

## State-Led Approaches to Apprenticeship Expansion and Innovation

### Speaker Biographies

**Shonda Anderson** is the Director of Internships and Apprenticeships for the Kansas Department of Commerce and has overseen the largest increase in Registered Apprenticeship numbers and funding in Kansas history. Kansas went from a 47nd in the nation to 29th in new apprentice numbers and currently facilitating over \$35 million in state and federal registered apprenticeship investments. She grew up in Colorado, where she earned an undergraduate degree in agriculture and resource economics and agricultural education from Colorado State University. Over 20 years ago, life brought her to Kansas, where she earned a master's in agricultural economics from Kansas State University. Previously, she worked as the director of the apprenticeship for Kansas City's Metropolitan Community College. She is a proud mother of two and will never forget she started her career driving dump trucks for her dad's asphalt business.

**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 workforce development and training, and apprenticeship. Her expertise is in program design and implementation, qualitative research methods, and policy analysis. Arabandi has received several awards for her research including the Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Award and was a postdoctoral research fellow at Rice University. She has an MA in sociology from George Mason University and a PhD in sociology from the University of Virginia.

**Leslee Haisma** is a training and technical assistance specialist in the Work, Education, and Labor Division at the Urban Institute, where she focuses on apprenticeships and workforce development. Her work focuses on building new occupational frameworks and helping organizations develop new apprenticeship programs. Before joining Urban, Haisma worked for 10 years in the Michigan public school system as a teacher and school administrator. Haisma holds an undergraduate degree in education from Grand Valley State University and a master's degree in urban education from Davenport University.

**Denise Miller, Ed.D.** is the Director of Apprenticeship Colorado at the Office of the Future of Work in the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE). After 15 years in direct service and program leadership, Denise earned a doctorate in Higher Education Leadership and Policy from Vanderbilt's Peabody College with a focus on the social context of education from preschool through adult learning. She serves as the Colorado subject matter expert in state legislation and actively contributes to national apprenticeship expansion policy through her membership in the National Association of Apprenticeship State and Territorial Directors (NASTAD), the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, and collaboration with the US Department of Labor. Her background in education and workforce in low-income communities, commitment to Colorado's distinct local diversity, and dedication to partnership drives her to create an inclusive and equitable registered apprenticeship system. Since joining the CDLE in 2019, Denise has secured over \$12M in federal investment for the state's apprenticeship expansion efforts, partnered with the Colorado Urban Workforce Alliance to launch the nationally recognized "Apprenticeship Hub", and consulted on the legislation and led the implementation of the State's Apprenticeship Agency.

**Amanda Richardson** has over 20 years of work experience in higher education, including 13 years within the South Carolina Technical College System. As the Vice President for Apprenticeship Carolina™, Amanda is committed to advancing workforce development across South Carolina through innovative apprenticeship programs and partnerships. Amanda received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Clemson University, her MBA from Southern Wesleyan University, and has completed the SC Economic Development Institute, the SC Technical College System Leadership Academy, and the Community College Leadership graduate certificate program through the University of South Carolina.