



# WIOA PARTNERS' CONFERENCE

FALL 2023

**NOVEMBER 7-9, 2023**

Hot Springs Convention Center  
134 Convention Boulevard  
Hot Springs, AR 71901



# DAY 1

**Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

**1:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.**

**Horner Hall**

REGISTRATION 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

PLEASE SIGN IN AT THE REGISTRATION TABLE.

**Facilitators:** Dr. Charisse Childers, ADWS Director, & Courtney Traylor, ADWS Deputy Director

**1:00 P.M. OPENING CEREMONIES**

Presentation of Colors: Hot Springs High School JROTC

National Anthem: Bismarck High School Choir

**R.E.S.E.T. "Ted Talks"**

R- Reimagining &

E- Elevating

S- Service

E- Effectiveness

T- Together

Eddie Thomas, Deputy Director, ADWS

Zoë Calkins, Communications Director, ADWS

Carmen Edwards, Workforce Director, CAPDD

Chip McAfee, Communications Director, ARS

Carl Daughtery, Chief of Field Services, ARS

**1:20 P.M. WELCOME**

Dr. Charisse Childers

Director, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

**CABINET REMARKS**

Hugh McDonald

Secretary, Arkansas Department of Commerce

**1:45 P.M. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR PRIORITIES & UPDATES**

Nicholas Lalpui, Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor-ETA, Region 4

**2:15 P.M. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN ARKANSAS**

*In this presentation, we'll dive deep into the labor force participation rate, what it is, why it matters, & what factors influence its rise & fall in Arkansas.*

Susan Price, Bureau of Labor Statistics Program Manager, ADWS

**2:35 P.M. NETWORKING BREAK**

**2:45 P.M. EMPLOYER PANEL**

**Workforce Challenges, Innovations, & Business Needs**

*In this employer panel, we'll explore the pivotal role of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) in shaping the landscape of the public workforce system. The discussion will shed light on the overarching goals of WIOA, focusing on how it impacts service to employers & overall economic growth in Arkansas. We'll delve into how the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, spanning government agencies, educational institutions, & community organizations, come together to create a robust ecosystem that caters to the unique business needs of the region. With WIOA's extensive network of partners, this session will highlight the strategies that underpin the successful partnership between public workforce systems & employers, an indispensable alliance in meeting the multifaceted requirements of today's job market.*

MODERATOR: Shenaye Johns, Business Services & Discretionary Grants Manager, ADWS

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Jonathan Taylor, Executive Director, DFA, Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

BANK OZK

Cathy Bonner, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion & Outreach Programs, Bank OZK

Kim Franco, Affirmative Action & Outreach, Program Manager, Bank OZK

OAKLAWN

Eric Gilson, Vice President of Human Resources, Oaklawn

**3:45 P.M. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE UPDATES FOR EMPLOYERS**

Kristen Rhodes-Berry, Assistant Director of Unemployment Insurance, ADWS

**3:55 P.M. TRANSITION**

**4:00 P.M. PARTICIPANT SUCCESS PANEL**

**The WIOA Experience: Customer Voices**

**5:00 P.M. ADJOURN**

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**FEEDBACK SURVEY DAY 1**



# DAY 2



**Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

**8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.**

**Horner Hall**

PLEASE SIGN IN AT THE REGISTRATION TABLE.

**Facilitators:** Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes, Director, DSB & Eddie Thomas, Deputy Director, ADWS

**8:00 A.M. OPENING REMARKS**

Dr. Charisse Childers, Director, ADWS

**8:15 A.M. LAUNCHING ARKANSAS' WORKFORCE THROUGH DATA & TECHNOLOGY**

*An overview of how the state will utilize Google CiviForm, the RIPL platform, & Credential Engine to create resources and opportunities for Arkansans & employers.*

AR DEPARTMENT OF TRANSFORMATION & SHARED SERVICES (TSS)

Robert McGough, Chief Data Officer, TSS

Dr. Jake Walker, Chief Research Officer, TSS

Kristen Shryock, Skills Data Coordinator, TSS

GOOGLE.ORG CIVIFORM

Erin Hattersley, Manager, Google.org

RESEARCH IMPROVING PEOPLE'S LIVES (RIPL)

Kaitlin Sweetin, Deputy Director of Policy, RIPL

CREDENTIAL ENGINE

Jared Diener, State Partnerships Manager, Credential Engine

**9:30 A.M. NETWORKING BREAK**

**9:45 A.M. THE TEXAS MODEL: A DISCUSSION WITH LEADERS FROM THE TEXAS WORKFORCE SYSTEM-- COLLABORATION ON ALL LEVELS**

*Texas Workforce Solutions network provides services to ensure the state's economic viability today, tomorrow and in the future. The Texas Workforce Commission, 28 local workforce development Boards and their many strategic service providers promote and support a workforce system that creates value and offers employers, families, individuals, and communities the opportunity to achieve & sustain economic prosperity. Hear how the state agency, Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas Board, & Equus Workforce Services focus on alignment & collaboration of workforce system programs, services, & initiatives to meet the needs of employers, learners, & job seekers. By focusing on outcomes, thoughtful alignment, relationships & with a little bit of luck, Texas boasts an incredibly skilled workforce ready to meet employer's needs & attract enterprise to the state.*

MODERATOR: Miles Crawford, Boss LLC, Arkansas Workforce Development Board Member

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (STATE AGENCY)

Courtney Arbour, Director of Workforce Development, Texas Workforce Commission

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS OF GREATER DALLAS (LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD)

Laurie Bouillion Larrea, President, Workforce Solutions of Greater Dallas

Demetria Robinson, Executive Vice President, Workforce Solutions of Greater Dallas

EQUUS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS (ONE-STOP OPERATOR/SERVICE PROVIDER)

Tera Nunn, Project Director, Equus Workforce Solutions

**11:00 A.M. NETWORKING BREAK**



**11:15 A.M. BREAKOUT SESSIONS** Four concurrent options (all offered twice.)

- A. New & Emerging Tech to Aid in Employability**  
Room 102/103 *View demonstrations & learn more about the assistive technology available & how it can help clients achieve educational, employment, & independent living goals.*

PRESENTED BY:  
Rick Anderson, Program Manager, ARS  
Gustavo Manzanales, Program Manager, DSB

- B. Mental Health & the Workforce**  
Room 104/105 *This session provides an overview of the Mental Health First Aid training that The Academy at Goodwill Industries of Arkansas offers. We will cover why & how this training is important & useful in the workplace, community, & among family & friends. Attendees will get a chance to participate in activities & discussions that are used in the training, & a small glimpse of the extensive evidence-based information that the Mental Health First Aid training provides.*

PRESENTED BY:  
Kristen Blair Lawhon, MHFA Instructor  
The Academy at Goodwill Industries of Arkansas

- C. Customer Service: Know Your Audience, Serve Your Audience**  
Room 201/202 *Customer Service Skills cover the most difficult types of people you encounter during work & provide you with the techniques to deal with them. While no one always fits into a specific category, characteristics can be identified & dealt with effectively. This presentation will provide strategies & tools to help you cope with difficult customers & situations.*

PRESENTED BY:  
Cara Kerner, Statewide Program Specialist  
Transformation and Shared Services, Office of Personnel Management

- D. Business Services & Engaging Employers: Practical Application**  
Room 203/204 *In this session, you will learn about the importance of gathering business intelligence, establishing techniques & standards for creating vivid employer contact management systems, building program services through responsiveness, addressing challenges in workforce development, engaging employers through knowing their common pain points, working collaboratively to resolve local & industry-wide challenges, & becoming familiar with partner resources to maximize state performance.*

A.M. FACILITATORS:  
LaJuana Delph, Adult Education Section  
Stephen Partridge, Division of Services for the Blind

P.M. FACILITATORS:  
Nathan Winter, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services  
Mark McManus, Office of Skills Development

**12:15 P.M. TRANSITION TO LUNCHEON**

- 12:30 P.M. LUNCHEON & KEYNOTE ADDRESS: ARKANSAS' WORKFORCE STRATEGY**  
Horner Hall Mike Rogers, Chief Workforce Officer, State of Arkansas, Office of Governor Sarah Sanders

**1:25 P.M. NETWORKING BREAK**

**1:40 P.M. BREAKOUT SESSIONS** (Same options)

**2:40 P.M.      NETWORKING BREAK**

**3:00 P.M.      THINK OUTSIDE THE CYLINDER:**

**How to use the uniqueness of you to better serve them.**

*Join Candice Lawrence as she guides you in how to unleash your creative voice to develop innovative service delivery strategies.*

Candice Lawrence

Vice President, Programs & Partnerships, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce/AIA

Executive Director, Arkansas Economic Developers & Chamber Executives

Arkansas Workforce Development Board Member

**4:00 P.M.      NAVIGATING THE PATH TO WORK-BASED LEARNING (THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED)**

*The presentation, "Navigating the Path to Work-Based Learning" (AKA "The Road Less Traveled"), is a journey through the evolution of work-based learning opportunities offered through WIOA. It begins with our realization of the need, which emerged from conversations with employers who expressed a demand for on-the-job training. While our historical focus has been on institutional training, this presentation highlights the imperative to shift our narrative & make work-based learning more appealing to both job seekers & employers. It outlines the progression of our efforts to bridge this gap & create a more robust framework for workforce development.*

Cora Easterday, Business Engagement Coordinator

West Central Arkansas Planning & Development District

Maria Brady, Multi-State Navigator/WIOA SME

USDOL-Office of Apprenticeship

**5:00 P.M.      ADJOURN**

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**FEEDBACK SURVEY DAY 2**



**FEEDBACK SURVEY DAY 3**

## **ACRONYMS**

ADHE: Arkansas Division of Higher Education

ADWS: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

AIA: Associated Industries of Arkansas

ARS: Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

BLS: Bureau of Labor Statistics

CADC: Certified Alcohol & Drug Counselor

CAPDD: Central Arkansas Planning & Development District

DFA: Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration

DSB: Division of Services for the Blind

ETA: Employment and Training Administration

MHFA: Mental Health First Aid

OPM: Office of Personnel Management

SME: Subject Matter Expert

TSS: Transformation and Shared Services

USDOL: United States Department of Labor

WIOA: Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act

# DAY 3



**Thursday, November 9, 2023**

**8:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.**

**Horner Hall**

PLEASE SIGN IN AT THE REGISTRATION TABLE.

**Facilitators:** Dr. Trena Miles, Director, Adult Education & Joseph Baxter, Commissioner, ARS

**8:00 A.M. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

Dr. Trena Miles, Director, Adult Education  
Joseph Baxter, Commissioner, ARS

**8:15 A.M. WIOA PERFORMANCE:**

**Understanding Our Goals & Working Towards Outcomes**

*An overview of the WIOA Performance will include the PY2022 Performance Outcomes, data source, performance measures and calculation methodology, & workforce reporting outcomes.*

Robert McGough, Chief Data Officer, TSS  
Dr. Jake Walker, Chief Research Officer, TSS

**8:45 A.M. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM UPDATES**

Kristen Rhodes-Berry, Assistant Director of Unemployment Insurance, ADWS

**9:00 A.M. SERVING JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS:**

**Reentering The Workforce & Transitioning to Success**

*The great handoff – Learn about the many resources & types of support Justice-Involved Individuals can receive to help them transition back into the community, including being prepared for reentering the workforce.*

Melissa Capuano, CADC II  
100 Families County Coordinator, Ouachita Behavioral Health & Wellness

**9:30 A.M. NETWORKING BREAK**

**9:45 A.M. BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THOSE WE SERVE**

*The Bridges Out of Poverty workshop helps participants gain a better understanding of how people from generational poverty view the world. This includes mental models, internal pictures of how the world works, which determine how we view ourselves & those we interact with. It also includes hidden rules, the unspoken cues & habits that come from the environment in which one was raised. It concludes with a discussion of resources that are needed in order to overcome the challenges of poverty.*

Monieca West, Career Pathways Program Director, ADHE

**10:45 A.M. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA COLLABORATIONS**

**11:45 A.M. VETERANS SALUTE**

Michael Tippin, Program Operations Chief, Employment Services, ADWS

**12:00 P.M. ADJOURN**

# SPEAKERS



**Charisse Childers, Ph.D.**  
*Director, Arkansas Division of  
Workforce Services*



**Courtney Traylor**  
*Deputy Director, ADWS*



**Eddie Thomas**  
*Deputy Director, ADWS*



**Zoë Calkins**  
*Communications Director,  
ADWS*



**Carmen Edwards**  
*Workforce Director, Central  
Arkansas Planning &  
Development District*



**Chip McAfee**  
*Communications Director,  
ARS*



**Carl Daughtery**  
*Chief of Field Services, ARS*



**Hugh McDonald**  
*Secretary, Arkansas  
Department of Commerce*



**Nicholas Lalpui**  
*Regional Administrator,  
USDOL-ETA, Region 4*



**Susan Price**  
*BLS Program Manager, ADWS*



**Kristen Rhodes-Berry**  
*Assistant Director,  
Unemployment Insurance,  
ADWS*



**Shenaye Johns**  
*Business Services &  
Discretionary Grants Manager,  
ADWS*



**Jonathan Taylor**  
*Executive Director, DFA,  
Governor's Council on  
Developmental Disabilities*



**Cathy Bonner**  
*Director of Diversity, Equity &  
Inclusion & Outreach Programs,  
Bank OZK*



**Kim Franco**  
*Affirmative Action &  
Outreach, Program  
Manager, Bank OZK*



**Eric Gilson**  
*Vice President of Human  
Resources, Oaklawn*



# SPEAKERS



**Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes**  
*Director, DSB*



**Charisse Childers, Ph.D.**  
*Director, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services*



**Robert McGough**  
*Chief Data Officer, TSS*



**Dr. Jake Walker**  
*Chief Research Officer, TSS*



**Kristen Shryock**  
*Skills Data Coordinator, TSS*



**Erin Hattersley**  
*Manager, Google.org*



**Kaitlin Sweetin**  
*Deputy Director of Policy, RIPL*



**Jared Diener**  
*State Partnerships Manager, Credential Engine*



**Miles Crawford**  
*Boss LLC, Arkansas Workforce Development Board Member*



**Courtney Arbour**  
*Director of Workforce Development, Texas Workforce Commission*



**Laurie Bouillion Larrea**  
*President, Workforce Solutions of Greater Dallas*



**Demetria Robinson**  
*Executive Vice President, Workforce Solutions of Greater Dallas*



**Tera Nunn**  
*Project Director, Equus Workforce Solutions*



**Gustavo Manzanales**  
*Program Manager, DSB*



**Rick Anderson**  
*Program Manager, DSB*



**Kristen Blair Lawhon**  
*MHFA Instructor, Goodwill Industries of Arkansas*



# SPEAKERS



**LaJuana Delph**

*Workforce Development  
Coordinator, Adult Education*



**Stephen Partridge**

*Business Services  
Coordinator, DSB*



**Nathan Winter**

*Associate Commissioner, ARS*



**Mark McManus**

*Apprenticeship Expansion  
Coordinator, Office of Skills  
Development*



**Mike Rogers**

*Chief Workforce Officer, State  
of Arkansas*



**Candice Lawrence**

*Vice President, Programs &  
Partnerships, Arkansas State  
Chamber of Commerce*



**Cora Easterday**

*Business Engagement  
Coordinator, West Central  
Arkansas Planning &  
Development District*



**Maria Brady**

*Multi-State Navigator & WIOA  
SME, USDOL-Office of  
Apprenticeship*



**Dr. Trenia Miles**

*Director, Adult Education*



**Joseph Baxter**

*Commissioner, ARS*



**Melissa Campuano**

*CADC II, 100 Families County  
Coordinator, Ouachita  
Behavioral Health & Wellness*



**Monieca West**

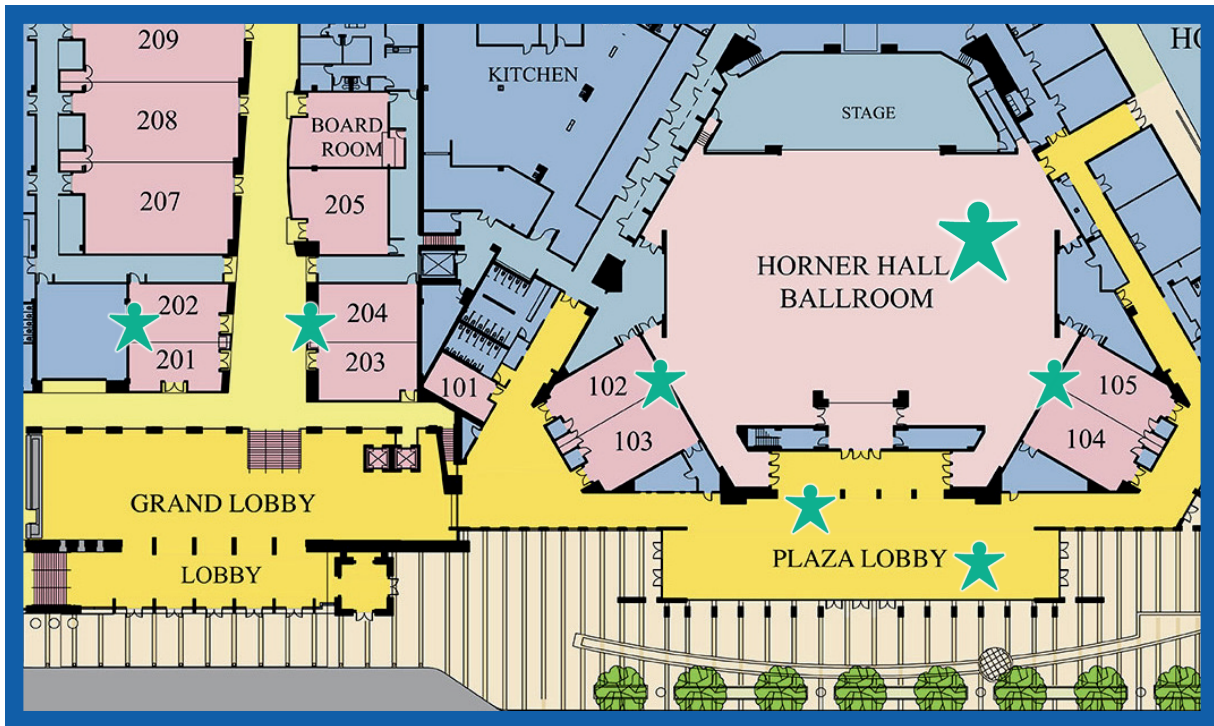
*Career Pathways Program  
Director, ADHE*



**Michael Tippin**

*Program Operations Chief,  
Employment Services, ADWS*

## Map of Hot Springs Convention Center



**Horner Hall Ballroom** Plenary sessions, Luncheon

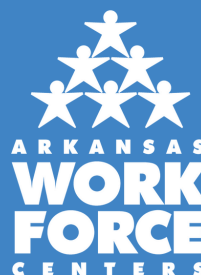
**Plaza Lobby** Registration Table, Exhibitor Tables

**102/103** Breakout (Option A- New & Emerging Tech to Aid in Employability)

**104/105** Breakout (Option B- Mental Health & the Workforce)

**201/202** Breakout (Option C- Customer Service: Know Your Audience, Serve Your Audience)

**203/204** Breakout (Option D- Business Services & Engaging Employers: Practical Application)



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