

Strengthening Small and Medium Business through Tech Apprenticeships

Speaker Biographies

Bhavani Arabandi is a senior research associate in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute. She is a labor sociologist whose work focuses on enduring inequalities in the labor market, women's labor force participation, gender, apprenticeship, and international development. Her expertise is in program design and implementation, qualitative methods research, policy analysis, and technical assistance. Before joining the Urban Institute, Arabandi worked as a program analyst at the US Department of Labor. She was selected as a fiscal year 2020 CXO Fellow and received the secretary's award for outreach and training. Before joining the federal service, Arabandi was an academic with extensive experience at public and private universities. She was awarded the Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Award in Teaching and Research and was a postdoctoral research fellow at Rice University. She has published in major journals and has received several awards for her research. Arabandi has a MSW from the Tata Institute of Social Work, Mumbai, and grassroots experience working with women's groups in rural India. She also has a MA in sociology from George Mason University and a PhD in sociology from the University of Virginia.

Zoë Baird is Senior Counselor to Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo for Technology and Economic Growth. In this role, Baird focuses on advancing U.S. competitiveness in key technologies and ensuring the economic benefits are broadly shared by innovative businesses and a well-trained workforce. Prior to Commerce, Baird was CEO and President of the Markle Foundation, where she worked to improve the economic security, national security, and health of all Americans. Baird served on President Biden's National Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee and chaired its Working Group on International Cooperation. Previously, Baird had a diverse career as a lawyer and business executive.

Karan Bhatia is the head of government affairs & public policy at Google, a role he has held since joining the company in 2018. In this role, he leads the company's engagement on a broad array of public policy issues and oversees its engagement with government officials and key political stakeholders in the United States and more than 100 other countries. Prior to joining Google, Karan worked at General Electric for a decade, where he similarly led its government affairs function. Earlier in his career, he served in senior positions in the US Government, including at the Departments of Commerce and Transportation. His last role was as Deputy U.S. Trade Representative with the rank of Ambassador, overseeing U.S. international trade policy with respect to Asia and Africa. Before government service, he was a partner in the Washington, D.C. law firm Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering. Karan has written and spoken widely on technology and international economic policy, taught at Georgetown University Law Center, and testified on many occasions before Congress. In addition to the Partnership for Public Service, he sits on the boards of the Urban Institute and the US Global Leadership Coalition. Bhatia holds a bachelor's degree from Princeton, a master's from the London School of Economics, and a law degree from Columbia. He and his wife Sara have two grown sons.

Zach Boren, is a senior policy program manager in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population, where he leads a variety of apprenticeship-focused projects, including youth apprenticeship, and is a technical expert on registered apprenticeship and equal employment opportunity. Before working at Urban, Boren spent 11 years with the US Department of Labor, where he was the director of registered

apprenticeship and policy. Boren worked with US Coast Guard on congressional affairs and on Capitol Hill. Boren was selected by the Aspen Institute as a Marano Fellow, participating in their Sector Skills Academy. A native of Indiana, Boren received a bachelor's in public affairs from Indiana University and a master's in congressional and presidential studies from The Catholic University of America.

Tal Frankfurt is the Founder and CEO of Cloud for Good, Salesforce's leading cloud consulting partner helping nonprofit organizations and higher education institutions create transformational value through technology. Prior to founding Cloud for Good, Tal was the director of resource development for a nonprofit organization that worked with at-risk immigrant youth. In his search for the right tool to help manage donors, participants, and volunteers, Tal learned about Salesforce and hasn't looked back since. The adoption of Salesforce into his everyday work was what sparked the inception of Cloud for Good. Tal has a robust history in the Salesforce ecosystem, including establishing three Salesforce user groups, one of which was the second-ever Salesforce user group outside of the US. Tal sits on the Advisory Board for Salesforce.org, and has helped to develop many Salesforce products. In 2010, Tal was chosen to be one of the first Salesforce.com MVP Program members, an exclusive club representing the top 1% of the Salesforce community and has remained part of the inaugural class ever since. In addition to his efforts through Cloud for Good and Salesforce, Tal offers thought leadership through contributions to both Forbes Technology Council and Entrepreneur magazine.

Courtney Jackson is the Founder and CEO of Paragon Cyber Solutions, LLC, an 8(a), woman, minority, veteran-owned, HUBZone certified Tampa, Florida-based small business specializing in information security and assurance. Ms. Jackson has more than 20 years of certified hands-on experience in Information Technology and security, encompassing both executive leadership and entrepreneurship. Through her work, she helps government agencies and private companies to protect the integrity of their business operations through specialized cyber security and risk management solutions. Ms. Jackson got her start in Information Technology during her tenure in the U.S. Navy. After completing her military service, she took at entry-level position as an IT Help Desk Representative, impressively working her way up to the C-Suite in a span of a career before exiting the Corporate space to pursue her entrepreneurial endeavors full-time. Courtney's unique journey has positioned her to mentor women in male-dominated industries by helping them shatter the glass ceiling that stands in the way of their career advancement to executive leadership roles. Ms. Jackson is the recipient of the 2022 Cybersecurity Woman Entrepreneur of the year award. She serves on the Board of Directors as the Programming Chair for the Women in Defense Greater Tampa Bay and the Women in Cybersecurity (WiCyS) Florida Affiliate Board. She is also a member of the Military Cyber Professionals Association (MCPA) and a fellow of the Cyber Security Forum Initiative (CSFI), a not-for-profit organization providing cyber warfare awareness, guidance, and security solutions through collaboration, education, volunteer work, and training to assist the U.S. Government, U.S. Military, commercial interests, and international partners.

Kimberlyn Leary is a senior vice president, managing research and program development across the Urban Institute. She comes to Urban from Harvard University, where she is an associate professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School, an associate professor in the department of health policy and management at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and a lecturer in public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. For four years, she directed the Enabling Change program for the Doctor of Public Health program at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Leary also served as executive director of policy outreach and of the Center of Excellence in Women's Mental Health at McLean Hospital. Before that, she was chief psychologist at the Cambridge Health Alliance for nearly 12 years. Leary served as an advisor to the White House during the Obama administration. As a Robert Wood Johnson health policy fellow, she helped launch the Advancing Equity initiative for the Obama White

House Council on Women and Girls. She was also an advisor to the health division at White House Office of Management and Budget and senior policy advisor to the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Leary served on the Biden-Harris transition as a volunteer part-time member of the Agency Review Team for the Office of National Drug Control Policy in the Executive Office of the President. Leary writes, consults, and teaches on adaptive leadership, leading teams, cross-boundary collaboration, negotiation, and conflict transformation. She holds an MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School and a PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Michigan, and she completed advanced training as a clinical psychoanalyst at the Michigan Psychoanalytic Association. Leary serves on the board of trustees at Amherst College, the Austen Riggs Center, and the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute and serves as an advisor to Pivotal Ventures and the Upswing Fund. Additionally, she serves as a judge for the McArthur Foundation's 100&Change competition and for Lever for Change's Lone Star Competition.

Odette Nemes is a queer woman who migrated to the United States from Puerto Rico. She has dedicated her career to addressing racial and gender inequities by building and managing programs that inspire people to reach their full potential. She is proud to be Head of Growth at Onramp, a company that builds custom technical apprenticeships for clients such as Vanguard, Amazon, and Twitch. For over 12 years at Girls Inc., Odette collaborated with corporate partners to design and scale programs to get girls of color from Oakland and NYC interested in careers in STEM and finance. She leveraged her strategic leadership and relationship building skills to launch the first Girls Resource Center in Alameda County. When she doesn't have her hands full with her 2 kids, she enjoys joining pickup basketball games, and attending concerts and musicals.

Jomarie Polanco is a current Software Engineer II at Twitch and a first generation Dominican-American. After graduating from Boston University in 2015, she dabbled in many careers from retail management to recruiter. During the height of the pandemic, Jomarie made the career change to software engineering and hasn't looked back since. After the apprenticeship with Onramp, Jomarie secured a spot as a Software Engineer I at Twitch and, in less than a year, was promoted to Software Engineer II. She is currently on track to a promotion to tech lead. In her spare time, Jomarie enjoys writing music, babysitting her niece and nephews, cooking, and listening to Taylor Swift on repeat.

Winellia Rivera is a Senior Enlisted Non-Commissioned Officer in the U.S. Air Force. She is preparing to transition into the civilian workforce culminating a 22-year career with the Air Force as the Section Chief for the Wing Cyber Security office at MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, FL. Winnie's expertise is within the Cybersecurity realm as a highly effective military leader. As a part of her transition, Winnie completed a 12-week Cybersecurity apprenticeship at Paragon Cyber Solutions. Following her retirement from the Air Force and apprenticeship, Winnie will begin her civilian career at Paragon Cyber solutions as a full-time Information Assurance Specialist.

Martin J. Walsh was sworn in as the 29th Secretary of Labor on March 23, 2021. A lifelong champion of equity and fairness, and a proud product of the City of Boston, Secretary Walsh leads the U.S. Department of Labor with a strong connection to working people, and a commitment to creating an economy that works for all. In 1997, he was elected to serve as a State Representative for one of the most diverse districts in Massachusetts. There, he focused on creating good jobs, protecting workers' rights, expanding mental health treatment, and investing in public transit. Following his time as a State Representative, Secretary Walsh spent the last seven years as the Mayor of the City of Boston. While mayor, he led the creation of close to 140,000 jobs and helped secure a statewide \$15/hour minimum wage, paid sick leave, and paid parental leave. He established Universal, high-quality Pre-Kindergarten for all children, and free community college for low-income students. Secretary Walsh was a national leader in the response to

COVID-19, getting PPE to first responders and nursing homes; funding emergency child care for healthcare and frontline workers; halting evictions and providing rental relief; and setting up multiple funds to help small businesses survive. His work early in the pandemic to pause construction and establish safety requirements has been lauded as a model by both unions and employers alike. As Mayor of Boston, Secretary Walsh also made his mark as a labor leader. After following his father into Laborers Local 223 in Boston, he rose to head the Building and Construction Trades Council from 2011 to 2013. He worked with business and community leaders to promote high-quality development, and he created a program called Building Pathways that has become a model for increasing diversity in the workplace and providing good career opportunities for women and people of color. Born and raised in the neighborhood of Dorchester by immigrant parents, Secretary Walsh is driven to ensure our nation's economy works for everyone. Secretary Walsh is a survivor of Burkitt lymphoma and is a proud member of the recovery community who has worked to expand addiction treatment throughout his career. While working full-time as a legislator, he returned to school to earn a degree in Political Science at Boston College.