



# INNOVATE

## 2025 SUMMIT

September 8 -11, 2025 | Dallas, Texas

Agenda

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 - MEETINGS

|               |  |                      |
|---------------|--|----------------------|
| 8:30a – 5:00p | <b>UI INTEGRITY CENTER STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING</b>  | Cortez A             |
| 1:00 – 5:00p  | <b>WORKFORCE &amp; LABOR MARKET INFORMATION COMMITTEE MEETING</b>  | DeSoto               |
| 1:00 – 5:00p  | <b>PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE WORKGROUP MEETING</b>   | Cortez CD            |
| 3:00 – 6:00p  | <b>HOSPITALITY DESK: EARLY CHECK-IN</b><br>*Check in & pick up your name badge to attend all meetings & sessions | Trinity Pre-Function |

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 – BOARD & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

|                |  |                      |
|----------------|--|----------------------|
| 7:00a – 7:00p  | <b>BOARD OF DIRECTORS LOUNGE</b>   | Wedgewood Foyer      |
| 7:30a – 7:00p  | <b>HOSPITALITY DESK</b><br>*Check in & pick up your name badge to attend all meetings & sessions | Trinity Pre-Function |
| 7:30 – 9:00a   | <b>BREAKFAST: BOARD &amp; COMMITTEES</b>   | Trinity Pre-Function |
| 8:30a – 12:00p | <b>UI SIDES OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING</b>   | Coronado A           |



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| 8:30a – 5:00p  | <b>BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING</b>                                 | Wedgewood Ballroom   |
| 8:30a – 5:00p  | <b>ADMINISTRATION &amp; FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING</b>             | Cortez B             |
| 8:30a – 5:00p  | <b>EMPLOYMENT &amp; TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING</b>                | Peacock Terrace      |
| 8:30a – 5:00p  | <b>EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING</b>                        | Cortez A             |
| 8:30a – 5:00p  | <b>PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE WORKGROUP MEETING</b>                | Cortez CD            |
| 8:30a – 5:00p  | <b>TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING</b>                               | Metropolitan         |
| 8:30a – 5:00p  | <b>WORKFORCE &amp; LABOR MARKET INFORMATION COMMITTEE MEETING</b> | DeSoto               |
| 9:00a – 5:00p  | <b>COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING</b>                           | Monte Carlo          |
| 8:30a – 5:00p  | <b>WAGE &amp; HOUR COMMITTEE MEETING</b>                          | Manchester           |
| 11:00a – 5:00p | <b>EXHIBITOR SET-UP</b>   | Trinity Exhibit Hall |
| 12:00 – 1:30p  | <b>LUNCH: BOARD &amp; COMMITTEES</b>                              | Trinity Pre-Function |
| 1:00 – 5:00p   | <b>UI COMMITTEE MEETING</b>                                       | Coronado A           |

5:30 – 7:00p **SUMMIT WELCOME RECEPTION** Trinity Exhibit Hall  
with Exhibitors

**HOSPITALITY DESK** \*Check in & pick up your name badge before entering the reception.



## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 – SUMMIT

|               |   |                      |
|---------------|---|----------------------|
| 7:30a – 5:30p | <b>HOSPITALITY DESK</b><br>*Check in & pick up your name badge to attend all sessions | Trinity Pre-Function |
| 7:30a – 5:30p | <b>EXHIBIT SHOWCASE</b>   | Trinity Exhibit Hall |
| 7:30 – 8:15a  | <b>HOSTED BREAKFAST</b>   | Trinity Exhibit Hall |
| 8:30 – 9:50a  | <b>OPENING CEREMONIES</b>   | Trinity Ballroom     |

### WELCOME

**Joe Barela**, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and NASWA Board Chair, Association Year 2024-2025

### TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION SHOWCASE: WELCOME TO TEXAS!

**Ballet Folklorico Performance - Las Estrellas De Tejas**

**Ed Serna**, Executive Director, Texas Workforce Commission

### NASWA WELCOME & THE STATE OF THE WORKFORCE REPORT

**Scott B. Sanders**, President and CEO, NASWA

### A WORD FROM OUR DIAMOND SPONSOR | FAST Enterprises

|               |                                     |                      |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 9:50 – 10:20a | <b>COFFEE BREAK WITH EXHIBITORS</b> | Trinity Exhibit Hall |
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|                 |                        |                  |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 10:20a – 12:00p | <b>PLENARY SESSION</b> | Trinity Ballroom |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|

### A WORD FROM OUR PLATINUM SPONSORS | CAI, Career Team, Deloitte

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER | “Leading Change in an Unpredictable World.”

In simple terms, this session is about helping leaders navigate complexity — not just by managing change, but by learning to lead in ways that shift thinking, unlock potential, and move people forward together. Leadership isn't a solo act. It's a shared endeavor. And in a world full of complexity and competing demands, growing our capacity to lead – and to help others lead – is not a nice-to-have. It's essential.

**Barry Bales, PhD.**, Colleague at Cultivating Leadership

## EXERCISING LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CHANGE AND UNCERTAINTY

Hear from state workforce agency leaders about how they are navigating and guiding their teams through the shifting landscape for the nation's public workforce system. In addition to learning about the important role of leadership in the present moment, we will also hear how state workforce agencies are advancing innovative initiatives during a period of significant change.

Moderator: **Joe Barela**, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Speakers: **Stephanie Beckhorn**, Director, Office of Employment & Training, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

**Cami Feek**, Commissioner, Washington Employment Security Department

**Deniece Thomas**, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development

## A WORD FROM OUR PLATINUM SPONSORS | eightfold.ai, Geographic Solutions, Google Public Sector

12:00 – 1:15p      **HOSTED LUNCH**      Trinity Exhibit Hall

1:20 – 2:20p      **PLENARY SESSION**      Trinity Ballroom

## A WORD FROM OUR GOLD SPONSORS | AWS, CATCH Intelligence, Infosys, Metrix Learning, myOneFlow

## WASHINGTON, DC UP TO THE MINUTE

What workforce leaders need to know about the current state of play on Capitol Hill and the Administration.

**John Colbert**, Co-Founder, Capitol Hill Partners

**A WORD FROM OUR GOLD SPONSORS** | PAIRIN, Sagitec, Salesforce, SentiLink, TATA  
Consultancy Services

2:20 – 2:50p      **NETWORKING BREAK WITH EXHIBITORS**      Trinity Exhibit Hall

3:00 – 4:00p      **CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

**BREAKOUT 1 - SADDLE UP TOGETHER: HOW STATE DATA COLLABORATION TAMES  
WORKFORCE CHALLENGES** | WEDGEWOOD BALLROOM

**TRACKS**       

In today's workforce landscape, states are being asked to wrangle more with fewer resources, and the Multi-State Data Collaborative (MSDC) is helping them cowboy up to the challenge. This session will showcase the MSDC's approach through voices from its core partner organizations who help states stay in the saddle by using data strategically to answer real-world questions. Through an interactive discussion and audience engagement, participants will explore challenges facing workforce agencies and hear from state members about how their involvement in the MSDC has helped them tackle these challenges through capacity building, peer support, and actionable data tools.

Speakers:      **Cynthia Forland**, State Engagement and Special Projects,  
Contractor, Multi-State Data Collaborative, NASWA

**Anna Hui**, Director, Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial  
Relations

**Rachel Leventhal-Weiner, PhD.**, Director of Research and  
Evaluation, Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

**Baron Rodriguez**, Executive Director, DISC

**Ahu Yildirmaz, PhD.**, President and CEO, Coleridge Initiative

## BREAKOUT 2 – AI IN ACTION: LEVERAGING SMART TOOLS FOR MODERN COMMUNICATIONS | PEACOCK TERRACE

### TRACKS

Explore how AI is reshaping communications and marketing. Join Story and Strategy, a public relations firm based in the Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex, as they share insights from their *State of Communications* survey and discuss the use of practical AI tools. This session will also explore AI guidelines available and navigating ethical considerations while keeping your messaging human-centered and authentic.

Facilitator: **Patrice Kendrick**, NASWA Communications Committee AI Workgroup Lead & Deputy Director of Communications and Events, Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Speakers: **Kim Brown**, APR, Co-Founder, Story and Strategy PR  
**Abigail Hoover**, Co-Founder, Story and Strategy PR

## BREAKOUT 3 - WORKFORCE SYSTEM ROUND UP: INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR MODERNIZATION | CORONADO A

### TRACKS

As federal workforce programs evolve, states are at the forefront of transforming systems to adapt. This session will explore how states are modernizing their digital infrastructure to unify case management, standardize data, and enhance interoperability across agencies. States will highlight plans and strategies for adapting legacy systems and leveraging AI-driven analytics to improve service delivery and accountability. Attendees will gain insight into how these innovations can support the agile, state-led, and outcomes-focused workforce development ecosystem.

Moderator: **Annie Tietema**, Director, Performance and Technical Management, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Speakers: **Mark Duey**, Strategic Technology Manager, Colorado Department of Labor & Employment

**Ajit Girn**, CIO, California Employment Development Department

**Aaron Weisser**, Senior Program Manager, Colorado Department of Labor & Employment

**Ryan Wold, Ph.D.**, Workforce Development Product Owner, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

## BREAKOUT 4 – ADVANCING NEW MODELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY FOR REENTRY | CORTEZ AB

### TRACKS

This session will showcase how states are transforming reentry services through innovation and collaboration. Attendees will gain insights on how cross-agency partnerships and other initiatives are supporting justice-involved individuals through the reentry process and advancing improved employment outcomes.

Moderator: **Tasha Abdul-haqq**, Job Service Bureau Director, Division of Employment & Training, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Speakers: **Crystal Houser**, Director, Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations, Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry  
**Ismaila Maidadi**, Workforce Services Director, Washington State Employment Security Department  
**Bettina Sparkes**, Manager, Justice-Involved Programs, Kansas Department of Commerce

## BREAKOUT 5 – INTEGRITY ON THE RANGE: FRAUD PREVENTION ACROSS UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE & PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE | CORTEZ CD

### TRACKS

This session will have two states discuss program integrity and fraud prevention efforts happening across both their UI and PFML programs. Colorado and Washington will discuss how and when they collaborate across programs, their specific integrity needs and best practices happening across UI and PFML.

Moderator: **Tracy Marshall**, Division Director, Family and Medical Leave Division, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Speakers: **Alison Eldridge**, Deputy Director, Washington State Employment Security Department

**Cher Haavind**, Deputy Executive Director / Chief Communications Officer, Colorado Department of Labor & Employment & NASWA Communications Committee Board Delegate

**JR Richards**, Insurance Services Director, UI Customer Support and Paid Family Medical Leave, Washington State Employment Security Department

**BREAKOUT 6 - RIDING THE RANGE OF UI OPERATIONAL ADVANCES | CORONADO BC**



States share new strategies to improve operations and customer service.

Moderator: **Kris Funk**, UI Administrator, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

Speakers: **Andi Bridgmon**, Unemployment Insurance Director, Nebraska Department of Labor

**Susan Dickinson**, Director, Office of Unemployment Compensation, Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry

**Lars Thompson**, Associate Commissioner for Unemployment Insurance, New York State Department of Labor

**BREAKOUT 7 - ATTORNEY GROUP MEETING (NASWA MEMBERS ONLY) | DESOTO**



Time for the NASWA Attorney Group members to gather and share promising practices. Open to NASWA Members only.

4:15 – 5:15p **CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

**BREAKOUT 1 - WRANGLING THE FUTURE: INNOVATIONS IN STATE WORKFORCE AND LABOR MARKET INTELLIGENCE | WEDGEWOOD BALLROOM**



Explore the frontier in how states gather, analyze, and deliver labor market and workforce information. This panel brings together pioneering state LMI innovators to share new approaches in research and analytics focused on priority agency needs, including understanding AI impacts, labor supply gaps, and building collaborative tools. Perfect for state workforce administrators, labor market analysts, and workforce development leaders. Take home practical solutions you can implement in your own territory!

Moderator: **Mariana Vega**, Director, Labor Market and Career Information, Texas Workforce Commission



Speakers: **Bryan P. Grady, Ph.D.**, Assistant Executive Director for Labor Market Information, South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce

**Lesley Hirsch**, Assistant Commissioner, Research & Information, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

**David Schmidt**, Chief Economist, Research and Analysis Bureau, Nevada Department of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation

## **BREAKOUT 2 – Y’ALL MEANS ALL: DESIGNING STATE WORKFORCE WEBSITES WITHOUT BARRIERS** | PEACOCK TERRACE

### **TRACKS**

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.

Moderator: **Liz Gagen**, Director, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

Speakers: **Chris Barron**, Communications Director, Washington State Employment Security Department and Vice Chair, NASWA Communications Committee

**Chris Cannon**, Assistant Administrator for Communications, Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development

**Jesse Dougherty**, Public Information Officer, Iowa Workforce Development

**Haley McCoy**, Communications Director, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

## BREAKOUT 3 – REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF STATE FUNDED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS | CORONADO A

### TRACKS

Within the context of a challenging federal budget landscape, state funding for workforce development offers new opportunities for innovation and program expansion. This session will explore how state workforce agencies have built the case for state investments while navigating political and budgetary challenges. Attendees will also hear how the workforce system is deploying state funds and structuring innovative programs to serve both jobseekers and businesses.

Moderator: **Kelly Folks**, Director, Division of Employment and Training, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Speakers: **Kevin Kortas**, Workforce Development Specialist, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

**Erin Roth**, Assistant Secretary, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, Maryland Department of Labor

**Cody Waits**, Director, Workforce Connections, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

## BREAKOUT 4 - EXPLORING THE UI DASHBOARD FRONTIER: FROM RAW INSIGHTS TO REAL-TIME ACTION | CORTEZ AB

### TRACKS

Dashboards are essential in UI operations for fraud detection, performance tracking, reporting, and daily monitoring. This session features panelists who've implemented tools to understand their data and enhance UI systems. Learn how dashboards are being used to surface fraud trends, support investigations, and inform decisions, while navigating the challenges of integration in today's landscape.

Moderator: **Amber Shultz**, Secretary, Kansas Department of Labor

Speakers: **Jennifer Crader**, Business Services Manager, Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

**Mark Floersch**, Founder and CEO, CATCH Intelligence

**Rachael Griffith**, UI Administrator, Delaware Department of Labor

**Caroline Pratt**, UI Integrity Director, Connecticut Department of Labor

## BREAKOUT 5 - INNOVATIVE STATE INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT YOUNG AMERICANS IN THE WORKFORCE | CORTEZ CD

### TRACKS

The labor force participation rate for Americans aged 16-24 has fallen from a record high of 68.6 percent in 1989 to a near-record low of 55.9 percent in 2024. As concerns grow about AI impacting the employment prospects for recent college graduates, this is a critical moment for states to invest in programs that support young jobseekers and workers. This session will feature insights from the BEST Youth Initiative and two states on how they are supporting employment and career development for young Americans.

Moderator: **Eddie Thomas**, Deputy Director, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Speakers: **Jason Callahan**, Executive Vice President, Cross-Systems Consulting

**Melina Cutright**, Departmental Specialist, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

**Marcos Martinez**, Deputy Secretary, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

## BREAKOUT 6 – DUST OFF THE DATA: USING UI DATA TO TRACK DOWN IMPROPER PAYMENTS | CORONADO BC

### TRACKS

In this interactive moderated session, attendees will receive foundational information on the use of UI data to inform program performance improvement. Attendees will engage in a roundtable discussion on leveraging the most effective datasets available, including BAM, ETA reports, and others, and how to turn data insights into actionable performance.

Moderator: **Evan E. Littrell**, Director, State Engagement, NASWA

**BREAKOUT 7 - LASSOING MISCLASSIFICATION IN UI, WAGE AND HOUR & STATE WORKFORCE PROGRAMS | DESOTO**

**TRACKS**       

Three states present how they work across divisions and through strong UI auditing to prevent misclassification.

Moderator: **David Biglin**, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Wage & Hour Compliance, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Speakers: **Mindy Gensler**, Legal Liaison, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

**Cindy Lee**, UC Tax Supervisor, Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry

**Kristin Pregmon**, UC Tax Agent, Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry

**Lisa Ramsey**, Regional Tax Manager, North Carolina Department of Commerce – Division of Employment Security

**Evelyn Rivera**, Director, Division of Employer Accounts, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

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| 6:00 – 10:00p | <p><b>TEXAS STATE FAIR EVENING EVENT</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Trinity Exhibit Hall</p> <p>Have you ever wanted to attend the renowned <b>Texas State Fair</b>? Now is your chance! Join us for a night experiencing true-to-life replications of food, games, music and fun from the Texas State Fair all at the Anatole. It will be an experience you won't want to miss and is included in your SUMMIT registration! <i>Bring your name badge and join us!</i></p> |
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## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

|               |                                     |                      |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 7:30a – 5:00p | <b>HOSPITALITY DESK</b>             | Trinity Pre-Function |
| 7:30a – 3:00p | <b>EXHIBIT SHOWCASE</b>             | Trinity Exhibit Hall |
| 7:30 – 8:15a  | <b>HOSTED BREAKFAST</b>             | Trinity Exhibit Hall |
| 8:30 – 9:30a  | <b>CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS</b> |                      |

### BREAKOUT 1 - TRAILBLAZING AI: SOLUTIONS FOR A MODERN WORKFORCE | WEDGEWOOD BALLROOM

#### TRACKS

States are implementing AI solutions to enhance workforce services—from chatbots that assist UI claimants, to tools that simplify complex documents into plain language to AI-driven job matching. This session highlights real-world solutions that improve service delivery, efficiency, and user experience. Panelists will share lessons learned, challenges faced, and the impact of these innovations on jobseekers and staff alike.

Moderator: **Allison Johnson**, Director, Open UI, NASWA

Speakers: **Raju Gadiraju**, CIO, North Carolina Department of Commerce

**Melisa Matthews**, Associate Chief of Performance & Integrity,  
Indiana Department of Workforce Development

**Holly Newell**, Chief of UI, Indiana Department of Workforce  
Development

**Chris Tonjes**, CIO, DC Department of Employment Services

### BREAKOUT 2 – THE LMI ROUNDUP: HERDING DATA INTO MEANINGFUL MESSAGES | PEACOCK TERRACE

#### TRACKS

Join this roundup to see how states are corralling complex labor market data and transforming it into insights that stick. With Communications and LMI teams riding side-by-side, discover how collaboration leads to smarter decisions and stronger outcomes.

- Moderator: **Dawn Dovre**, Deputy Secretary | Director of Policy & Public Affairs, South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation and Past Chair, NASWA Communications Committee
- Speakers: **Chris Barron**, Communications Director, Washington State Employment Security Department and Vice Chair, NASWA Communications Committee
- Laura Crosswhite**, Deputy Director, Labor Market Information, Kansas Department of Labor
- Gabriel “Mike” Guzman**, Manager, Economic Analysis Unit, Innovation, Information & Insight | Labor Market Information (LMI), Texas Workforce Commission
- Derek Helms**, Communications Director, Kansas Department of Labor
- Amy Landrum**, Director, Office of Communications & Media, Texas Workforce Commission
- Erin Turbitt**, Public Information Officer, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

### BREAKOUT 3 – A FISTFUL OF DATA: ALIGNING THE WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEM THROUGH DATA AND INFORMATION SIGNALING | CORONADO A

#### TRACKS

Join a dynamic discussion on how workforce, education, and industry utilize real-time data to provide constant signals and communication throughout the public workforce ecosystem, and how this information turns into actionable insights. Ideal for workforce professionals, labor market analysts, and innovators driving data-informed strategies and program development.

- Moderator: **Paul Daniels**, NLx Research Hub Manager, NASWA
- Speakers: **Veronica Gielazauskas**, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Performance & Strategy / MERIC, Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development
- Colleen Lynn**, Labor Industry Executive, Google
- Shannon Offord**, VP of Strategic Partnerships, DirectEmployers Association
- Mariana Vega**, Director, Labor Market and Career Information, Texas Workforce Commission

## BREAKOUT 4 - IMPLEMENTING SNAP & MEDICAID WORK REQUIREMENTS | CORTEZ AB

### TRACKS

Following the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), states are now tasked with implementing a new set of work requirements for SNAP and Medicaid. During this session, we will hear from representatives of the National Association of Medicaid Directors (NAMD), and the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and two state workforce agencies on these sweeping policy reforms. NASWA members will also have the opportunity to discuss what role state workforce agencies can play in implementing these new policies.

Moderator: **Ben Mays**, Policy Director, NASWA

Speakers: **Robert Asaro-Angelo**, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

**Lindsey Browning**, Deputy Executive Director of Programs, National Association of Medicaid Directors

**Liz Carver**, Director, Workforce Development Division, Utah Department of Workforce Services

**Chloe Green**, Manager, Food and Nutrition Services, American Public Health Services Association (APHSA)

## BREAKOUT 5 – MAXIMIZING RESEA OPERATIONS | CORTEZ CD

### TRACKS

Join in the discussion on how to maximize impact by improving operations in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. Three states will share policy and practice updates.

Moderator: **Mary York**, Division Director for Workforce Development, Texas Workforce Commission

Speakers: **Ann Astin**, RESEA Program Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

**Andi Bridgmon**, UI Director, Nebraska Department of Labor

**Eryn Schappa**, Associate Chief, Field Operations, Indiana Department of Workforce Development

## BREAKOUT 6 - LABOR MARKET IMPACTS OF GEN AI: WLMI LEADERS HARNESS CURRENT RESEARCH | CORONADO BC

**TRACKS**       

Three seasoned state LMI directors share insights from their GenAI research on AI exposure, ethical considerations, and workforce impacts. They'll explore current findings and discuss what's anticipated in GenAI's next phase. This interactive session includes audience participation where attendees can ask panelists questions, share their perspectives on GenAI's labor market impact, and engage in open discussion about how this technology is reshaping the workforce landscape.

- Speakers: **Meihui Bodane**, Assistant Secretary of Policy, Research & Strategy, North Carolina Department of Commerce  
**Nicol Nicola**, Director of Economic and Demographic Research, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
**Bob Uhlenkott**, Research Director, Oregon Employment Department

## BREAKOUT 7 – THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE IMPROPER: STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING UI IMPROPER PAYMENTS | DESOTO

**TRACKS**       

The UI Improper Payment Rate is an important and highly visible metric. Hear from NASWA UI Integrity Center experts on strategies for reducing improper payments while also sustaining high UI program performance.

- Moderator: **Randy Gillespie**, Vice President of Finance and Integrity, NASWA  
Speakers: **Sara Hall Phillips**, Director, Behavioral Insights, NASWA  
**Evan E. Littrell**, Director, State Engagement, NASWA

9:45 – 10:15a **COFFEE BREAK WITH EXHIBITORS** Trinity Exhibit Hall

10:30 – 11:30a **CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS**



## BREAKOUT 1 - BUILDING A HIGH-PRODUCTION WLMI RANCH: STRATEGIES FOR STATE ADMINISTRATORS | WEDGEWOOD BALLROOM

### TRACKS

Learn how state workforce leaders are transforming their workforce and labor market information operations into powerhouse data analytics units that drive evidence-based decision making. This panel features seasoned administrators and WLMI directors who have expanded their shops beyond traditional labor market intelligence to serve as data hubs for UI operations, program evaluation, and cross-agency initiatives. Discover proven strategies for building capacity, securing resources, and positioning your WLMI unit as an indispensable partner across state functions.

Moderator: **Stephanie Beckhorn**, Director, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

Speakers: **Charisse Childers**, Director, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services  
**Melissa Gibson**, Associate Director of Research and Analytics, Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget  
**Lesley Hirsch**, Assistant Commissioner, Research & Information, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

## BREAKOUT 2 - TELLING YOUR STORY: COMMUNICATING THE IMPACT OF UI & WORKFORCE SERVICES | PEACOCK TERRACE

### TRACKS

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.

Moderator: **Cher Haavind**, Deputy Executive Director / Chief Communications Officer, Colorado Department of Labor & Employment & NASWA Communications Committee Board Delegate

Speakers: **Anna Hui**, Director, Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations & NASWA Board Secretary  
**Cami Feek**, Commissioner, Washington State Employment Security Department & NASWA Board Chair Elect

**Diane Watkins**, Director, Office of Public Affairs, District of Columbia Department of Employment Services & NASWA Communications Committee Chair

**Jessica Smith**, Government Policy and Public Relations, Colorado Department of Labor & Employment

### BREAKOUT 3 - STATE SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING: OPTIONS FOR DIMINISHING FEDERAL FUNDING | CORONADO A

**TRACKS** 

This session will do a deep dive into state strategies to augment federal funding in an era of diminishing federal funding and uncertainty. States are using a variety of strategies to accomplish this; in this session we will explore these in detail.

Moderator: **Andy Summar**, Chief Financial Officer, Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Speakers: **Christine Bonorino**, Budget Director, Colorado Department of Labor & Employment

**Chris Nelson**, Chief Financial Officer, Texas Workforce Commission

**Mike Smith**, Chief Financial Officer, Indiana Department of Workforce Development

**Emily Ward**, Director of Administrative Services, South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation

### BREAKOUT 4 - LEVERAGING STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY STAFF TO EXPAND REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS | CORTEZ AB

**TRACKS** 

As the Administration sets out to reach an ambitious goal of surpassing 1 million new active apprentices in the nation, state workforce agencies are uniquely positioned to support the expansion of registered apprenticeship programs in a broad range of sectors. Hear how three states are creating new positions, training staff, and engaging stakeholders within the public workforce system to scale apprenticeship.

Moderator: **Tonya Neely, Ph.D.**, Director, Office of Apprenticeship, Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Speakers: **Tara Bartekoske**, Apprenticeship Program Manager, South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation

**Joann Bueno**, PHR, Registered Apprenticeship Program Manager, Arizona Department of Employment Security

**Tara Loew**, Director, Apprenticeship and Training Office,  
Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry

### **BREAKOUT 5 - RIDING THE RANGE OF ALIGNED CASE MANAGEMENT: INSIGHTS FROM ACMI INNOVATORS | CORTEZ CD**

**TRACKS**       

Explore the transformative power of aligning case management systems. Discover how streamlined processes, enhanced communication, and improved outcomes can be achieved through alignment. Learn from the pioneering states that participated in the Workforce ITSC Aligned Case Management Institute (ACMI) and have successfully developed comprehensive approaches addressing whole-person case management, customer experience, staff productivity, and administrative efficiency. Gain valuable insights on implementing best practices to align case management strategies and supporting technologies with your organizational goals.

Moderator: **Veronica Alonzo**, Operations and Program Manager, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

Speakers: **Fiona D. James**, Chief of Staff, Louisiana Office of Workforce Development

**Carrie Schneider**, Program Manager, Workforce ITSC, NASWA

**Sacha Stadhard**, Director of Policy and Program Administration, MassHire Department of Career Services

### **BREAKOUT 6 – NOT THEIR FIRST RODEO: LESSONS FROM STATES BUCKING OLD WAYS OF EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT | CORONADO BC**

**TRACKS**       

Explore innovative approaches and resources that support scalable, data-informed employer engagement. Gain actionable insights about the SkillsNation platform in Washington, D.C., Minnesota's new Employer Engagement initiatives, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) resources. Participants will learn how AI-powered tools and collaborative strategies are reshaping talent pipelines, recruitment, and economic development. The session will showcase how regional and national efforts are aligning business needs with workforce development systems to drive measurable outcomes.

Moderator: **Amber Gaither**, Director, National Labor Exchange, NASWA

Speakers: **Jeanna Fortney**, CareerForce Director, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

**Kenneth Walker**, Deputy Director of Federal Workforce Programs,  
District of Columbia Department of Employment Services

**Jason Tyszko**, Senior Vice President, U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
Foundation

**BREAKOUT 7 – BOOTS ON THE GROUND: FRAUD INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION  
FOCUS WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
GENERAL | DESOTO**

**TRACKS** 

An opportunity to hear from representatives from the Department of Labor's Office of the Inspector General about how they pursue unemployment insurance cases, and how your state can best work with them.

Moderator: **Cally Martinez**, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Wyoming  
Department of Workforce Services

Speakers: **Casey Howard**, Special Agent in Charge, DOL-OIG  
**John Martinez**, Assistant Special Agent-in-charge, DOL-OIG  
**Lea Rawls**, Senior Special Agent, DOL-OIG

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| 11:45a – 1:00p  | <b>SALUTE TO OUR LEADERSHIP AWARDS LUNCHEON</b> | Trinity Ballroom |
| NASWA's 2024-2025 Board of Directors and Committee Chairs will be recognized with awards for their service during the Association Year. |   |                  |
| 11:45a-12:25p Luncheon  |   |                  |
| 12:25-12:30p UNITED IN SERVICE & REMEMBRANCE: <i>Remembering 9/11</i>   |   |                  |
| 12:30 -1:00p Salute to Leadership Awards  |   |                  |

|   |                                       |                  |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1:15 – 2:30p  | <b>89TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING</b> | Trinity Ballroom |
| This meeting is only open to state administrators and state members who are eligible to vote for their state. |                                       |                  |

|              |                                     |  |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1:15 – 2:15p | <b>CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS</b> |  |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--|



## BREAKOUT 1 - RIDE TOGETHER, WIN TOGETHER: STRENGTHENING STATE-VENDOR PARTNERSHIPS | PEACOCK TERRACE

### TRACKS

Vendors and states are invited to engage in an open, solutions-focused conversation aimed at strengthening collaboration. A state panel will explore real-world challenges—like procurement, communication, and project delivery—while spotlighting successful partnerships in workforce development and unemployment insurance modernizations. Join us to share your experiences, identify opportunities for improvement, and help shape stronger, more effective partnerships.

Moderator: **Brett Flachsbarth**, Director, UI ITSC, NASWA

Speakers: **Tanya Campbell**, Supplier Engagement Manager, National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO)

**Matthew Hankins**, Deputy Director, Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

**Heather Hall**, CIO, Texas Workforce Commission

**Lisa Kissler**, CIO, Washington State Employment Security Department

## BREAKOUT 2 - BRIDGING THE WATERS: WLMI AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS THAT DELIVER | CORONADO A

### TRACKS

Navigate the currents of how high-production LMI operations are driving CTE program excellence through state partnerships. Hear proven strategies for leveraging workforce intelligence to strengthen career and technical education outcomes while meeting Perkins V requirements that embed critical LMI elements.

Learn how these collaborations create actionable intelligence that benefits students, educators, and employers alike. Essential for state workforce administrators and education leaders seeking to strengthen the vital connection between workforce intelligence and career preparation programs.

Moderator: **Nithya Govindasamy**, Senior Director of Policy, Advance CTE

Speakers: **Matt Berry, PhD.**, Executive Director, Kentucky Center for Statistics

### BREAKOUT 3 – 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GOLD RUSH: POWERING WORKFORCE INTELLIGENCE TOGETHER WITH THE NLX RESEARCH HUB | CORTEZ AB

TRACKS 

Saddle up for a fast-paced, interactive showcase of the NLx Research Hub—your gateway to unlocking the full potential of job and labor market data. Learn more about some of the latest tools, insights, and innovations from the Hub and its community. Roll up your sleeves for a hands-on activity designed to surface challenges, spark ideas, and support collective action in catalyzing digital transformation for education and workforce data in an emerging data paradigm.

Moderator: **Amber Gaither**, NLx Director, NASWA

Speakers: **Paul Daniels**, NLx Research Hub Manager, NASWA

**Jason Tyszko**, Senior Vice President, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

### BREAKOUT 4 – DEMYSTIFYING THE RANGE OF INTERSTATE AND FEDERAL UI PROCESSING: LEARN HOW YOUR STATE CAN IMPROVE WITH ICON MODERNIZATION AND BEST PRACTICES | CORTEZ CD

TRACKS 

This workshop will provide a high-level overview of the Unemployment Insurance Interstate Connection Network (ICON) and the ongoing modernization efforts to replace legacy infrastructure. Participants will explore new tools and capabilities available through the ICON Cloud Hub that are enhancing efficiency in processing interstate, federal, and military claims. The session will also highlight best practices for managing federal unemployment insurance claims and examine how states have successfully addressed recent challenges.

Speakers: **Judy Mattinson**, Director, UI Interstate Connection Network (UI ICON), NASWA

**Leah Reeder**, Subject Matter Expert, UI ICON, NASWA

### BREAKOUT 5 – CROSSING THE DIVIDE: BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS PROGRAMS & AGENCIES | CORONADO BC

TRACKS 

Cross-agency partnerships play an important role in clearing pathways to economic security and mobility. In this session, we will explore how states are breaking down silos

and building partnerships across health, human services, higher education, transportation, workforce systems, and more, to better serve customers.

Moderator: **Christina West**, One-Stop Deputy Administrator, Employment and Training Division, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

Speakers: **Raquel Gomez**, Special Projects Coordinator, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

**Jess Maneely**, Assistant Director, Process Innovation, American Public Human Services Association (APHSA)

## BREAKOUT 6 - ROUNDUP OF STATES WITH CASE LAW UPDATES, SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATION, AND EMERGING LEGAL AND POLICY ISSUES | DESOTO

### TRACKS

An opportunity for state workforce agency attorneys and policy staff to report on and ask questions of each other about significant state legislation, significant case law, and policy development.

Facilitators: **Joy Adams**, Director, Employment System Policy & Integrity Division, Washington State Employment Security Department

**Tony Vaughan**, Deputy Director, Division of Employment Security, Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

2:30 – 3:00p      **NETWORKING BREAK WITH EXHIBITORS**      Trinity Exhibit Hall

3:15 – 5:00p      **CLOSING PLENARY SESSION**      Trinity Ballroom

## WILL AND SKILL 2025: A U.S. LABOR MARKET STORY

The post-COVID labor market has been a wild ride of economic uncertainty, technology disruption and changing workplace attitudes. The complex interplay of global supply chains, cultural shifts, domestic demographics, and market dynamics has made it increasingly difficult to know with certainty how best to prepare education and workforce customers for the job market ahead. Hear about some of the most significant factors driving job opportunity and the role of workforce professionals and the individual to facilitate career success and wage mobility.

**Richard Froeschle**, Senior Labor Market Economist, Texas State Technical College System

## THE FUTURE OF WORK ON THE AI FRONTIER

The United States is currently experiencing a major wave of investments related to the adoption and deployment of AI in a range of sectors. While the long-term impacts of AI on the nation's workforce remain unclear, we are already beginning to see a flurry of labor market activity in U.S. "frontier regions" at the forefront of producing critical technologies such as data centers, semiconductors, and quantum computing. During this session, we will hear from Rachel Lipson, a Co-Founder of the Harvard Project on Workforce and Research Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, on the early indicators of how AI and related technologies are impacting the nation's labor market.

**Rachel Lipson**, Research Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School

## INTRODUCTION OF NEW AY2025-2026 BOARD CHAIR & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Cami Feek**, Commissioner, Washington State Employment Security Department

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2026 SUMMIT & ADJOURNMENT OF THE 2025 SUMMIT

**Scott B. Sanders**, President & CEO, NASWA

