

# Summarizing Approaches for Designing Inclusive Apprenticeship Programs

## Speaker Biographies

**Zach Boren** is a senior policy program manager in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute. He is a highly experienced workforce development professional, with more than 15 years of expertise in shaping government policies on workforce development and apprenticeships and building training programs with employers and labor. Since 2020, he has directed projects for Urban to expand and modernize apprenticeships and has written extensively on policies to improve the labor market and conditions for business and workers. Before joining Urban, Boren was the director of registered apprenticeship and policy in the US Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship. He is a frequent presenter, trainer, and author, lending his expertise on apprenticeships, equal employment opportunity, and labor issues. His work has been featured with Bloomberg, NPR, NBC News Radio, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and the *Public News Service*. He has a bachelor's degree from Indiana University and a master's degree from the Catholic University of America.

**Jennifer Carlson** is Co-Founder and Executive Director at Apprenti is a non-profit, apprenticeship intermediary and workforce consulting organization that delivers a secondary pipeline of diverse tech talent to address U.S. domestic digital skills shortages. A former business leader with AIG, Progressive and adjunct professor at Seattle University, Jennifer also serves on the Tech Councils of North America (TECNA) foundation board, and as an Advisory Board Member - Apprenticeships for America.

**Jackson Costa** is Senior Economist, Research and Evaluation at the US Department of Labor. Jackson began his federal service at the Social Security Administration, where he was a Researcher and Project Manager for the last 7 years. He's worked with several staff from ODEP over the years on various demonstration projects, most notably as the evaluation lead on both Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI (PROMISE) and Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN). Prior to his federal service, Jackson has worked in various roles in the education system—he started off as a tutor for C2 Education, then transitioned into a Supplemental Education Services (SES) administrator for Prince George's County in Maryland, and finally as an instructor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Teaching is one of his passions; he capitalizes on every opportunity he gets to provide lessons or teach his colleagues. In fact, he led a SAS Coding group in his role at SSA for new/beginner programmers. Jackson has a Masters of Economic Policy Analysis from UMBC.

**Karen Gardiner**, a senior fellow in the Income and Benefits Policy Center, directs evaluations of workforce training programs, including their implementation and effects on participants. She is the project director and principal investigator of the ODEP Research to Support the Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship project. She leads Urban's impact study work for two U.S. Department of Labor studies—the evaluation of the Apprenticeship Building America grant program and the evaluation of a Senior Community Service Employment Program-related demonstration. Prior to joining Urban, Gardiner directed the evaluation of the DOL American Apprenticeship Initiative, as well as the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) project for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, one of the first impact studies of career pathways programs. Previously, she was a Principal Associate at Abt Associates, and a Vice President at The Lewin Group. She is the Vice President of the Board of Directors of Jobs Have Priorities, a nonprofit organization that provides job training and job search assistance to residents of homeless shelters in the Washington, D.C., area. Gardiner holds an MPP from the University of Chicago.

**Daniel Kuehn**, a principal research associate in the Income and Benefits Policy Center, focuses his research on registered apprenticeship and workforce development. Kuehn is an adjunct professor at the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration at George Washington University. In addition to his research on workforce development, he regularly publishes journal articles on the history of economic thought. He received a PhD in economics from American University.

**Stephanie Petrov** is a research assistant in the Income and Benefits Policy Center, where her research focuses on workforce development and higher education. She received a BA in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is pursuing an MPP at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy.

**Scott Robertson** is Senior Policy Adviser, Office of Disability Employment Policy at the US Department of Labor. He was the federal project manager for ODEP's Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship (PIA) initiative. Dr. Robertson, an autistic adult, spearheads ODEP's activities to enhance national autism policy and increase access to gainful employment for people on the autism spectrum, and he represents ODEP at the Federal Interagency Workgroup on Autism. He also advises on accessible work technology and emerging technology, such as artificial intelligence, automated vehicles, and virtual and augmented reality and collaborates on ODEP's Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT). Earlier in his career, Dr. Robertson worked on Capitol Hill as U.S. Senator Tom Harkin's Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Fellow in the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions. He also co-founded the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization launched in 2006 and served as the Founding Vice President. He earned his PhD in information sciences and technology at the Pennsylvania State University. His PhD dissertation investigated cyber- and face-to-face bullying victimization of autistic youth.

**Taryn Mackenzie Williams** is Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy, Office of Disability Employment Policy at the US Department of Labor. She advises the Secretary of Labor on how the Department's policies and programs impact the employment of people with disabilities and leads ODEP, which works with employers and all levels of government to promote evidence-based policy that improves employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities. Previously, Williams was the managing director for the Poverty to Prosperity Program at American Progress. Before joining American Progress, she worked at ODEP on a variety of issues related to education, workforce policy, Social Security, Medicaid and civil rights. In her role as director of youth policy, Williams led agency efforts to coordinate education and employment policy in support of improved labor force outcomes for disabled youth. From 2014 through 2016, Williams served as ODEP's chief of staff. She also undertook detail assignments as associate director for public engagement and liaison to the disability community at the White House from 2014 through 2015 and as a policy adviser on the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions from 2012 through 2013.