nine years, she has served as the TANF Program Director. Prior to that, she was the Food Stamp Program Director for 7 years, the Overpayment Section Manager for 15 years, and





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a Social Worker for 5 years. Ms Hughes' hobbies include spending time with family, cooking and watching television. Ms. Hughes has worked or the Oklahoma Department of Human Services for 36 years. She and her husband, Roy, are the proud parents of two children—Bryan and Lacey— and two grandchildren—Camden and Ainslee.

Larry James

President and Chief Executive Officer
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Larry became CEO in September 2004 after serving as executive director for 10 years. Known in the Dallas faith, business and media communities as a social entrepreneur and committed servant to the people of East and South Dallas, Larry came to CDM after serving 14 years as senior minister with the Richardson East Church of Christ in Richardson, Texas.

He is a graduate of Harding University (BA 1972), Harding University Graduate School of Religion (MA 1973), New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv 1977) and Tulane University (MA—American History 1986).

Larry spent eight months in 1998 as executive director for the Greater Dallas Community of Churches but returned to CDM with a renewed clarity that his place was close to the streets of Dallas' inner-city community. That community is also where Larry and wife, Brenda, have made their home since 1999.

Gerald Jensen

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Jerry Jensen, Senior Community Planning and Development Representative is employed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the Fort Worth Regional Office. Mr. Jensen has worked for the department since 1990 in HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development in Fort Worth and Washington DC. He is primarily responsible for overseeing housing and community development programs and homeless assistance programs in the Dallas area. He has graduate degrees in city and regional planning, public administration, and social work. He is married and has two young sons.





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Speaker Biographies

Joseph C. Juarez

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Joseph C. Juarez is the Regional Administrator of the Employment and Training Administration, Dallas, Texas. As the Regional Administrator, he is responsible for providing leadership, guidance and overseeing all Employment and Training programs and initiatives, including the Unemployment Insurance, State Employment Service and Workforce Investment Act programs throughout the region, which includes the States of Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Wyoming, and Utah.

Since 1974, when Mr. Juarez joined the U.S. Department of Labor, he has served in progressively responsible positions in the areas of employment and training policy and planning, legislative development and program management. From 1987 to 1996, he was the Regional Administrator in Chicago, Illinois, and prior to that, he was the National Director of the Veterans Employment Service.

Mr. Juarez did his undergraduate work at Azusa Pacific University in California and graduate work in Public Administration at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, and George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Mr. Juarez is a recipient of the Distinguished Executive Presidential Rank Award for sustained extraordinary accomplishments.

Marsha Lindsey

Operations Manager
Workforce Solutions Texoma Board
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Marsha Lindsey has been with Workforce Solutions Texoma for the past 12 years serving as the Quality Assurance Manager, and more recently as the Operations Manager. She is responsible for oversight of workforce center programs. She also provides oversight for program and performance quality improvement activities, equal opportunity initiatives, performance analysis, technical assistance, training, development of policies and procedures, and Board monitoring activities.

Marsha has presented at state, regional, and national conferences in the areas of Performance Management, Integration of One-Stop Services, Ensuring Accessible One-Stops, and Community Literacy Programs. Marsha is a member of the Fannin Literacy Council and represents the Board





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in Fannin County Chamber activities. She is a founding coordinator of the Quality Assurance Network, a committee of the Texas Workforce Executive Director's Council that coordinates educational and networking activities for all 28 Texas Workforce Boards. Marsha has a Masters Degree in Educational Psychology from Texas A&M University.

Rebecca Lucero

Regional Director

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Rebecca serves as the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Southwest Regional Director for the Office of Civil Rights and Human Resources. In this position, she is responsible for providing direction, leadership, training and oversight of human resource and civil rights functions to prevent and eliminate unlawful discrimination and to ensure equal treatment and opportunities for participation in FNS programs and the region's employment activities.

Prior to her Civil Rights/Human Resources role, Rebecca served five years as the Executive Analyst to the Regional Administrator of the FNS Southwest Region, when she primarily coordinated and promoted the Administration's nutrition assistance priorities for the five-state region. She worked extensively with federal, state, and local government; faith-based and community organizations; schools and universities; and others working to eliminate hunger and promote nutrition in our communities.

Ms. Lucero has worked for the Food and Nutrition Service for over 30 years, starting in the Southeast Region, and then transferring to the Southwest in 1982. While in FNS, Rebecca has held positions in each of the major FNS Programs where she served as Nutritionist and Management Analyst. And, Rebecca has been appointed to countless special project teams throughout her FNS tenure.





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Speaker Biographies

Jane Oates

Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training

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Jane Oates was nominated by President Barack Obama to join Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis' leadership team at the Department of Labor in April, 2009. Confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training on June 19, 2009, she now leads the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) in its mission to design and deliver high-quality training and employment programs for our nation's workers.

Prior to her appointment, Ms. Oates served as Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education and Senior Advisor to Governor Jon S. Corzine. In that position, Oates worked to strengthen the connections among high school, post-secondary education and the workforce. Ms. Oates served for nearly a decade as Senior Policy Advisor for Massachusetts Senator Edward M. Kennedy. She worked closely with the Senator on a variety of education, workforce and national service legislative initiatives, including the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Ms. Oates began her career as a teacher in the Boston and Philadelphia public schools and later as a field researcher at Temple University's Center for Research in Human Development and Education. She received her BA in Education from Boston College, and an M.Ed in Reading from Arcadia University.

Leon R. McCowan

Regional Administrator

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Mr. McCowan serves as the Regional Administrator for the Administration for Children and Families, Region VI, in Dallas, Texas. He provides executive leadership, direction, and coordination for all ACF programs in the region, consisting of the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The Administration for Children and Families is responsible for programs that promote the social and economic well-being of children and families. The following ACF programs are under his direction: Head Start, Child Care, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Child Support Enforcement, Tribal programs, Developmental Disabilities, Child Welfare programs, Youth programs, and Community Service programs. Nationally, he serves as the Lead Regional Administrator for Child Support Enforcement.





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With more than 30 years of professional federal service, Mr. McCowan began his career in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. He has held various program and management positions within the Department of Health and Human Services, including: Regional Hub Director – West Central Hub; Deputy Program Manager for the Office of Family Assistance; and as the Deputy Regional Representative for Child Support Enforcement.

Tracey Polson

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Tracey Polson is the Program Coordinator for the CDSA YouthBuild program in Enid, Oklahoma. CDSA is a community action agency that has been serving the Enid community for over 35 years with a variety of community-based programs. CDSA was awarded its very first Department of Labor-YouthBuild grant in August 2009. The CDSA YouthBuild program has completed the inaugural cycle in July 2010 serving 29 disconnected youth. Prior to Ms. Polson's work with YouthBuild, she worked as the Program Coordinator of the North Central Oklahoma Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs for 4 years and worked with WIA for 9 years total. Ms. Polson attended Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva, OK.

“Being awarded a Department of Labor, YouthBuild grant was a real turning point for our community. The YouthBuild program offers the right kinds of services for young people that need them the most. Having a YouthBuild program in Enid, OK demonstrates that our community is committed to reconnecting young people that have lost their way.”

Kevin Richards

Division Director, Colorado Works

Colorado Department of Human Services

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Kevin Richards has worked in the Colorado human service field for 28 years. Gaining his start in a small eastern Colorado rural county, Mr. Richards later supervised the eligibility program work with five mountain counties, and then for nine years served as the Director for Clear Creek County Human Services. While Kevin served in this capacity, he worked with the legislative workgroup headed by then Senator Mike Coffman, crafting Colorado's program in response to the new federal TANF legislation. He successfully instituted the program in his own county and subsequently in served on the Governor's Task Force reviewing initial welfare reform implementation throughout the State.





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Mr. Richards left 17 years of county employ when he became the State Director for the Colorado Works program. He has served in this capacity for nearly 10 years. For many years Kevin has led successful efforts bringing together diverse entities; governmental, non-profit and faith-based, to the table, to promote collaborative work to further strengthen Colorado's families and to assist families to move to meaningful self sufficiency.

Rebecca Sarmiento

Federal Project Officer
Employment and Training Administration, Region IV
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Rebecca Sarmiento is employed as a Federal Project Officer with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration (ETA) in the Dallas Regional Office. Ms. Sarmiento has worked for ETA since 1999 on major reforms and initiatives of the nation's job training system and on providing guidance to state and local workforce investment systems, which are intended to help the underemployed and unemployed find jobs, and provide U.S. companies with skilled workers. Ms. Sarmiento currently serves as ETA's liaison to the State of Texas and as co-lead for the Dallas Region's Reemployment Initiative, which seeks to integrate services provided by states' Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser, and Workforce Investment programs.

Christina Techico

Senior Manager
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Christina Techico has fifteen years of experience working on workforce development, social service programs, youth development, and education reform efforts, primarily for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services at the Federal, State, and local levels. Her strengths lie in end-to-end strategic planning, program design, project development, implementation, technical assistance and training, and management. Ms. Techico has experience in managing resources and staff at all levels to accomplish client missions on a wide range of complex projects. Currently, she manages several projects on welfare reform, workforce development, and targeting special populations, such as at-risk youth. She serves as the Project Director for the Online Work Readiness Assessment, a comprehensive web-based tool that assists multiple barrier individuals assess their strengths and barriers and develop pathways to self-sufficiency.





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Speaker Biographies

Helen Thatcher

Program Manager

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Helen has worked for the State of Utah for 32 years. She began in child welfare as a foster care worker, managed local human services offices and now is a state administrator in the Utah Department of Workforce Services, the One Stop Operator in Utah. Helen was part of the restructuring of Utah's welfare, job services, and training agencies in 1997. Helen has had wide ranging experiences in programs of child protection, child care and child care licensing, self sufficiency, employment, and training, and policy development for Wagner-Peyser, WIA, TANF, Trade, and SNAP Employment and Training. She is currently managing a team of program specialists responsible for TANF, SNAP E&T, and General Assistance. She has a BA in Sociology and Social Work with a Masters in Human Resources/Labor Economics from the University of Utah.

Michael Thurmond

Commissioner

Georgia Department of Labor

Michael Thurmond has distinguished himself as an attorney, author, lecturer and public servant. In 1986, he became the first African-American elected to the Georgia General Assembly from Clarke County since Reconstruction. During his legislative tenure, he was the only African- American legislator elected from a majority white district. While serving in the General Assembly, Thurmond authored major legislation that has provided more than \$200 million in tax relief to Georgia's senior citizens and working families.

Following his tenure in the legislature, Thurmond was called upon to direct Georgia's historic transition from welfare to work. He created the innovative Workfirst program, which has helped over 90,000 welfare-dependent Georgia families move into the workforce, saving more than \$100 million in tax dollars that have been reinvested in childcare, training and other support services.

In 1997, Thurmond became a distinguished lecturer at the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government. The following year, he was elected Georgia Labor Commissioner. Now serving his third term as labor commissioner, the Labor Department has undergone a significant transformation in customer service and efficiency. Unemployment offices have been transformed into state-of-the-art Career Centers focused on getting jobless Georgians back to work as quickly as possible.





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Thurmond's latest book, ***Freedom: Georgia's Antislavery Heritage***, 1733-1865, was awarded the Georgia Historical Society's Lilla Hawes Award and the Georgia Center for the Book listed ***Freedom*** as one of The 25 Books All Georgians Should Read. He presently serves on the Board of Curators of the Georgia Historical Society.

Thurmond graduated with honors from Paine College with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and religion and later earned a Juris Doctorate from the University of South Carolina's School of Law. He also completed the Political Executives program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Nicole Verver

Director

Workforce Policy and Program Assistance

Texas Workforce Commission

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Nicole Verver is Director of the Texas Workforce Commission's Policy and Program Assistance Department. Her primary responsibilities include the administration of the TANF/ Choices, Child Care, Food Stamp Employment and Training, and Project RIO programs. She is an accomplished professional with extensive experience in policy development, program administration, program evaluation and policy implementation. Mrs. Verver is a member of the Executive Committee for the National Association of TANF State Administrators (NASTA). She also serves as the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program State Administrator and the Child Care State Administrator for the State of Texas. In addition, Mrs. Verver serves as a primary point of contact at TWC for several local, state and federal agencies and is often called upon to brief members of the legislature regarding workforce programs and policy. Currently, Mrs. Verver is an active member on both the TANF and Child Care National Reauthorization Committees.

Prior to joining Workforce Policy, Mrs. Verver spent several years in various roles within in TWC, including, TWC's Welfare Reform Initiatives Department and Managing TWC's Performance, Analysis and Reporting department. She is an active member of several national associations and is often invited to share her programmatic expertise as a speaker and panelist at national conferences. Mrs. Verver has Bachelor and Master's of Science degrees from Southwest Texas State University.





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Speaker Biographies

Dr. Mary Beth Vogel-Ferguson

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Mary Beth Vogel-Ferguson, PhD, CSW received her Ph.D. in Social Work from the University of Utah in 2008 and is currently the principal investigator of the FEP Study of Utah, a research partnership with Utah's Department of Workforce Services (DWS). For the past 11 years she has directed multiple studies and program evaluations with state and regional level government agencies, exploring the characteristics and needs of various low income populations, primarily cash assistance recipients. She has assisted these agencies in using the data for program and policy development.

In summer 2008, Dr. Vogel-Ferguson joined the faculty of the College of Social Work and teaches research at the masters level. She continues to provide workshops for local and national welfare agency administrators, research bodies and social work groups addressing issues related to welfare policy, poverty issues and serving the diverse welfare population.

Chris Warland

Program and Policy Liaison
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Chris Warland is Program and Policy Liaison for the National Transitional Jobs Network. He leads the Network's technical assistance activities, consulting with providers, state- and city-level leadership and regional consortia regarding Transitional Jobs program design and implementation; developing program resources and tools; researching and disseminating best practices; and providing training and learning opportunities for providers. Chris's experience in workforce development and serving hard-to-employ individuals also includes providing direct training and adult education instruction; developing training curricula for job-readiness and life skills courses; and conducting public policy research and analysis. Chris holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan and a Master of Arts from the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago.





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Speaker Biographies

Charles Watts

Accountant

Employment and Training Administration, Region IV

U.S. Department of Labor

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Charles Watts received his Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Regis University in Denver, Colorado. He has served in the U. S. Army, worked for the State of Colorado as a Labor and Employment Specialist and U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) as an Unemployment Insurance Program Specialist. Currently he is an Accountant with USDOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). In his current position he conducts monitoring reviews and provides technical assistance in the areas of fiscal and administrative grant management to ETA grantees and their sub-recipients.

Tobi Wickham

Business Training and Outreach Division Administrator

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

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Tobi Wickham was selected as the Administrator for the Business Training and Outreach Division of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services in August, 2008. Tobi oversees the management and direction of some of the Department's most popular programs including the Workforce Development Training Fund, the Employment Training for Self Sufficiency Program, the Dads Making a Difference Program, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, WY Quality Counts! and the LIFT Mentoring Program.

Prior to joining the Department, Tobi came to the Department from the Carbon County Higher Education Center in Rawlins where she served as the Marketing Communication Manager for three years. Prior to that experience, Wickham served as the Executive Director of The Child's Place Child Care Center in Glenrock. Tobi holds a Bachelor's Degree in Communications from Thomas Edison State College. Along with her education, Tobi has over 20 years of non-profit development experience.

