



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX

NOTE: You must have a name badge to attend any meetings, sessions and receptions.

TUESDAY | SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

MEETING ROOM: Monte Carlo, Tower Mezzanine

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. | **Breakfast | Trinity Pre-Function**

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. | **Agenda Overview, Ice Breaker, and Approval of Minutes**

Diane Watkins, Committee Chair, Director, Office of Public Affairs, DC Department of Employment Services

1. Overview of Agenda
2. Ice Breaker
3. Approve Minutes: [View June Meeting Notes](#)
4. Thank you to our 2024-2025 Committee Leadership Team!

2025 Comms Leadership Team



Chair
Diane Watkins (DC)
diane.watkins@dc.gov



Vice Chair
Chris Barron (WA)
chris.barron@esd.wa.gov



Past Chair
Dawn Dobre (SD)
dawn.dobre@state.sd.us



Cher Haavind (CO)
Board Chair Delegate
cher.haavind@state.co.us

9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. | **NASWA Updates**

- **Michelle Marshel**, Director of Communications & Events, NASWA

9:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. | **Welcome to Texas! | TWC Showcase**

- **Amy Landrum**, Creative & Campaigns Director, Texas Workforce Commission

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. | **Beverage Break**

10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. | **Workgroup Updates**

Workgroup & Resources Updates – Need Members!

- **Onboarding Workgroup**: **Lisa Fitz-Coy (NASWA)**
- **Outreach Workgroup**: **Erin Turbitt (WY)** – Lead
- **Resources Workgroup**: **Dawn Dobre (SD)** – Lead

- [AI Workgroup](#): **Patrice Kendrick (TN)** – Lead (see 2:30p session)
- [Award Workgroup](#): **Cher Haavind (CO)** – Lead (see next session)

10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | **Communications Award Proposal**

- **Cher Haavind**, *Deputy Executive Director/Chief Communications Officer, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment*

[This award](#) will be presented during the Winter Policy Forum Workforce Innovation Awards Ceremony each year, and all nominations, including the winner, will be collected and presented on the NASWA website as resources for all members. The winner will be highlighted each year in a press release announcement. The idea to develop this new award was approved at the February 2025 winter Communications Committee meeting.

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | **Creating Efficiency in Communications Teams**

A discussion on how small and large communications departments structure their teams and manage workloads efficiently. Share your org chart and take this [brief poll](#).

- **Chris Barron**, *Communications Director, Washington State Employment Security Department*

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. | **Hosted Lunch | Trinity Pre-Function**

1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. | **AI Workgroup Updates and Facilitated AI Use Discussion**

- **Patrice Kendrick**, *Deputy Director of Communications and Events, Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development*

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. | **State Roundtable**

- **Diane Watkins, Committee Chair**, *Director, Office of Public Affairs, DC Department of Employment Services*

A roundtable discussion involving updates from each state present (5-minute max). Please choose one of the following questions:

- What is a recent success your communications team has had?
- What's keeping you up at night?

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. | **Beverage Break**

3:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. | **State Roundtable (cont.)**

- **Diane Watkins, Committee Chair**, *Director, Office of Public Affairs, DC Department of Employment Services*

A roundtable discussion involving updates from each state present (5-minute max). Please choose one of the following questions:

- What is a recent success your communications team has had?
- What's keeping you up at night?

4:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. | Election of Vice Chair and Vice Chair-Nominee

1. The **Vice Chair** position will serve on the Communications Leadership Team for two years, serving in this position for one year, then moving to Chair. The Leadership Team meets monthly and is charged with oversight and planning for the committee.
2. The **Vice Chair-Nominee** position serves on the Communications Leadership Team for four years, serving in this position for one year, then moving to Vice Chair, Chair, and Past Chair. Each position is for a one-year term. The Leadership Team meets monthly and is charged with oversight and planning for the committee. Candidates:
 - o Erin Turbitt (WY)
3. Interested candidates, please send your self-nomination, including your statement of interest and experience, to Lisa Fitz-Coy: lfitz-coy@naswa.org
 - o We will also take self-nominations during the meeting.

4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Introduction of 2025-2026 Committee Leadership Team & Looking Forward

- **Chris Barron**, 2025-2026 Chair, and Communications Director, Washington Employment Security Department

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. | SUMMIT Welcome Reception | Trinity Exhibit Hall

Upcoming Association Year 2026 Meetings

Winter Meeting

February 26, 2026
Washington, DC

Winter Policy Forum: Feb 25

Fall Meeting

September 2026
Location TBA

SUMMIT Dates TBA

SUMMIT Communications Track Breakout Sessions

- **AI in Action: Leveraging Smart Tools for Modern Communications** – Discover how artificial intelligence is transforming the way we communicate. This hands-on session will share practices leveraging practical AI tools that streamline content creation, enhance audience targeting, and boost engagement across platforms. Learn how to use AI for communications—while keeping your messaging human-centered and authentic. Perfect for those looking to work smarter, not harder.
- **Telling Your Story: Communicating the Impact of Workforce & UI Services** – Learn how to effectively share the mission, services, and success stories of your workforce and UI programs to engage the public, partners, and stakeholders. Through practical examples and messaging strategies, explore how to highlight the real-life impact of these programs on individuals, communities, and businesses. The session will cover tools for crafting

compelling narratives, choosing the right platforms, and developing communication campaigns that build trust and awareness.

- **Lassoing how to share Labor Market Information in Innovative Ways** – Effectively communicating labor market information is essential for empowering stakeholders to make informed decisions. Find out how states are translating complex LMI into clear, actionable insights that resonate with audiences and drive outcomes. The key to that? Collaboration between the LMI and Communications teams!
- **Y'all Means All: Designing State Workforce Websites Without Barriers** – Accessible websites are essential for ensuring that all users—including those with disabilities—can fully engage with digital workforce services. Hear how State Workforce Agencies are updating websites to be compliant with new ADA accessibility requirements starting in April 2026. This session will feature highlights of best practices, tools, and strategies for building inclusive online experiences that enhance usability for everyone.