



# Innovation through Integration

## 2010 Heartland TANF Conference

### Speaker Biographies

**Rhandi Berth** has been the leading creative force behind the development of the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership into a nationally recognized model for economic and workforce development.

Ms. Berth has been the primary architect of new projects, initiatives, and services that enhance the ability of private sector organizations to recruit, retain, and develop a more diverse, qualified workforce over the last fifteen years. Her work includes:

- Developing nationally recognized model for pre-employment training certificate programs in entry-level manufacturing skills, machining, and welding for the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative
- Adapting pre-employment training certificate model to building and construction trades and joint apprenticeship committees, including utility line construction, heavy highway construction, and underground construction
- Facilitating development of peer advisor guide, mentor training guide, shop floor training guide, essential workplace skills program, positive attendance workshop, and other recruitment and retention services

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**Corey Bulluck** is currently Supervisor for the Division of Workforce Investment in Region V of the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration.

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**Doryan Clifton** has been working in the public assistance arena for 14 years. She began her career in April 1997 as a Financial Worker at Wright County Human Services. At Wright County she had a generic case load that was a combination of family and adult cases. On October 11, 1999, Ms. Clifton transferred to Hennepin County where she worked as a Senior & Principal Financial Worker. In 2001, Ms. Clifton was a member of the Shelter Project Team (which had the goal to divert clients from returning to agency for shelter and secure permanent affordable housing). In 2003, Ms. Clifton served as an Acting Trainer in Hennepin County's Training Team (for new hires in the adults division). Currently, she works as a Human Services Supervisor at Hennepin County in the Families Division implementing for the (DWP) Diversionary Work Program. Her primary responsibility is to manage a staff of eleven team members.

Ms. Clifton ensures that they maintain current knowledge of state and federal program rules and regulations, and that they determine and issue benefits in an efficient, timely manner. She believes that sharing resources (Electronic Case File) and communication is essential. She collaborates with other departments and agencies regarding clients in common.

Customer Service and process improvements are Ms. Clifton's passion. She remains committed to ensuring that all applicants are treated with dignity and respect and that her team members access all resources possible (ECF - BNA) to service our clients even when the clients are not eligible for the programs we service. Ms. Clifton enjoys spending time with her husband, 4 daughters and 1 stepson. She recently became a fan of the author Mary Higgins Clark, and enjoys cross word puzzles and Zumba.

**Heather Hahn, Ph.D.**, recently joined the Urban Institute as a Senior Research Associate in the Center for Labor, Human Services, and Population. Dr. Hahn spent the prior 11 years at the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), where she served most recently as an Assistant Director for Education, Workforce and Income Security issues. At GAO, she made numerous agency recommendations and provided Congress with original, nonpartisan research on the wide range of issues related to the well-being of children and families, including TANF, SNAP, and other supports for low-income families, as well as education, labor, and other policy issues. Her research on TANF has included, for example, aspects of state policy choices, eligibility and participation, outcomes for those with impairments, and receipt of supports for vulnerable groups. She received a Master of Public Policy from Duke University and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Stanford University. Dr. Hahn lives in Maryland with her husband, Jim, their two sons, ages 1 and 3, and her two stepdaughters, ages 13 and 16.

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**Jennifer Hrycyna** is the Associate Director for Policy and Field Operations within the Illinois Department of Human Services. She serves as the state's TANF Director, and is also responsible for SNAP policy and the local offices throughout the state that administer the benefits.

Prior to joining DHS, Jennifer was a Skadden Fellow with the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, where she focused on state and national TANF policy. She is a 2008 graduate of Northwestern University School of Law.

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Prior to joining ACF, **Earl Johnson, Ph.D.**, was senior Policy Advisor to Oakland, California Mayor Ron Dellums, where he was responsible for helping set policy and program goals for the city in the areas of workforce, health and urban affairs. He also worked with the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships on fatherhood initiatives. Before serving in Oakland he had significant state and non-profit sector experience, having served as Associate Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the California Health and Human Services Agency, as Associate Director, Working Communities for the Rockefeller Foundation, and as Senior Program Officer for The California Endowment, a private statewide health foundation.

Dr. Johnson graduated from the American University in Washington and earned a Master of Arts in Public Policy from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. in Social Welfare from the University of California. He is widely known for his work in developing programs and policy on matters related to TANF and has authored articles on needy family issues. His areas of expertise include poverty and fatherhood, both high priority issues for the Administration and HHS.

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**Les Johnson, Jr.** is currently the VP of Partnerships for ARCHS, a private nonprofit organization that serves as the official community partnership for the Greater St. Louis Region. Mr. Johnson is responsible for the creation of program design and implementation models that have been acknowledged as "promising practices" in their respective fields.

Mr. Johnson has worked in the field of health and human services for the past 20 years for both government and private organizations. He has served on local, state, and national task forces in the area of public policy impacting children, families and urban communities.

Mr. Johnson was previously an adjunct professor at Washington University in St. Louis' School of Social Work. Mr. Johnson holds a Bachelors Degree from Culver-Stockton College in the field of Administration of Justice. He earned his Masters of Social Work Degree from the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis.

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**Judy Kennedy** has been involved Human Services since 1983 when she started out doing eligibility determination in Nebraska. During a four year period she worked with customers in both the Omaha and Grand Island offices. She then became a Quality Control Specialist in the Food Stamp program for the State. In 1987 she expanded her

expertise to include work in Child Support Enforcement while employed with the Missouri Division of Family Services. In 1991 she spent 3 years in the Cass County Prosecutors Office in Harrisonville, Missouri working as a Victim Advocate and Paralegal, but returned to Family Services in 1994 where she stayed until 1997.

Ms. Kennedy moved to Pittsburg, Kansas and joined the State of Kansas Social Rehabilitation Services division of Employment and Economic Support (EES) in 1997. In Pittsburg she worked in the capacity of an EES case worker. She eventually made her way to the Topeka, Kansas EES Service Center and in January of 2008 she became the TANF Program Manager in the State of Kansas Social Rehabilitation Services EES Central Office.

Her past experiences have made her a capable leader that has an understanding of providing Human Services in a constantly changing economic and political atmosphere. Her employment record and education have made it possible for her to exemplify the mission statement of the State of Kansas Social Rehabilitation Services which is: To protect children and promote adult self-sufficiency.

Ms. Kennedy graduated from the University of Nebraska, Kearney, with a Bachelor of Science and Criminal Justice Degree. She received her Paralegal certificate from the University of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri. She now resides in Topeka, Kansas with her family.

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**Andrea Kovach** has been working with survivors of domestic violence for over a decade, including as a legal court advocate, a prosecutor in Cook County, and most recently in her work as a staff attorney at the Shriver Center. She wrote and advocated enacted legislation on prosecuting domestic violence cases. Ms. Kovach authored "Integrating Asset-Building Strategies into Domestic Violence Advocacy," Clearinghouse REVIEW Journal of Poverty Law and Policy (July–August 2009). She has presented on the topic nationally, including at the Northwest Area Foundation's 2010 Grassroots and Groundwork Conference. She is a proud alumna of Wellesley College and the University of Illinois College of Law.

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**Cassandra Slade** is Vice President – Community Development Officer at Lake Forest Bank & Trust, where she is responsible for managing the bank's community development initiatives that have a positive impact on the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) program. Prior to Lake Forest Bank & Trust, Ms. Slade served as Vice President – CRA Officer for National City Bank with responsibility for Northern Illinois. In her short tenure with Lake Forest Bank & Trust, she has established a very successful and nationally recognized lending program – the "Small Dollar Loan" – which lends small amounts of money to lower income borrowers to counteract the plethora of payday lending.

She has presented at the FDIC Alternative Small Dollar Loan Symposium in Chicago, as well as a panelist for a Webinar on "Integrating Asset Building Opportunities into Domestic Violence Advocacy" and a panelist/presenter at the Alliance for Economic Inclusion on "Encouraging Unbanked Consumers to Save" and in May 2010 co-presented the workshop "Empowering Domestic Violence Survivors to Create Assets and Wealth" at the national Northwest Area Foundation's "Grassroots & Groundwork" conference in Portland, Oregon.

Ms. Slade received her Master's from Marian College and BS in Economics from University of Wisconsin Milwaukee in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Ms. Slade was named a 2008 Woman of Achievement by the YWCA Lake County.

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**Gwen Sampson** is currently the Deputy Regional Administrator for the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid with the Department of Health and Human Services.

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**Trish Solis** has worked with the Food and Nutrition Service for the past twenty years. Prior to that she was a case worker in the panhandle of Texas, where she interviewed and certified households for the food stamp, AFDC (as they were called back then) and Medicaid programs. Since coming to the Food and Nutrition Service, she has worked in several areas of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. She also served a period of time as the Director of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program for the Food and Nutrition Service. Ms. Solis is now the Director of

the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for the Midwest Region.

Outside of work, she spends time with her husband and three daughters. They all like to cook, travel, and spend time together doing volunteer activities in the community.

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**Kenneth Tota** is the Deputy Director for the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). As the Deputy Director, Mr. Tota serves as the senior advisor to the Director of ORR and provides oversight with regard to all agency operations.

Prior to this, he served as Senior Program Specialist at the Immigration and Naturalization Services where, as manager-in-charge, Mr. Tota was directly responsible for the orderly transfer of the Unaccompanied Alien Children's Program from the U.S. Department of Justice to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Before entering civil service, Mr. Tota was the Cuban Haitian Program Coordinator for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in Washington, DC and Miami, Florida. In this role, he helped to coordinate a series of mass migration response efforts from both Cuba and Haiti. Mr. Tota has a Masters in Public Administration from the American University in Washington, DC.

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**Mary Beth Vogel-Ferguson, Ph.D., 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 all levels of agency management, from senior leadership to front line workers, in using the data for program and policy development.

In Summer 2008, Dr. Vogel-Ferguson joined the faculty of the College of Social Work at the University of Utah 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, and serving the diverse welfare population.