

Speakers and Bios

Plenary Sessions

Opening Plenary: Addressing the Nursing Workforce Crisis – Current Trends and Future Opportunities

*Facilitator: **Maya Kelley**, Unit Chief of the H-1B Skills Training Grants Unit, Office of Workforce Investment, U.S. Department of Labor*



Maya Kelley is the Unit Chief of the H-1B Skills Training Grants Unit within the Division of Strategic Investments, housed in the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Office of Workforce Investment at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). She manages and provides leadership, oversight, policy guidance, and technical assistance for several H-1B Skills Training competitive grant programs including the DOL Nursing Expansion Grant Program, Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs, Apprenticeships: Closing the Skills Gap, Rural Healthcare, and One Workforce grants. Prior to joining DSI, Maya worked in ETA's Office of Regional Management providing strategic communications and coordination to support regional grants management operations and technical assistance to the public workforce system. She also has previous human resource management experience working with the DOL Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management and a private sector consulting firm, PRM Consulting. Maya holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from the University of Virginia.

Katie Boston-Leary, PhD, MBA, MHA, RN, NEA-BC, Senior Director of Nursing Programs, American Nurses Association



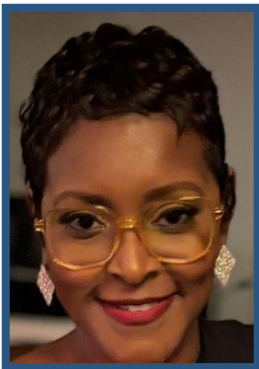
Dr. Katie Boston-Leary is the Senior Director of Nursing Programs at the American Nurses Association overseeing the Nursing Practice and Work Environment Division and Healthy Nurse Healthy Nation. She was also the Co-Lead for Project Firstline, a multi-million-dollar grant collaborative with the CDC for training on Infection Prevention and Control. Katie is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Maryland School of Nursing and the School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University. She is a board member for St. John's University Health Programs, Hippocratic AI and Ingenovis Health and an editorial advisory board member with Nursing Management, Nursing 2023 and ACHE. Katie serves as staff on the National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing and is also part of the National Academy of Science and Medicine's National Plan to Address Clinician Well-Being supported by the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy. Katie authored two chapters in The Sage Encyclopedia of Multicultural Counseling, Social Justice, and Advocacy, the first

encyclopedia focused on racism and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging. Katie was also featured in the documentary film, Everybody's Work, produced by SHIFT Nursing film funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Katie also led a National Nurse Staffing Think Tank and Task Force, which published actionable recommendations to address the nurse staffing crisis. She is also a 2023 International Council of Nurses Global Nurse Leadership Institute Scholar. Katie has also testified on panels and roundtables on Capitol Hill on the nurse staffing crisis and regulatory burden on hospitals and nurses. She was identified in August 2019 Health Leaders Media Journal as "One of Five Chief Nursing Officers Changing Healthcare". She also won the ICABA TD Bank 2023 Woman of Impact award and the 2024 Spectrum Circle Award for Innovation in Health. She was also

inducted as a Distinguished Fellow at the Academy of Diversity Leaders in Nursing with the National Black Nurses Association.

She has conducted research on care delivery models and time allocation with Quint Studer, Joslin Insight and McKinsey. She is a well-known speaker nationally and internationally with many publications and podcast guest invitations. She completed her PhD at Walden University in Health Services, obtained a dual degree MBA and MHA from the University of Maryland Global Campus and her bachelor's degree in nursing from Bowie State University in Maryland. She is a board-certified Nurse Executive and obtained a nurse executive leadership certificate from Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. She has been interviewed for numerous print, online and televised media outlets namely CNBC, NY Times, Cheddar TV, Axios, Beckers, Forbes and Bloomberg News. She has authored numerous articles on staffing, diversity and leadership and was featured on NBC's Today Show to discuss the nurse staffing crisis that is impacting health care delivery.

Qiana R. Parker, MSN, Branch Chief in the Nurse Education Practice, Quality, and Retention, Division of Nursing and Public Health, Health Resources and Services Administration



Qiana currently serves as the Branch Chief in the Nurse Education Practice, Quality, and Retention Branch under the Division of Nursing and Public Health within the Bureau of Health Workforce. Before joining HRSA, she oversaw the development of clinical and administrative policies, addressing quality, safety, and risk for another HHS agency. In addition to her administrative career, Qiana has 21 years of clinical nursing experience working as a staff/agency nurse in several Emergency Room/Trauma Centers and Community Health Clinics in the District of Columbia and Maryland.

Qiana received an A.S.N. from Prince George's Community College, a B.S. in Health Systems Management from the University of Baltimore, a B.S.N. from the University of Maryland University Campus, and a Master's degree in Quality Safety and Risk Management from Drexel University. Qiana enjoys spending time with family and friends, vacationing *without* a schedule, listening to 70s-80s music, and eating crabs.

Deborah Stamps, EdD, RN, FAAN, Chief Equity through Nursing Advisor, Center for Health Equity through Nursing, AARP



Deborah C. Stamps serves as Chief Equity through Nursing Advisor to the AARP Public Policy Institute, and among other responsibilities, she leads the LPN-to-RN Progression Initiative for the AARP Center for Health Equity through NursingSM (A-CHEN). The initiative seeks to identify and help replicate progression models with a track record of helping licensed practical nurses who wish to become registered nurses.

Stamps is the founder and chief executive officer for Deborah Stamps Consulting, LLC. She has over 30 years of progressive health care leadership and is an internationally recognized authority on workforce development, diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, nursing education, and leadership. She has held a variety of roles, from LPN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer, Vice President of Quality, Patient Safety and Innovation including founding President of the Rochester General College of Health Careers and the inaugural Chief Diversity Officer at Rochester Regional Health. Stamps earned her EdD from St. John Fisher College; MBA from Rochester Institute of Technology; MS and the Gerontological Nursing Practitioner at Nazareth College; and a BSN from SUNY College at Brockport. She is a 2023 Academy of Nursing Fellow and the recipient of the Center for Nursing NY Driscoll Award.

Ask the Experts: The ABCs of Grants Management

Facilitator **Dani Abdullah**, *Workforce Development Specialist, Nursing Expansion Program Support, Office of Workforce Investment, Department of Labor*



Dani Abdullah is a Workforce Development Specialist in the Division of Strategic Investments at the Department of Labor (DOL), where she serves as program support for the H-1B healthcare grant programs and as a performance lead for all H-1B grant programs. She has provided programmatic and performance technical assistance to hundreds of grantees across ten different DOL grant initiatives. Prior to joining this team, she worked as contractor supporting the Office of Workforce Investment at DOL and has worked on various initiatives, such as Green Jobs Grants, Technical Skills Training Grants, Job Accelerator Grants, the Competency Model Clearinghouse, and others. She was also a temporary federal employee

working on the Recovery Act grants. Dani holds a Bachelor of Science in International Business and Marketing from the University of Maryland.

Facilitator **Kristen Milstead, Ph.D.**, *Workforce Analyst- Nursing Expansion Program Lead, Office of Workforce Investment, Department of Labor*



Kristen Milstead, Ph.D., is a Workforce Analyst in the Division of Strategic Investments at the Department of Labor (DOL), where she serves as the program lead for the H-1B healthcare grant programs. She has provided programmatic and performance technical assistance to hundreds of grantees across fifteen different DOL grant initiatives. Prior to joining this team, she worked as a YouthBuild national liaison in the Division of Youth Services at DOL and as a statistician at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. She received her doctorate in Sociology from the University of Oklahoma, where her areas of emphasis were social stratification and criminology. Before her career in the federal government, she worked as a criminal justice professor at the University of Illinois and a resident adviser in a youth homeless shelter. In her free time, she likes to read, write, play geeky strategy board games, and cuddle with her Arabian Mau cats, Bo and Chewbacca.

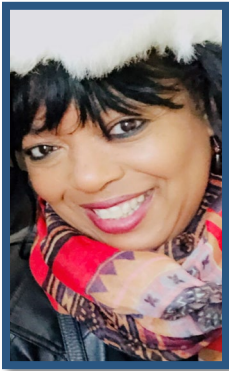
Thomas Kodiak, *Administrator, Office of Grants Management, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor*



Thomas Kodiak is the Administrator for the Office of Grants Management, Employment and Training Administration, which obligates greater than 85 percent of the funds for the Department of Labor. Prior to DOL he served as Director of Federal Assistance Financial Management and Director of Federal Assistance at the U.S. Department of State, leading grants policy and training for over 4000 grants management personnel domestic and overseas covering \$12 billion in federal assistance. Thomas has served in many grants' roles from Grants Officer for Conventional Weapons Destruction and Humanitarian Demining Program to Federal Project Officer for the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States advancing grants in democracy, human rights, and development, to being a grant recipient at an Illinois Small Business Center receiving Small Business Administration grants through the State of Illinois. He also worked as a

ranch manager on a 49,000-acre cattle ranch in South Park County, Colorado and served as a bonsai apprentice under a Japanese bonsai master in Japan. He has an MBA from the College of William and Mary, a MIM from Thunderbird, and a BS from Purdue University

Brie Burleson, *Nursing Expansion Federal Project Officer, Employment and Training Administration, Region 4 Office, Department of Labor*



I'm originally from Chicago, but my career in the Air Force and my love for exploring different cultures allowed me to travel around the world. I've been with the federal government for more than 20 years. I'm a Certified Grants Management Specialist and my job as a Federal Project Officer primarily has given me the opportunity to manage hundreds of non-profit organizations who were awarded millions to target at-risk populations which include youth, older workers, previously incarcerated individuals, people in rural Communities, and National Farmworkers. I work closely with grantees to ensure they administer successful programs.

Patrick Campbell, *Nursing Expansion Federal Project Officer, Employment and Training Administration, Region 5 Office, Department of Labor*



Patrick Campbell has thirty-six years of workforce development experience working with a wide variety of programs at both the State and Federal level. He understands the unique, detailed, and various responsibilities of administering a federal grant because he served as a grantee for more than three decades. In his current position as a Federal Project Officer, he is working with a portfolio of multiple programs such as Youth build, Strengthening Community College (1, 2, 3, and 4), Apprenticeships, National Farmworker Jobs Program, both Adults and Youth, Migrant Seasonal Housing, and The Nursing Expansion grants. He was with the State of Illinois for 33 years employed by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Employment and Training as the Program Development Division Manager. He has presented workshops and breakout sessions on Employer Engagement, Funding for Special Initiatives, Layoff Aversion/Rapid Response, Talent Pipeline Development and Apprenticeship Expansion at multiple State and Federal Convenings.

Paul Castro-Rodriguez, *Nursing Expansion Federal Project Officer, Employment and Training Administration, Region 6 Office, Department of Labor*



Paul Castro-Rodriguez was born in Guanajuato, México. For more than thirty years, he oversaw the implementation of workforce development programs that primarily served farm-working communities across Northern California. In 2022, Paul joined the Department of Labor and became a Federal Project Officer in Region 6-San Francisco. He remains committed to contributing to and supporting a workforce system that enables individuals and families to achieve their personal goals. He is a husband, a father of five, and a grandfather of seven, and he is a proud resident of Stockton, California.

Closing Plenary: Imagining the Future – DOL’s Vision for the Nursing Expansion Grants

*Facilitator: **Jenn Smith**, Division Chief of the Division of Strategic Investments, Office of Workforce Investment, U.S. Department of Labor*



Jenn Smith is Division Chief for the Division of Strategic Investments in the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration’s Office of Workforce Investment (OWI). In this position, she provides leadership in developing programs and policy guidance for ETA’s discretionary investments in skills training and employment programs. This division administers the Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants, as well as a portfolio of initiatives funded by the H-1B Skills Training grant funds. Prior to joining this division, she provided leadership in developing policy guidance and technical assistance for youth workforce development as the Program Manager for the Department’s YouthBuild program. In 2014, she was selected for a President’s Management Council rotation, where she detailed at the Office of Management and Budget in the Labor branch. While there, she worked on budget and policy issues related to the implementation of the

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

***José Javier Rodríguez**, Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor*



José Javier Rodríguez is DOL-ETA's Assistant Secretary. Prior to joining DOL, Asst Sec. Rodríguez handled complex litigation for employees, labor unions and pension and benefit funds as an attorney and partner at Sugarman, Susskind, Braswell & Herrera PA in Miami, Florida. In addition, Rodríguez has taught Florida constitutional law, advanced employment law topics and trial advocacy at three Florida law schools.

Rodríguez also served for eight years in the Florida Legislature. He was first elected in 2012 and represented a district in Miami-Dade County in the Florida House of Representatives and then, from 2016 to 2020, in the Florida Senate where he served as vice-chair of the Judiciary Committee. He has received numerous awards and recognitions for his work as a community leader and as policymaker, particularly in areas related to employment and the environment.

Raised in Miami, Rodríguez served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal after earning a B.A. from Brown University and prior to earning a J.D. from Harvard Law School. He and his wife Sonia are proud parents of two boys.

***Suchi Akmanchi**, Economist, Chief Evaluation Office, U.S. Department of Labor*



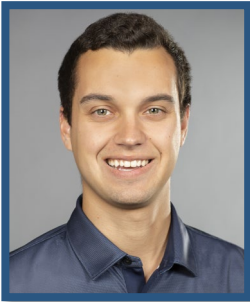
Suchi Akmanchi is an Economist in the Chief Evaluation Office at the U.S. Department of Labor. She leads evaluations of DOL employment and training programs with a primary focus on community colleges and registered apprenticeships. Her portfolio of work includes supporting projects focused on sectoral strategies, one of which is the Nursing Expansion Grant evaluation.

Daniel Litwok, PhD., Senior Associate, Abt Global



Dr. Daniel Litwok is a Senior Associate at Abt Global with expertise in evaluation design, research methods, and data analysis. His research over the past decade has focused on evaluating career pathways programs and workforce development initiatives. In addition to his role as co-Principal Investigator for DOL's Sectoral Strategies and Employment Engagement Portfolio, he has played leadership roles in Abt's evaluations of two rounds of the Health Profession Opportunity Grants program, or HPOG. Funded by the Administration for Children and Families, the HPOG evaluations are multi-year experimental studies of career pathways programs in the healthcare sector.

Evan Murphy, PhD., Evaluation Specialist, Chief Evaluation Office, U.S. Department of Labor



Dr. Evan Murphy is an Evaluation Specialist in the Chief Evaluation Office, at the U.S. Department of Labor. In the Chief Evaluation Office, he oversees evaluations of employment and training programs, including workforce development, reentry, and reemployment programs. Outside of his evaluation portfolio, he supports the development of the Department of Labor's Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR). Evan is the project officer for the Sectoral Strategies and Employer Engagement Portfolio which includes the evaluation of the Nursing Expansion Grants.

Featured Grantees

Outreach & Recruitment: Intake Onramps, and Enrollment Strategies

Dyranesia Cooper, *Vocational Counselor, Asian American Drug Abuse Program Inc.*



Dyranesia Cooper is a Vocational Counselor II at the Asian American Drug Abuse Program in Los Angeles, CA. She is the lead counselor for AADAP's Nursing Expansion Program and has more than eight years of experience working in nursing and other medical training programs.

Kimberly Huettl, *Program Specialist, Employ Milwaukee*



Kim Huettl is a Program Specialist from Employ Milwaukee. With over twenty years supervising student and professional employees to reach their full potential through coaching and mentoring in higher education, Kim made a recent career change in January when she joined the Employ Milwaukee team to work on their Nursing Expansion Grant. An administrator who understands the importance of quantitative and qualitative data collection for assessment and program improvement and she looks forward to sharing her social media experience.

Supporting Student Retention & Success

Nikki Coleman, *Workforce Development Specialist, 1199 SEIU Training & Employment Funds*



Nikki Coleman is a Workforce Development Specialist at the 1199 SEIU Training & Employment Funds (TEF). In her role, Nikki provides strategic support for grant-funded training and education programs, including LPN, associate degree RN, and BSN RN programs, and cultivates collaborative relationships with key stakeholders. She facilitates member enrollment, manages student cases, and ensures academic standards are met. She previously served as a Project Specialist II in the Education Department, where she was responsible for managing respiratory therapy cohort programs. Nikki has consistently worked to improve programs and processes while maintaining strong stakeholder relations. She received a Bachelor's degree in Social

Work, working for over 17 years, and most recently obtained her Master's in Healthcare Administration from Monroe College. Nikki brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her role.

Lynn Harris, Program Coordinator for Post Licensure Programs, Edson College of Health and Innovation, Arizona State University



Lynn Harris is an accomplished and organized leader with extensive experience in program coordination, grant management, and compliance within academic and clinical settings. Currently serving as the Program Coordinator for Post-Licensure programs at Edson College of Health and Innovation, Arizona State University, she oversees the Department of Labor Grant, ensuring the successful delivery of program milestones, compliance, and reporting. She holds an M.S. in Curriculum, Development & Instruction from the University of Kansas and dual B.A.s in Business Administration/Finance and Elementary Education with endorsements in Math & Reading from MidAmerica Nazarene University. She brings a pragmatic approach to leadership, focusing on achieving organizational goals through strategic planning, effective communication, and team development.

Heidi Sanborn, DNP, RN, CNE, Clinical Associate Professor and Senior Director of Post Licensure Programs, Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation, Arizona State University



Heidi Sanborn is a Clinical Associate Professor and Senior Director for the Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation post-licensure programs at Arizona State University. She teaches in both the BSN and MS in Nursing Education programs and mentors students in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program. She has leadership experience in both clinical and academic settings and uses her understanding of complex adaptive systems to launch and grow programs through academic and practice partnerships. Heidi serves as subject matter expert for Quality Matters peer reviews, is a peer reviewer for multiple publishers and journals, and has earned designation as a Certified Nurse Educator. She has authored textbooks,

publications and presentations and consults on topics around interprofessional leadership, nursing education, curriculum design, and accreditation in a variety of national and international forums.

Heidi Sanborn has served on the AzNA Board of Directors since 2018 in both the Vice President and President positions. She has also been actively involved with the American Nurses Association, serving as AzNA Member Representative and on the Nominations and Elections Committee. Heidi is passionate about health policy and nursing workforce issues in the state of Arizona and is dedicated to amplifying the nursing voice with stakeholders across the state and health disciplines to ensure the support that nurses need to deliver high-quality and safe care.

Participant Completion & Certification Strategies

Leigh Roberts, Vice President of Workforce Development, The Workplace, Inc.



With over twenty years in higher education and workforce development, Leigh Roberts specializes in program development, diversity initiatives, and student engagement. As Vice President at The Workplace, Inc., she oversees comprehensive workforce projects, aimed at enhancing career pathways in healthcare and other critical sectors. Leigh's expertise in aligning educational programs with labor market trends and her commitment to diversity and inclusion have profoundly impacted students and communities alike. She holds a Master of Public Administration and multiple certifications in Human Resources, Career Development, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Placement Strategies

Irma Garcia, Chief Program Officer, Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement



Irma Garcia, Chief Program Officer with Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement, a non-profit agency specializing in job training to low-income individuals. Responsibilities include overseeing a staff of eleven, direct personnel engaged in providing services with the project, analyze counseling and guidance procedures, recruitment and screening of applicants, network with employers, business leaders and institution instructors, etc. The Chief Program Officer is responsible for developing program goals, managing all program services by directing and coordinating activities consistent with the strategic plan. The Chief Program Officer is responsible for program administration by coordinating activities of all Career Counselors/Case Managers, Case Aides, and other program staff.

Prior to working at VIDA in 1997, Mrs. Garcia worked at Buckner Children and Family Services as a Case Aide where she worked primarily assisting the Case Worker. Before that, Mrs. Garcia worked as a Financial Secretary and Receptionist for a total of twelve years before moving to VIDA.

In 1986 Mrs. Garcia got a certificate in Computerized Accounting, got a job doing what she studied but at a very low wage with no advancement. In 1992 Mrs. Garcia decided to take the next step and attended a university. In 1997 Mrs. Garcia received a BS degree in Rehabilitative Services from the University of Texas-Pan American in Edinburg, Texas. Right out of college Mrs. Garcia was given the opportunity to continue employment at the location where she conducted her practicum.

Mrs. Garcia became employed at VIDA in 1997 as a Case Manager. Throughout her employment years, she has worked herself up the ladder serving in different positions such as: Case Manager, Program Manager, Operations Manager, Compliance Officer and her current position as Chief Program Officer.

Isidro “Sid” Ramos, Director of Workforce & Economic Development, Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement



Sid, as he is known, is short for Isidro Ramos. Sid works for Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement, or VIDA, a non-profit career training assistance organization. He is the Director of Workforce and Economic Development. He is a graduate of the University of Texas Pan American, where he received his Bachelor of Arts in Behavioral Science and later obtained a Bachelor of Applied Science in Organizational Leadership.

Sid's expertise is rooted in bringing forth sustained systemic change to the region through the development of short-term career-based training pathways. In his 27-year workforce development career, Sid has developed countless training programs with this in mind, which ensure the region can maintain a competitive edge. Sid currently oversees the allied health, manufacturing and skilled trades programs.

Effective Partnership Strategies

Hannah Dieterle, *Next Nurse Program Coordinator, Alluvion Health*



Hannah Dieterle is the Next Nurse Program Coordinator at Alluvion Health in Great Falls, Montana. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Northern Arizona University and gained valuable experience in executive assistant roles before stepping into her current position. During college, Hannah completed an 8-month internship at Disneyland Resort in California, adding a unique touch to her professional background. Now, she resides in Montana with her husband and two daughters, where they enjoy camping, skiing, and all things outdoors.

Heather Smith, *MSN, RN, Clinical Educator, Alluvion Health*



Heather Smith, the Clinical Educator for the Next Nurse program at Alluvion Health in Great Falls, Montana, brings practical expertise and a passion for nursing education to her role. She holds a master's degree from Walden University, specializing in nursing education, and is currently enrolled in a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner program. Before joining Alluvion Health, Heather taught LPN and ASN nursing at Great Falls College – MSU, which laid the foundation for her transition to the Next Nurse Apprentice Program. As the Clinical Educator, Heather operationalizes and runs this innovative program, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world patient care. The Next Nurse program offers an “earn as you learn” approach, preparing aspiring nurses for their future careers.

Heather and her wife moved from New Jersey to Montana in 2014. They now reside on a small ranch surrounded by mini donkeys, goats, sheep, and alpacas.

Susan Welch, *EdD, RN, CNE, CCRN alumnus, Vice Dean, University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing*



Dr. Susan Welch, a nationally and internationally recognized expert in curriculum development and program evaluation, is also a dedicated nursing faculty mentor, demonstrating her commitment to the development of future nursing professionals. As a nationally certified nurse educator (CNE), Dr. Welch has rich experience teaching prelicensure BSN and graduate students. Her past leadership roles include serving as an inaugural doctoral program director and associate dean for graduate nursing programs for over a decade. Over the past 20 years, Dr. Welch has actively contributed to education through numerous research studies, presentations, and publications, securing over \$6 million in grant funding for nursing education. She has been named a national scholar in the Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society's Experienced Nurse Faculty Leadership Academy. Dr. Welch serves as chair of the Executive Committee and the Board of Commissioners for the National League for Nursing (NLN) Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (CNEA).

Sustainability: Planning for the Future of Your Grant

Sarah Vlasich, BSN, RN, CMSRN, Workforce Development Specialist & Granite State PARTNERS Project Manager, Elliot Health System



Sarah Vlasich is the Workforce Development Specialist and Grant Manager for Elliot Hospital's Nursing Expansion Grant Project, Granite State PARTNERS (People Aligning Resources towards Nursing Expansion and Retention Strategies).

Before joining the Workforce Development Department in October 2023, Sarah spent four years as a certified registered nurse on Elliot Hospital's acute medical oncology unit. She advanced to a leadership position as a Resource Nurse in December 2016, where her leadership became particularly vital during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period that significantly exacerbated the nursing shortage.

Sarah's direct experience with the nursing shortage in New Hampshire has fueled her dedication to addressing this critical issue. Her personal journey, supported by the "Upward Bound" grant program throughout high school, has deepened her commitment to supporting underrepresented and underserved individuals, thereby enhancing the healthcare pipeline, and expanding opportunities for those who might otherwise be unable to pursue careers in healthcare.

Sarah earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Rivier University in 2014. Outside of her professional responsibilities, she enjoys spending time with her family, cooking, and reading

Nursing Expansion Technical Assistance Team

Lori Collins, *Senior Technical Assistance Consultant and Nursing Expansion Coach, American Institutes for Research (she/her/hers)*



Lori Collins is a Senior Technical Assistance Consultant at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) with over 25 years in the workforce system as a local workforce board director, state administrator, and various roles in the nonprofit sector. She has expertise in workforce development policy and practice; streamlining operations to enhance effectiveness and ensure compliance; alignment and integration of programs for collective impact, and program design and delivery for universal and targeted populations including individuals with disabilities and individuals experiencing the cycle of generational poverty. Lori's experience also includes grant management, sector partnerships, business engagement, program monitoring, rehabilitation counseling principles and practices, and the facilitation of strategies ranging from big ideas to operational practice.

Her portfolio of practice at AIR includes projects aimed at improving the impact of the workforce system; training and coaching for state workforce agencies, local elected officials, and state and local workforce board members; resource alignment and cost-sharing; coaching grantees of federal awards; and leading technical assistance efforts related stay-at-work/return-to-work outcomes for individuals who acquire an injury or illness while in the workforce.

Lori holds a BA in Sociology from Georgetown College and a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Kentucky. She's lives in Kentucky with her two daughters, is a proud Appalachian, an avid concert goer, and an enthusiastic fan of University of Kentucky football and basketball.

Kara Conroy, *Senior Researcher and Nursing Expansion Coach, Mathematica*



Kara Conroy is a Senior Researcher in the Education and Employment division of Mathematica. Ms. Conroy has a decade of experience in measurement, evaluation, and evidence-based technical assistance with a focus on workforce development, education, and economic mobility. In addition to her work on the Nursing Expansion Grant, Ms. Conroy is currently supporting evaluation capacity building of state workforce agency staff through the Employment and Training Administration (ETA)'s Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC). In the past, Ms. Conroy was a TA coach for DOL's Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) and her research on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's New Jersey Nursing Initiative, which was designed to address the nurse faculty shortage in New Jersey, was published in Nursing Outlook.

Ms. Conroy is particularly passionate about workforce and education programs that have the potential to support prosperity for women and girls and provide opportunities in the growing care economy. She holds a B.A. from Boston College and an M.S. in Applied Economics from Johns Hopkins University.

Chris Herzog, Principal TA Consultant & Nursing Expansion Coaching Lead, AIR



Chris has over 20 years of experience in the public sector, academia, and the private sector, with a focus on workforce development. Chris is a Project Director and Principal TA Consultant in the Workforce Program Area at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) with a focus on sector strategies, career pathways, registered apprenticeship, workforce board development, and unemployment insurance. Chris is an accomplished director with extensive experience designing and leading industry sector aligned TA initiatives, development of career pathways, and driving workforce partner and employer engagement.

Prior to joining AIR, Chris worked at the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission where she ran the Healthcare Workforce Council and was a Research Project Director at the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers. Chris holds an MA in Public Administration and a BA in Political Science.

Dallas Oberlee (she/her/hers), Seniors Associate and Nursing Expansion Coach, Social Policy Research Associates

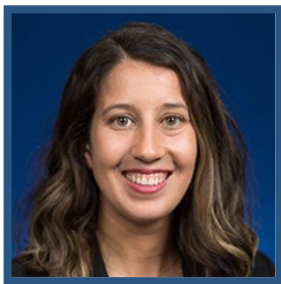


Dallas Oberlee serves as a Senior Associate in the Workforce Human Services Division at Social Policy Research Associates (SPR). She is an expert in training and technical assistance, specializing in coaching, career pathways, employer engagement, performance, workforce program implementation, and project management.

Before joining SPR in 2020, Dallas spent 14 years as a Program Director at the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, where she led programs at the local American Job Center. At SPR, Dallas plays a vital role in providing technical assistance and managing multiple projects. Her contributions include planning and organizing virtual events, coordinating with partners and key stakeholders, providing guidance to grantees, conducting needs assessments, developing asset maps, and ensuring materials are 508 compliant.

Dallas holds an M.P.A. and a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Western Michigan University. In her free time, she enjoys outdoor activities such as skiing, camping, running, and hiking with her family.

Ryan Ruggiero, Researcher and Nursing Expansion Coach, Mathematica



Ryan Ruggiero is a Researcher at Mathematica and Nursing Expansion Program coach. At Mathematica her work spans evaluating federal social and workforce programs and providing programmatic and evaluation technical assistance to grantees. She has expertise in apprenticeship, workforce, and family support programs aimed at advancing economic mobility and alleviating poverty. She holds and M.P.P from the University of Michigan and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in South Africa.

Darcee Simon, (she/her/hers), Technical Assistance Consultant and Nursing Expansion Coach, American Institutes for Research



Darcee Simon is a Technical Assistance Consultant in the Workforce Program Area at AIR. Darcee's experience and expertise spans education, non-profit and workforce development with a focus on strategic partnership development, cross-program coordination and system alignment. Her project work at AIR has included supporting state and local workforce development areas with strategic planning, coaching state grantee teams and state board staff, and developing technical assistance resources and facilitating training for state workforce partners, state and local workforce board members and staff, and state grantee teams.

Previously, Darcee served as a state workforce system coordinator with the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development, focusing on strengthening state and local workforce area partnerships to align strategic workforce development initiatives. Darcee came to workforce development from the education field, where she began as a New York City Teaching Fellow and later went on to be a higher education administrator for a career training program and a recruiter for Teach for America.

Darcee holds a M.A. from the School for International Training and a M.S. from Pace University and has completed doctoral coursework at the University of Arkansas. Outside of work, she cheers for the Oklahoma City Thunder, hangs out in her local knitting shop, and enjoys the Minnesota weather.

Tessa St. John, Associate and Nursing Expansion Grants Management and Performance Lead, Social Policy Research Associates



Tessa is an Associate in the Workforce and Human Services Division at Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) with expertise in workforce grant management, team leadership, project management, and technical assistance and training. She currently works with the DOL team as a grants management and performance lead on the Nursing Expansion grant. Before joining SPR, Tessa worked for the State of California where she led a team of analysts conducting grant compliance monitoring reviews and providing technical assistance to workforce grant recipients, specializing in the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA). Tessa holds an M.P.A. from California State University, Stanislaus and a B.A. in Child Development from Sacramento State.