



2020 NASWA Summit Presenters

Speaker & Presenter Biographies

Olugbenga Ajilore, dark hair, dark-skinned, smiling at camera

Olugbenga (Gbenga) Ajilore

Senior Economist, Center for American Progress

Gbenga Ajilore is a senior economist at American Progress. His expertise includes regional economic development, macroeconomic policy, and issues in diversity and inclusion. He has been invited to testify in front of Congress. He has been featured in The New York Times and The Washington Post, and he has made many media appearances.

Prior to joining American Progress, Dr. Ajilore was an associate professor of economics at the University of Toledo. His research has focused on race and local public finance, peer effects and adolescent behavior, and police militarization. His work has been published in numerous journals, such as The Review of Black Political Economy, Economics and Human Biology, the Review of Economics of the Household, and the Atlantic Economic Journal. In 2018, he served as president of the National Economic Association.

Dr. Ajilore received his Ph.D. in economics from Claremont Graduate University. He earned his B.A. in applied mathematics and economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

Presenter Regina Ashley, Dark hair, medium skin-toned woman smiling at the camera

Regina Ashley

Chief UI & Workforce Solutions Officer, Indiana Department of Workforce Development

Regina Ashley is the Chief Unemployment Insurance and Workforce Solutions Officer at the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Ms. Ashley also served as Chief Workforce Officer, Interim DWD Commissioner, Chief Strategy Officer and Associate Chief Operations Officer of Policy prior to moving to her current role. Prior to DWD, Ms. Ashley worked for the Indiana Department of Child Services, served as a Commissioner for the Marion County Superior Court, Juvenile Division, and worked as a civil litigation attorney

for law firms in Indianapolis, Chicago and St. Louis.

Presenter Amy Banicki, Dark hair, light-skinned woman smiling at the camera

Amy Banicki

Deputy Administrator, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Amy has been with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Unemployment Insurance Division, for over 20 years in various positions. She has been in her current position as the Deputy Administrator since March 2019.

Presenter Pat Bayer, Gray hair, light skinned male, smiling at camera.

Pat Bayer

Gilhuly Family Distinguished Professor in Economics, Duke University

Pat Bayer's research focuses on a wide range of subjects including racial inequality and segregation, social interactions, housing markets, education, and crime. He has received numerous grants from the National Science Foundation, Social Science and Humanities Council of Canada, and the US Department of Education. His most recent work has been published in the Quarterly Journal of Economics, the Journal of Political Economy, the Journal of Environmental Economics, and American Economics Association P&P. He is currently working on projects that explore housing price dynamics, racial discrimination in home sales, dynamic equilibrium in a national system of cities, the microdynamics of neighborhood discrimination, and the impact of the racial composition of juries on criminal trial outcomes.

Dr. Bayer received his Ph.D. from Stanford University and his B.A. from Princeton University.

Presenter Michelle Beebe, dark haired, light-skinned woman, smiling at the camera

Michelle Beebe

Chief of Legislation Division, Office of Unemployment Insurance, Employment and Training Administration,
U.S. Department of Labor

Michelle Beebe currently serves as the chief of the legislation division within the Office of Unemployment Insurance in the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and has served in that role since December, 2019. Prior to her federal service, Michelle oversaw the Unemployment Insurance programs in Utah and then in Michigan – two states of very different sizes and methods of administration. In that role, she chaired the NASWA UI Committee 2017-2018. Michelle also served with the national UI Integrity Center, first as a member of the steering committee and then as a senior subject matter expert in coordinating state intensive services. Michelle earned a Bachelor of Science in philosophy and a Master of Public Policy from the University of Utah.

Presenter Kevin Burt, light haired, light-skinned male, smiling at the camera

Kevin Burt

Director, Unemployment Insurance Division, Utah Department of Workforce Services

Kevin Burt has worked for the Department of Workforce Services for over 18 years and is currently the Unemployment Insurance division director for the State of Utah.

Presenter Greg Castellani, Dark haired, light-skinned male, smiling at the camera

Greg Castellani

Unemployment Insurance Director, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Greg Castellani has worked for the Division of Unemployment Insurance for 30 years, starting as a Claims Examiner in 1990. He has held multiple positions within the Division over the years and was appointed as UI Director in April 2015.

Presenter **John Colbert**, dark hair, light-skinned, smiling at the camera

John Colbert

Co-Founder and Partner, Capitol Hill Partners

John Colbert has an extensive background serving in the Executive branch, as well as working with Congress. John was a senior official in the Clinton Administration as Chief of Staff of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, overseeing an \$11 billion budget. In this position, John helped direct the nation's major job training and youth development programs.

Prior to becoming Chief of Staff, John was a legislative liaison with Congress for the Clinton Administration on a number of major reauthorization bills and their implementation, including the Workforce Investment Act, Older Americans Act and Welfare to Work Act. He also acted as the Department of Labor's point person with the Congressional Appropriations Committee in the development of pilot projects and Congressionally directed funding. More recently, John served on President Obama's workforce policy committee during the 2008 Presidential campaign. At Capitol Hill Partners, John specializes in representing national workforce, education and social service programs, as well as individual nonprofits, before Congress, and the Executive branch. His assistance on behalf of clients includes direct lobbying, regulatory initiatives, political intelligence, coalition advocacy, as well as communications and grassroots strategy.

Presenter **Angela Crocker**, Dark hair, dark skin-toned woman, smiling at the camera

Angela Crocker

Strategic Partner Manager, Google

Angela Crocker is Strategic Partner Manager responsible for leading the partner and ecosystem strategy for Search products focused on Civic Services and Economic Opportunity. Prior to her current role, she was in higher education and strategy and operations for Google Cloud. She is based in Google's New York office.

~~Nora Crowley~~ Dark hair, light-skinned woman, smiling at the camera

Nora Crowley

Executive Director, Rhode Island Governor's Workforce Board

~~Bill Dowling~~ Bearded, light-skinned, smiling at the camera.

William "Bill" Dowling

Director, Employment and Training Division, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

William “Bill” Dowling began working as the Director of the Employment and Training Division at Colorado Department of Labor and Employment on June, 1st 2012. He has over 23 years of experience working in the Workforce and Economic Development arena.

Previous to his relocation to Colorado to assume his current position; Bill served for seven years as the Director of Workforce Development for the City of Springfield, MO, as well as the Executive Director of the Ozark Region Workforce Development Board. In this role, he was responsible for providing comprehensive employment and training programs for the disadvantaged, unemployed, or underemployed in the Ozark Region of Missouri.

Before moving to Springfield, Bill came from the City of Los Angeles, California where he was responsible for the operation of 2 One-Stop Career Centers who primarily served the Asian-Pacific Islander community. Previous to his Workforce Development experience, Bill served in parish ministry as a Roman Catholic priest in the greater Los Angeles area.

Bill holds a Master of Arts in Theology and Master of Divinity from St. John’s in Camarillo, California. Bill is a member of several national workforce organizations including currently serving as the Vice Chair of the Board of the National Association of Workforce Professionals (NAWDP), and Co-Chair of the Workforce Information Technology Support Center (WIOA ITSC) Board of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies.

~~Presenter Laurel Farrer~~ Dark hair, light-skinned, smiling at the camera

Laurel Farrer

Founder, Distribute Consulting and Remote Work Association

As the Founder of Distribute Consulting and the Remote Work Association, Laurel Farrer starts, strengthens, and leverages virtual workforces to solve corporate and socioeconomic concerns. A global thought leader on the topic of remote work, Laurel collaborates with the world's leading businesses and governments to eliminate virtual worker discrimination, prevent policy retraction, increase remote job accessibility, train distributed leaders, and design economic initiatives. Additionally, she also shares her expertise as a Forbes contributor, subject matter expert for business education curriculum, and virtual software product advisor.

~~Presenter Jim Garner~~ Dark haired, light-skinned man, smiling at the camera

Jim Garner

Deputy Administrator, Office of Unemployment Insurance, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor

Jim Garner currently serves as the Deputy Administrator of the Office of Unemployment Insurance in the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and has served in that role since June, 2012. Prior to his federal service, Jim served eight years as the Secretary of Labor for the State of Kansas (2003-2011). Jim is a graduate of Coffeyville (Kansas) Community College and he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from the University of Kansas and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Kansas, School of Law. Following law school, Jim served a two-year appointment clerking for U.S. District Judge Dale Saffels. In August 2016, Jim graduated from the Federal Executive Institute's "Leadership for a Democratic Society" program.

~~Presenter Gay Gilbert~~ Blonde hair, light-skinned, smiling at camera

Gay Gilbert

Administrator, Office of Unemployment Insurance, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor

Gay joined the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) in November 2000 and currently serves as the Administrator of the Office of Unemployment Insurance overseeing the nation's federal-state Unemployment Insurance program.

Previously, Gay served as the Administrator for the Office of Workforce Investment in ETA providing federal oversight and leadership for America's workforce investment system, including employment and training programs under the Workforce Investment Act and direction and support for the nation's locally driven one-stop delivery system. She also served as the Director for ETA's Business Relations Group and headed the Employment Service.

Prior to joining the U.S Department of Labor, Gay was a senior official for the State of Ohio overseeing workforce programs and unemployment insurance for over ten years.

Gay also served as Assistant City Attorney for the City of Columbus, Ohio, and eight years with the West Virginia Department of Human Services.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Michigan State University, a Master of Social work from West Virginia University, and Juris Doctor, from Ohio State University.

~~Ellen Golombek~~ Dark hair, medium-skin-toned woman, smiling at camera

Ellen Golombek

Deputy Executive Director, National Association of State Workforce Agencies

Ellen joined NASWA as Deputy Executive Director, overseeing NASWA services as well as new business, and helping define the agency's role in the ever growing world of apprenticeships. Prior to joining NASWA, Golombek was the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment for almost seven years. In that role, she oversaw the 1300-person agency which houses the Divisions of Employment and Training, Labor, Unemployment Insurance, Workers' Compensation, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Oil and Public Safety.

Ellen's previous experience includes state director for America Votes in Colorado and vice president for External Affairs for Planned Parenthood. She was the first woman elected as president of the Colorado AFL-CIO and spent four years with the 1.8 million-member Service Employees International Union.

~~Presenter John Grigsby~~ Dark hair, light-skinned, smiling at camera

John Grigsby

Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Economics Department, Northwestern University

John Grigsby's research studies macroeconomics with a focus on aggregate labor markets, wage dynamics and innovation. He is coauthor of the paper "The U.S. Labor Market During the Beginning of the Pandemic Recession," which analyzed weekly payroll data from Automatic Data Processing (ADP), Inc. His recent work has been published in the American Economic Review and featured in outlets such as the Washington Post, Politico, The Atlantic, and the Harvard Business Review.

Dr. Grigsby received his PhD in Economics from the University of Chicago and his B.A. from Washington and Lee University. He is joining Princeton University as an Assistant Professor in the Fall of 2021.

Julie Hatch Maxfield, Dark hair, light-skinned woman, smiling at camera

Julie Hatch-Maxfield

Associate Commissioner for Employment and Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

Julie Hatch Maxfield became the Associate Commissioner for the Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics in 2019. Ms. Maxfield began her career at BLS in 1999 and worked for many years on the Current Employment Statistics program. In 2015, she became Assistant Commissioner in the Office of Current Employment Analysis. Her responsibilities included overseeing the Current Population Survey, the Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, and the American Time Use Survey. Of particular note is the extensive work she has done in support of the most recent collection and publication of the Contingent Worker Supplement to the Current Population Survey, followed by work with the ongoing Committee on National Statistics panel working on potential improvements to these data. Ms. Maxfield received Bachelor of Science degrees in Economics and Business from Mount St. Mary's University and a Master of Arts degree in Applied Economics from Johns Hopkins University.

Presenter Alishea Hawkins, Dark haired, light-skinned woman, smiling at the camera

Alishea Hawkins

Associate Chief UI Officer, Indiana Department of Workforce Development

Alishea Hawkins is the Associate Chief Unemployment Insurance Officer at the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Dr. Hawkins also served as Associate Chief Strategy Officer and Director of Adult Education Policy and Programs prior to moving to her current role. Prior to DWD, Dr. Hawkins worked in the Child Welfare, Post-Secondary Supports and Mental Health fields.

Presenter Grace Hoyt, Blonde hair, light-skinned woman, smiling at the camera

Grace Hoyt

Strategic Partner Manager, Google

Grace is a Strategic Partner Manager, focusing on Search and Web support for global government partners during the COVID 19 crisis. She is based in Google's New York office.

Anna Hui, Dark hair, medium-skin-toned woman, smiling at the camera

Anna Hui

Director, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations | Board President, NASWA Board of Directors

Anna was appointed as Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations in March of 2017 with Senate confirmation in January 2018. Making her the first Asian-American to serve in the governor's cabinet in Missouri history. Anna started her public service career working for Illinois Governor Jim Edgar as the Special Assistant to the Governor for Asian-American affairs and then for Governor George Ryan, as a senior-member of the Washington, D.C. policy management team. In President George W. Bush's Administration, Anna served as Associate Deputy Secretary of Labor at the U.S. Department of Labor, where she coordinated major domestic and international programs and activities on labor and workforce safety and standards issues. After leaving federal service in 2009 and until she returned to Illinois in 2015, she was Chief of Staff to former U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Elaine Chao. From 2015 to 2017, Anna served as Assistant Director and later as Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Labor. Currently, Anna serves as Vice-Chair of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Unemployment Insurance Committee and member of their Legislation Committee; Board member of the Family and Community Trust; Midwest Regional Coordinator for the National Association of Government Labor Officials (NAGLO); and member of the International Association of Industrial Accidents Boards and Commissions (IAIABC).

Presenter Jennifer James, light haired, light-skinned woman, smiling at the camera

Jennifer James

Undersecretary for Workforce Development, Director of the Workforce SKills Cabinet, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Ms. James serves as the Undersecretary of Workforce Development for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. The Secretariat is responsible for development and oversight of major state and federal workforce development programs and funding streams. The public workforce system includes 16 Workforce Development Boards and 29+ One Stop Career Centers. Within this role, she designs and directs major initiatives on behalf of the Administration, including the Workforce Skills Cabinet. The Workforce Skills Cabinet develops signature initiatives through policy and practice to align our education, workforce and economic systems to address job growth and hiring demand in regions across the state. The Cabinet is made up of the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development (chair), Secretary of Education, and the Secretary of Housing and Economic Development. Prior to this post, Jennifer served as the Deputy Director at the state's Department of Workforce Development beginning in 2001 after earning a master's degree in Urban Development and City Planning with a concentration in Labor Economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Prior to graduate work, Jennifer managed projects related to central city economic development and affordable housing at a community development corporation in Roxbury, MA. In addition, she developed research on the workforce needs of high growth companies in Cambridge, MA through the Economic Development department at the City of Cambridge. She received an undergraduate degree in Social Work from the University of New Hampshire.

Presenter John V. Ladd, Dark hair, light-skinned male smiling at camera

John V. Ladd

Administrator, Office of Apprenticeship, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor

John Ladd became Administrator of the Office of Apprenticeship in January 2008. As the Administrator, John has responsibility for oversight and activities related to the National Apprenticeship Act as well as the management of OA staff in the National Office, 6 Regional Offices, and numerous field offices across the country.

Prior to his appointment as Administrator, John served as the Deputy Administrator for the Office of National Response and the Director of Regional Management in the Office of Field Operations. John has received numerous awards and honors while at ETA including being selected for the inaugural class of ETA's Excellence in Leadership Program. John also has extensive experience in ETA's Regional Offices having spent a number of years in the Boston Regional Office working with workforce development programs in New England. John first came to the Department of Labor as a Presidential Management Fellow in 1993.

John also has experience at the local level of the public workforce system having worked in Boston, MA, and Stamford, CT.

A native of Boston, MA, Mr. Ladd received his bachelor's degree from Boston University and his Master's in Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Mardy Leathers, dark hair, light skinned male, smiling at the camera

Mardy Leathers

Director, Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development

Dr. Mardy L. Leathers was appointed to serve as the Director of the Missouri Office of Workforce Development in October 2017. In his capacity, Leathers serves as Executive Director to Missouri's State Workforce Development Board, Director of Apprenticeship Missouri, and oversees Missouri's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Programs. Since his appointment, he has served an integral role in transforming Missouri's public workforce development system, expanding and modernizing apprenticeship and work-based learning programs, supporting the Job Centers of the Future, Talent for Tomorrow, and Best in Midwest initiatives, and launching the Missouri-United Kingdom Apprenticeship Partnership. Leathers has led his organization through a myriad of challenges including organizational restructuring, natural disaster, merger of state agencies, and global pandemic. Prior to becoming the Director of Workforce Development, he most recently served as Executive Director of the Center for Workforce Development at East Central College in Union, Missouri. There, he played a key role in developing the statewide Community College Workforce Development Network and oversaw the college's business and industry training efforts, community education, healthcare career certification and WIOA programs. Additionally, Leathers served as Crawford County, Missouri Clerk, holds a BS from Southeast Missouri State University, a MBA from William Woods University, a Doctor of Management from Webster University.

Presenter Anang Mittal, Dark hair, medium skin-toned male, smiling at camera

Anang Mittal

Strategic Partnerships Manager for Civics, YouTube

Anang Mittal was previously the creative director for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and at the Senate Republican Conference where his innovative videos received national attention and praise. He's very passionate about content creation, storytelling, and helping people communicate through digital media. He's a

first generation immigrant from New Delhi, India and now calls Washington, DC his home.

Presenter **Andy Rübsam**, Dark haired, light-skinned male, smiling at the camera

Andy Rübsam

Senior Attorney, Unemployment Insurance Division, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Andy Rübsam's practice comprises the many facets of government legal work in litigation and transactional matters. Andy particularly enjoys the nuances of drafting legislation, commiserating with other government attorneys, and homebrewing.

Presenter **Scott B. Sanders**, Dark hair, light skinned male, smiling at the camera

Scott B. Sanders

Executive Director, National Association of State Workforce Agencies

Scott B. Sanders began serving in his role as Executive Director of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) in October 2014. He previously served as the Commissioner for the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. During his tenure at the Department, Scott was instrumental in implementing Jobs for Hoosiers (helping unemployed individuals return to work faster) and launching a modernized UI computer system that integrated benefits, tax and appeals. He was also active in the passage of Indiana's UI Trust Fund Solvency Reform legislation and in the implementation of the nation's largest Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) drop-out prevention program. Scott holds a bachelor's degree from Miami University and a master's in business administration from Northwestern University's J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

Presenter **Kim Vitelli**, Dark hair, light-skinned woman smiling at the camera

Kim Vitelli

Deputy Administrator for the Employment and Training Administration's Office of Workforce Investment, U.S. Department of Labor

Ms. Vitelli most recently worked as the chief of the Division of National Programs, Tools, and Technical Assistance in the Office of Workforce Investment. In that capacity, she and her division were responsible for the National Farmworker Jobs Program, the Monitor Advocate system, the Disability Employment Initiative, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, Work Opportunity Tax Credits, national electronic tools such as CareerOneStop and O*NET, Labor Market Information grants, and ETA's technical assistance delivery platform Workforce3one.

While in that position, Kim led the development of the one-stop section of the proposed WIOA regulations. She also supported ETA in other capacities in the past, including overseeing the WIA waiver process and State Plan reviews, managing pilots and demonstrations, and providing technical assistance to the Senate on WIA reauthorization.

Presenter Daniel Waisberg, Dark hair, medium skin-toned male, smiling, eyes focused off camera

Daniel Waisberg

Search Team, Google

Daniel started at Google seven years ago as an Analytics Advocate, helping Googlers & users make better decisions by giving them useful data and insights. He's now part of the Search team, helping webmasters, SEOs & developers succeed in search, the web, and beyond.

Presenter Fitzgerald Washington, Dark-skinned man, smiling at camera

Fitzgerald Washington

Secretary, Alabama Department of Labor

Fitzgerald Washington has served as Secretary of the Alabama Department of Labor since 2014. During his tenure, the Department has launched a statewide marketing campaign, initiated a new job fair initiative that brings available jobs to Alabamians, and has participated in a new alignment of workforce regions that allows for better distribution of state workforce resources. Fitzgerald currently serves on the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Board of Directors representing Region IV and is a member of the

National Association of Government Labor Officials (NAGLO). Prior to his appointment as the Secretary of the Alabama Department of Labor, he worked for The Buffalo Rock Company for 15 years, serving as Corporate Marketing and Sales Director handling the company's multicultural marketing initiatives before being promoted to General Sales Manager in 2002. Fitzgerald has served as a past Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, where he helped create the Minority Business Council to foster growth and competitiveness of minority-owned businesses in West Alabama.

Presenter, Abigail Wozniak, blond hair, light-skinned, smiling at camera.

Abigail (Abbie) Wozniak

Director, Opportunity & Inclusive Growth Institute and Senior Research Economist, Minnesota Federal Reserve Bank

Abigail Wozniak is the first director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis' Opportunity & Inclusive Growth Institute. Prior to assuming that leadership role in February 2019, she was a tenured associate professor of economics at the University of Notre Dame. She is a faculty research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) and a research fellow at the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) in Bonn, Germany. From 2014 to 2015, Dr. Wozniak served as a senior economist to the White House Council of Economic Advisers. Her scholarly work has been featured in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Huffington Post, and Businessweek.

Dr. Wozniak holds a B.A. from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. from Harvard University.