

Apprenticeship Occupations and Standards Center of Excellence: Tools to Expand Registered Apprenticeship in the US

Speaker Biographies

Bhavani Arabandi is a principal 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.

Zach Boren is a senior policy program manager in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, where he leads various 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 the Sector Skills Academy. 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.

Kathryn Castelloes began working with the North Carolina Department of Labor in 1994 in the Pre-Apprenticeship Division. After working there for four years, she became an apprenticeship consultant with the Apprenticeship and Training Bureau. In 2006, she began working as the Western Field Supervisor and in 2008 started as the Bureau Chief for Apprenticeship and Training. In 2014, the Apprenticeship and Training Bureau was transferred to the Department of Commerce and in 2017 Apprenticeship was transferred to the NC Community College System, where she serves as Director of ApprenticeshipNC.

Patrick Cushing is the founder and CEO of WorkHands, a web and mobile platform for apprenticeships. WorkHands' mission is to make apprenticeship simpler. Prior to WorkHands, Patrick led the mobile team at SigFig, worked in NYC government to connect businesses online, and started his career in creative services at D.E. Shaw India. Patrick has a BS in biomedical engineering from Columbia University, but his greatest career education came early from working for his family's businesses delivering heating oil to Massachusetts homes and disassembling carnival rides on the weekends.

John Varian Ladd became Administrator of the Office of Apprenticeship in January 2008. As the Administrator, John has responsibility for oversight of the National Registered Apprenticeship System. The National Registered Apprenticeship System operates in cooperation with State agencies, businesses, industry, employers, employer associations, labor and management organizations and educational institutions. It is the nationally recognized credentialing system for skilled and technical occupational training programs with over 600,000 active apprentices in the U.S. 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 been in numerous leadership positions for major ETA initiatives including Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development (WIRED), InnovatETA and ETA's Transformational Forums. 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 many 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, Massachusetts, 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.

Sean Ofeldt is a former Navy SEAL, and is the CEO of Transition Overwatch, where he leads the company's mission and execution of its innovative military hiring programs. Sean and his team brought to market the Unconventional Apprenticeship, the first holistic military hiring program optimized for employers and transitioning military members. When Sean transitioned from the military he found himself in an all-too-familiar position faced by every military member at transition – uncertainty. Leaving the military was like jumping out of an airplane and leaving everything he knew behind. Trying to navigate a new world in the total absence of resources and a team was extremely difficult. That journey set Sean on a path to discover a better way to approach military transition. Through the lens of experience, and years of ideation, the team at Transition Overwatch has developed the optimal way for military members to successfully transition into new-collar careers with unlimited growth potential. We've also worked with our employer partners to develop innovative pathways to close their skills gap and implement programs to build talent within their organizations.