



## SSI Youth Solutions Conference: Proposals to Improve Employment for Youth with Disabilities

June 9 – 11, 2021

### Biographies

#### Authors

**Catherine Anderson, Ph.D.,**  
LPC, CRC, Department of  
Rehabilitation and Counseling,  
University of Wisconsin–Stout

Catherine (Cayte) Anderson serves as a researcher and associate professor in the Department of Rehabilitation and Counseling at the University of Wisconsin–Stout. She has been working in the field of rehabilitation counseling as a practitioner, administrator, educator, and researcher for more than 20 years. She is experienced in applying community-based participatory research methodology and knowledge translation strategies to enhance meaningful relationships among researchers, rehabilitation professionals, and community members to better understand and address relevant issues affecting people with disabilities. She currently serves as principal investigator, co-principal investigator, or researcher on several federally funded research demonstration or national technical assistance center grants funded through the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration, the U.S. Department of Education–Office of Special Education Programs, and the Administration for Community Living–National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. Dr. Anderson has also collaboratively worked on research and demonstration grants funded through the Social Security Administration and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Her past and current projects share a common theme in identifying, implementing, and studying the use of evidence-based practices with people with disabilities experiencing poverty to improve policy, employment, and economic outcomes. Dr. Anderson currently serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* and the *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*. She is also an elected board member of multiple national membership and credentialing organizations focused on professional issues in rehabilitation counseling and financial empowerment of people with disabilities. Dr. Anderson holds a Ph.D. in rehabilitation psychology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and is a licensed professional counselor and a certified rehabilitation counselor.

**Kelli Crane, Ph.D.,**  
Center for Transition and Career  
Innovation, University of  
Maryland, College Park

Kelli Crane has extensive knowledge of the development and implementation of secondary transition and employment programs for youth and students with disabilities. She participates in two state model demonstration projects designed to offer work-based learning experiences for high school students with disabilities. Dr. Crane also is co-leading the evaluation activities of a statewide research project to improve post-school outcomes for youth recipients of Supplemental Security Income. In addition to her work on federally funded projects, Dr. Crane has consulted with several state agencies to build capacity and coordinate systems to improve services for transition-age youth. These experiences required bringing together and facilitating policymakers and service providers across systems. Dr. Crane has previously held positions at TransGen, Inc., and the National School to Work Office. Through her work on secondary transition and employment practices, Dr. Crane has developed several training programs; presented widely at major conferences and webinars; and authored and coauthored manuscripts, briefs, and book chapters. She has direct experience working as a secondary education transition specialist in an urban school district, a vocational rehabilitation counselor, and a job coach. Dr. Crane holds a Ph.D. in vocational special needs education from Virginia Tech.

**Marsha Ellison, Ph.D.,**  
Transitions to Adulthood Center  
for Research, University of  
Massachusetts Medical School

Marsha Ellison is an associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School; she is also deputy director of the Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research at the medical school, as well as the center's associate director for knowledge translation. Dr. Ellison holds an appointment at the Veterans Health Administration as a health research scientist. She is a researcher in mental health services, psychiatric rehabilitation, and disability policy who brings more than 20 years of experience in cutting-edge research on rehabilitation services, emphasizing interventions that improve education and employment outcomes among youth and young adults with serious mental health conditions. Dr. Ellison is currently the principal investigator of a federally funded effort to develop practice guides for special education teachers of high school students with serious mental health conditions. These guides, developed using an implementation science framework, train secondary education teachers in three evidenced-informed practices to support students' transition to successful careers and postsecondary employment. The guides have been successfully piloted in two states. Dr. Ellison has also been the principal investigator for numerous other projects on supporting the employment outcomes of youth with mental health conditions. She holds a Ph.D. in sociology and social work from Boston University.

**Grace Francis, Ph.D.,**  
George Mason University

Grace Francis focuses her research on family support policy and practice and post-high school support and outcomes—for example, postsecondary education, employment, belonging, and mental wellness—for people with disabilities. Before her appointment at George Mason University, she served as the associate director and co-principal investigator of the SUCCEED Program, a postsecondary program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. She also served as the quantitative research coordinator for the Assessing Family Employment Awareness Training awarded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, and as the co-director of the Family and Community Engagement Technical Assistance team for the Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation Center at the University of Kansas. Dr. Francis has published more than 50 scholarly products, including 43 peer-reviewed manuscripts in various disability- and non-disability-related journals, such as *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, *Inclusion*, *Research and Practice for Severe Disabilities*, *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, *Teacher Education and Special Education*, and *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*. Before working in higher education, she taught students with disabilities in public school settings, facilitated person-centered support teams, served as a behavior consultant for students with significant disabilities (including students in transition), and worked as a support broker for a person with significant support needs. Dr. Francis holds a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas, specializing in family support policy and practice.

**Stephanie Gage, B.A.,**  
Virginia Commonwealth  
University National Training and  
Data Center

Stephanie Gage began her career in the education field but transferred into the field of social work. In her work as a career assessment counselor, Ms. Gage helped people identify career goals and establish a plan to attain their goals. As part of her work, she obtained state certification to assist people with disabilities on benefits counseling. In 2011, Ms. Gage became certified at the national level as a Community Partner Work Incentives Coordinator and began working for Indiana Works, a Work Incentives Planning and Assistance project. In this position, she counseled beneficiaries throughout the state on long-term benefits and assisted people with more intense and urgent benefits needs. In 2019, Ms. Gage began work as the Benefits Information Network Project Coordinator at the Center on Community Living and Careers. The Benefits Information Network project allows vocational rehabilitation participants within Indiana to receive individualized counseling on benefits and work incentives. Ms. Gage managed the training and certification of approximately 150 Benefits Information Network liaisons who each year provided individualized analysis on federal, state, and local benefits to more than 1,000 beneficiaries. She is currently a training and technical assistance liaison for the Virginia Commonwealth University National Training and Data Center.

**Judy Geyer, Ph.D.,**  
Abt Associates

Judy Geyer has 12 years of professional experience evaluating policies and programs and 5 years of experience studying work incentives for people with disabilities. Throughout her work as a policy researcher, Dr. Geyer has focused primarily on household economic behavior, as affected by a range of programs including disability insurance, subsidies, and rewards-focused programs. Her methodological expertise is econometrics and, in particular, the design of impact evaluations. She has led literature reviews to inform policy papers for the Social Security Administration and the U.S. Department of Labor. For the Social Security Administration, Dr. Geyer was the lead author of a recent report that describes community-based services and supports available for youth receiving Supplemental Security Income and provides recommendations on standards concerning when a person's participation in a community-based service and support program may qualify as a vocational factor for existing work incentives. As a senior research economist for the Benefit Offset National Demonstration evaluation, she specialized in understanding work incentives counseling and was the lead author on three public-facing impact evaluation reports about the effect of counseling and work incentives on employment outcomes. Dr. Geyer's work has appeared in a range of journals, including *Evaluation Review*, *Quantitative Economics*, the *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, the *Journal of Urban Economics*, and *Cityscape*. She holds a Ph.D. in economics from Carnegie Mellon University.

**Jade Ann Gingerich, M.S.,**  
Maryland Department of  
Disabilities

Jade Ann Gingerich has more than two decades of state policymaking experience, which began with her appointment as executive director of the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and most recently as director of employment policy for the Maryland Department of Disabilities (the nation's only cabinet-level cross-disability department). An expert in state-level interagency coordination and collaboration, she has worked with a broad array of state agency partners and key stakeholders on disability policy. Ms. Gingerich has presented widely on the topic of employment of people with disabilities, testified before the state legislature, and served as an expert on national advisory boards related to employment policy. Her accomplishments include co-leading Maryland's initial Employment First efforts, creating the Employed Individuals with Disabilities program and Maryland's Medicaid Buy-in program, leading the Maryland Medicaid Infrastructure grant, and co-founding the Maryland's Youth Leadership Forum. In addition to her policy work, Ms. Gingerich serves as project director for the Maryland PROMISE grant, a five-year research grant awarded to Maryland in October 2013 by the U.S. Department of Education. The PROMISE program, which involves a partnership across multiple agencies, was intended to enhance the education and employment outcomes for youth receiving Supplemental Security Income and their families. She holds a master's of science degree in special education, with a specialization in transition services, from Johns Hopkins University.

**Thomas P. Golden, Ed.D., CRC,** Thomas Golden passed away in November 2020. He had close to 30 years of experience with disability employment policy and practice, promoting reform, evidence-based practices, and innovations that increase economic self-sufficiency, informed choice, and labor market participation for people with disabilities, including youth with disabilities. Dr. Golden taught in the disability studies sequence in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University and directed three programs for New York State: the Transition Technical Assistance Partnership, the Data Technical Assistance Partnership, and the Consortium of Advancement of Employment Services. Most recently, Dr. Golden served as principal investigator for New York State PROMISE, a federal experimental research demonstration to test and identify evidence-based practices to support the successful adult transition of youth who receive Supplemental Security Income. He served on the National Advisory Group for the National Council on Disability on enforcement of federal disability civil rights laws, as well as with the U.S. Department of Labor's community of practice for the SSI Youth Recipient and Employment Transition project. He contributed to three Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers at Cornell. On the international front, Dr. Golden was a joint investigator for a comparative analysis of return-to-work policy and practice in the United Kingdom and the United States, and he completed an international educational curriculum used in over 20 developing countries to support the development of disability nondiscrimination legislation and policy. His work appeared in major disability journals, including the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *Journal of Disability Policy*, *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, and *Rehabilitation Research*, as well as in numerous books. Dr. Golden served as a former presidential and U.S. Senate appointment to the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel and the Social Security Administration Task Force on Adequacy of Ticket Incentives.

Yang Tan Institute on  
Employment and Disability,  
School of Industrial and Labor  
Relations, Cornell University

**Judith Gross, Ph.D.,**  
Center on Community Living and  
Careers, Indiana Institute on  
Disability and Community,  
Indiana University Bloomington

Judith Gross conducts research that focuses primarily on promoting high expectations for the employment of people with disabilities and on supporting people and their families in accessing and using available resources and benefits to increase competitive employment and community participation. She has been the principal investigator or co-principal investigator for federal grants, state contracts, and foundation grants worth more than \$4.4 million. In those roles, she manages 21 staff who work on six Indiana state contracts for providing training and technical assistance to families and their members with disabilities, special educators, community rehabilitation professionals, and vocational rehabilitation counselors; Dr. Gross and her team also work on three family training grants (Family Employment Awareness Training in Indiana, Nebraska, and Oklahoma). Dr. Gross is author and coauthor of numerous journal articles, book chapters, and white papers and reports focused on family–community–school partnerships, employment and community living for people with disabilities, and engaging culturally diverse families in school and, more specifically, the individualized education program and transition to adulthood processes. Dr. Gross has worked in the disability field for 25 years as an academic researcher, consultant, special educator, residential supports provider, and behavioral skills therapist. As a researcher, she has conducted independent and team-based mixed methods research in family and disability policy, transition to employment, expectations, and family–school and community–school partnerships. Dr. Gross has also provided training and technical assistance to families across the nation on navigating multiple adult service systems, supported and customized employment, accessing and using public benefits, asset development, developing individualized budgets, and creating inclusive supports. She holds a Ph.D. in special education from the University of Kansas.

**Ellie Hartman, Ph.D.,**  
BCBA-D, Behavior Evaluation  
Consultation, LLC

For more than 12 years, Ellie Hartman worked through the University of Wisconsin in partnership with Wisconsin state agencies. In this position, she implemented research grants and coordinated data collection and analyses to improve the competitive, integrated employment of Wisconsin residents with disabilities receiving Wisconsin public services through schools, vocational rehabilitation, long-term care, mental health, Medicaid, and child welfare programs. These research projects explored policy changes such as altering benefit rules to incentivize employment for Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries, Medicaid Assistance Purchase Plan enrollees, and transition-age youth receiving Supplemental Security Income and their families. As project manager for Wisconsin PROMISE, Dr. Hartman ensured that youth and their families enrolled and engaged in program employment services and supports, field staff implemented treatment with fidelity, the project met its benchmarks, and youth and family employment rates increased. As the project evaluator of Wisconsin's Let's Get to Work Grant, she created measurement tools, trained project staff and participating schools and teachers in data collection procedures, and disseminated the translation of research findings into practice. With the passage of Wisconsin's Act 178, which was intended to increase the competitive, integrated employment of working-age people with disabilities, she consulted on the development of an interagency plan and the implementation of interagency data reporting, sharing, and analysis to meet the law's requirements. Currently, Dr. Hartman is helping build the Department of Workforce Development's Workforce Data Integration System. She holds a Ph.D. in educational psychology (specializing in special education) from the University of Minnesota and is a board-certified behavior analyst–doctorate.

**Paul Hippolitus, M.A.,**  
Independent Consultant

Paul Hippolitus a person with a disability and a service-connected disabled veteran, has more than 40 years of experience in the field of employment for people with disabilities, particularly in youth development and career preparation. His career in the disability field has included positions at the U.S. President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (director of programs); the Office of Disability Employment Policy in the U.S. Department of Labor (senior employment advisor); the Disabled Students' Program at the University of California, Berkeley (director); and the World Institute on Disability (director of employment and disability benefits). He is a former board member of both the World Institute on Disability and the Berkeley Center for Independent Living and is an active board member of Disability PolicyWorks. Mr. Hippolitus currently serves as a program consultant to various political, educational, and employment programs, assisting in the implementation of Employment Empowerment policies and instructional content, which he pioneered and taught at the University of California, Berkeley. He holds an advanced degree in disability secondary and postsecondary transition educational programming from the George Washington University.

**Kevin Hollenbeck, Ph.D.,**  
Independent Consultant

Kevin Hollenbeck has professional and avocational interests in the employment and training of youth in transition to adulthood and people with disabilities. Professionally, he has more than four decades of applied research experience in the areas of education and workforce development programs. He is currently working on an evaluation of the American Apprenticeship Initiative, in which he is estimating the return on investment to employers. Most recently, Dr. Hollenbeck completed a four-year evaluation of the Kansas City Scholars program, an endowed scholarship program aimed at traditional high school students and adult learners in low- and middle-income families. He also recently co-edited a special edition of the *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration* on the return on investment to vocational rehabilitation programs. Other projects that he has undertaken include estimating the employment, earnings, and return-on-investment impacts of workforce development programs (including vocational rehabilitation) in Washington, Indiana, and Virginia. He wrote policy papers with ideas for ameliorating employment issues of opportunity youth—that is, youth who are not working or in school—and for facilitating the return to work of workers who have experienced significant injury or illness. Dr. Hollenbeck has authored dozens of research reports and published several peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. He retired as vice president of the Upjohn Institute in 2016. Outside his career, Dr. Hollenbeck has had extensive experience in advisory or governance roles of programs aimed at the education or employment of youth. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

**Melanie Honsbruch, B.A.,**  
CPWIC, Colorado Office of  
Employment First

Melanie Honsbruch has worked with all ages and populations of people with disabilities and their support systems, families, and service providers in her efforts to promote new ways to influence positive change in benefits counseling and in employment for people with disabilities. After receiving benefits counseling certification (as CPWIC, or Community Work Incentives Coordinator and Community Partner) from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2003, Ms. Honsbruch provided information on benefits and working to Colorado communities and people with disabilities and their families; among the topics covered were eligibility requirements for Social Security Administration disability benefits, navigation of the application process for these benefits, and explanations of how work and other life decisions affect a person's benefit situation. Ms. Honsbruch transitioned to work on the Benefit Offset National Demonstration Project, which investigated the effects of removing the cash cliff for people with disabilities returning to work. For this project, she educated research participants in Colorado, Wyoming, and Vermont about program rules and assisted them in navigating the program, Social Security systems, and their choice of work. She brought this experience to the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, where she worked on the demonstration project before transitioning to a position as benefits counseling program coordinator, working to improve and enhance the state's benefits counseling services. In her current position with the Office of Employment First, Ms. Honsbruch works to improve benefits counseling services and capacity statewide; she also provides training to service providers, families, and people with disabilities on all topics related to benefits counseling.



**Tara Howe, M.A., M.S., LMHC,**  
CRC, Vermont Division of  
Vocational Rehabilitation

Tara Howe is a certified rehabilitation counselor and a licensed mental health counselor who directs the transition program for the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Ms. Howe earned the Dexter Huntoon Award from the University of Southern Maine for her strong clinical counseling skills; her work with youth and young adults led to the Ally of Accessibility Award from the Vermont Center for Independent Living. She has worked in the field for more than 20 years to empower students to explore postsecondary opportunities and make decisions that reflect their long-term career goals and ambitions, while addressing their immediate needs. In overseeing the transition program, Ms. Howe provides technical assistance, implements best practices, and facilitates effective individual and team communication for all teams involved in providing transition services. She has presented at several state and national conferences about career readiness, effective interagency partnerships, and transition services. Ms. Howe, who has worked to create and solidify strong collaborative relationships between agencies and organizations that serve youth, leads an annual Interagency Core Team Event.

**Andrew J. Karhan, M.P.A., M.A.,**  
Yang Tan Institute on  
Employment and Disability,  
School of Industrial and Labor  
Relations, Cornell University

Andrew Karhan is the interim co-executive director and program director of Workforce Development at the Yang Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at Cornell University and has 25 years of experience developing and promoting competitive employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Mr. Karhan currently directs Cornell University's work on the Youth Impact Center (funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy), provides technical assistance under the Vocational Rehabilitation Youth Technical Assistance Center, and co-leads the New York State Neurodiversity in Business initiative. To enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities, Mr. Karhan developed a cross-systems approach—the New York Employment Services System—that braided funding and service delivery across six state agencies. He led the New York State PROMISE initiative, funded through the U.S. Department of Education, in exploring the implementation of a cross-systems approach to improve the educational, employment, and economic outcomes of more than 2,000 youth receiving Supplemental Security Income and their families. He also contributed to the establishment of a statewide administrative employment network under the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program, which engaged over 225 providers helping more than 8,000 beneficiaries enhance their financial self-sufficiency and independence. Mr. Karhan authored a policy-to-practice brief, "Developing a 21st-Century Approach to Enhancing Supported Employment Outcomes," which catalyzed the implementation of a performance-based contracting methodology within New York State's supported employment program; he was also principal author of the New York State Employment First Commission's report and recommendations.

**Daniel Kuehn, Ph.D.,**  
Income and Benefits Policy  
Center, Urban Institute

Daniel Kuehn researches apprenticeships, job training, and employment, including impact and implementation evaluations of training programs for state and federal agencies. He has a long-standing interest in the science and engineering workforce and in diversity and inclusion, particularly as these subjects relate to training. Dr. Kuehn is currently the deputy project director for the Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio project for the U.S. Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Office. He also serves as an analyst on the national evaluation of the American Apprenticeship Initiative grants and the evaluation of the State Apprenticeship Expansion grants. At the Urban Institute, Dr. Kuehn has worked on several evaluations of education and training programs, including the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grants and the Health Professions Opportunity Grants. Dr. Kuehn's work has appeared in the *Journal of Labor Research*, *Economic Development Quarterly*, the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, the *Review of Industrial Organization*, and other journals. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from American University.

**Sheryl A. Larson, Ph.D.,**  
Institute on Community  
Integration, University of  
Minnesota

Sheryl A. Larson is a principal investigator at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration, where she has worked since 1988. Dr. Larson's research currently includes the Residential Information Systems Project (a 40-year longitudinal study of Medicaid long-term supports and services) and the Research and Training Center on Community Living and Employment. She completed a policy study on community supports for transition-age Supplemental Security Income recipients, a systematic review on the prevalence of intellectual and developmental disabilities, and a policy analysis on using national data sets to estimate the prevalence of intellectual and developmental disability. Dr. Larson has managed 51 grant-funded research, training, or technical assistance projects on community-based long-term supports and services; transition to adult living and employment; Medicaid and federal disability policy; health care utilization and disparities; disability statistics and prevalence; and staff recruitment, retention, and training. In the course of these projects, she has conducted longitudinal studies, secondary data analyses, survey research, intervention studies, systematic reviews, and policy research. She translates research findings for and provides technical assistance to federal agencies (such as the Administration for Community Living, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Social Security Administration), state intellectual and developmental disability agencies, professional associations, researchers, attorneys, journalists, service providers, people with disabilities and families, and advocacy organizations. She served on the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and on the board of The Arc of Minnesota. Dr. Larson has authored or coauthored three books, 33 book chapters, 55 peer-reviewed journal articles, and more than 100 technical and other reports. She made more than 270 professional presentations throughout the United States, Australia, Canada, France, and South Africa. Dr. Larson holds a master's degree and a Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota. She is a fellow of the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities.

**Christine McCarthy, B.S.,**  
Vermont Association of Business,  
Industry and Rehabilitation

Christine McCarthy is the director of the Vermont Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation (VABIR), a community partner that works closely with the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to assist youth and adults with disabilities obtain employment. She has been with VABIR for 22 years, beginning with work in the Projects with Industry program (funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services). The purpose of the program was to create and expand career opportunities for people with disabilities in the labor market. The success of the program was guided by building relationships with private employers within Vermont. The services and programs that VABIR provides to people and employers promote skill development, training, and competitive career opportunities, all of which are intended to lead to job placement and career advancement. In her role as director, Ms. McCarthy oversees all programs that involve collaboration with the state of Vermont, including vocational rehabilitation, Youth in Transition, Linking Learning to Careers, Social Security Administration benefits, and economic services. She holds a B.S. in mathematics from the University of Vermont, where she is also a part-time faculty member.

**Colleen McKay, M.A.,**  
CAGS, Implementation Science  
and Practice Advances Research  
Center, Department of  
Psychiatry, University of  
Massachusetts Medical School

Colleen McKay has specialized interests in recovery, vocational rehabilitation, and health promotion issues for adults and young adults living with severe mental illness. Ms. McKay is a co-investigator on the project Advancing Employment through Career Technical Education Policy and Practice, conducted under the auspices of the Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood Rehabilitation and Research Training Center funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. She is also a co-investigator at the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health's Research Center of Excellence for Public Mental Health Services and Implementation Research. Ms. McKay was a co-investigator on a study examining the features of vocational supports for Latino and non-Latino transition-age youth and young adult consumers who participate in employment services through a clubhouse program, through an individualized placement and support program, or through standard state vocational rehabilitation services. She led a statewide survey of Massachusetts clubhouses to examine employment outcomes associated with these programs and developed a manualized training for staff and members of clubhouse model programs, aimed at engaging young adults for school and work transitions. Ms. McKay's background is in rehabilitation counseling. Her more than 20 years of experience in research and evaluation of mental health service programs have resulted in peer-reviewed journal articles, manuals, toolkits, and reports. Ms. McKay's publications have appeared in *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, *Work*, *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, and the *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research*. She has presented extensively to stakeholders through national and international conferences and webinars. She holds a master's degree and a certificate of advanced graduate study in rehabilitation counseling from Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts.

**Teresa Nguyen, M.P.H.,**  
Colorado Office of Employment  
First

Teresa Nguyen works with youth with disabilities and their families to ensure that they have access to competitive, integrated employment opportunities in Colorado. She focuses on innovation around employment outcomes for people with disabilities through building unique partnerships with health care providers to change the expectations around transition into adulthood, including employment. Before joining the Colorado Office of Employment First in 2019, Ms. Nguyen served as a federal project officer at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, and as a community liaison at the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing. She served as a member of the executive team at the Got Transition/Center for Health Care Transition Improvement (a cooperative agreement between the Maternal and Child Health Bureau and the National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health), which led to the development and implementation of transition readiness tools and resources that are used nationally by health care providers, families, and people with disabilities to prepare for adulthood. Her work is in *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* (journal of the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) and in Springer's *Health Care Transition for Adolescents and Young Adults with Chronic Illness and Disability: Building a Program for Adolescents and Young Adults with Chronic Illness and Disability*. Ms. Nguyen holds a master's degree in public health from the University of Colorado–Anschutz Medical Campus, Colorado School of Public Health.

**D.J. Ralston, M.A.,** The George  
Washington University

D.J. Ralston is a senior research associate at the George Washington University Center for Rehabilitation Counseling Research and Education. In this position, she is the project director for Project E3: Educate, Empower, Employ, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration. Project E3's primary objective is to help state vocational rehabilitation agencies engage and serve traditionally marginalized populations in economically impoverished areas, focusing on the impact of poverty as it relates to participation in public vocational rehabilitation programs. In addition to her current work with multiple Technical Assistance Centers involving vocational rehabilitation agencies, Ms. Ralston has more than 15 years of experience working on programs and grants related to the public workforce development system, as well as on disability at the local, state, and national levels, including the Disability Program Navigator Initiative and the Disability Employment Initiative. Ms. Ralston holds a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling from Western Washington University. She completed and maintains a Community Partner Work Incentive Coordinator Certification from Virginia Commonwealth University. Currently, Ms. Ralston is working on her doctoral degree and is enrolled in the Human and Organizational Leadership Executive Leadership Program at George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

**James Smith, M.A.,**  
Vermont Division of Vocational  
Rehabilitation

James Smith is the budget and policy manager and deputy to the director for the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Mr. Smith oversees the division's operations and policy, as well as several special programs. Among these programs is Linking Learning to Careers, which is a work-based learning experience demonstration for students with disabilities funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Mr. Smith has long been involved in initiatives to support the return to work of Supplemental Security Income recipients and Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries; he has led multiple special demonstrations in this area that have used a randomized controlled trial design. These demonstrations include a \$1 for \$2 Benefit Offset Pilot for Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries, which implemented an earned income offset for employment above the substantial gainful activity level. The results from the Vermont study, which were published in the *Journal of Rehabilitation*, demonstrated that beneficiaries with a gradual offset were more likely to earn above the substantial gainful activity level. Mr. Smith served on the Adequacy of Incentives Advisory Group for the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program in 2004 and is the coauthor of an article that demonstrated a link between benefits counseling and increased earnings for Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries. Before joining the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Mr. Smith worked for 10 years in the supported employment area in Vermont and New York City.

**David C. Stapleton, Ph.D.,** Tree House Economics, LLC, with contributions from James Smith, M.A., and Tara Howe, M.A., M.S., LMHC, CRC (authors of "Progressive Education" paper), Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

David C. Stapleton has conducted disability policy research, primarily on behalf of federal agencies, for the past 28 years. His agency clients include the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and the Social Security Administration. Over the past 15 years, his focus has been the design and rigorous testing of policy options that would improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities and reduce their reliance on public benefits. He is currently a consultant, operating under Tree House Economics, LLC, in Waterbury, Vermont. Dr. Stapleton is currently the co-principal investigator on two projects: (1) a rigorous test of youth applicant referrals to Job Corps by the Illinois vocational rehabilitation agency and (2) a Health and Human Services-led effort, with Social Security Administration support, to identify and rigorously test interventions that help adults at risk for Supplemental Security Income achieve better employment outcomes. Dr. Stapleton has been involved in various ways in developing the Department of Labor's Retaining Employment and Talent after Injury/Illness Network demonstration grants and the Social Security Administration's planning for its evaluation. He also participates as a consultant in the strategic planning group of Vermont's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and is a consultant to SourceAmerica in support of its efforts to inform potential changes in the AbilityOne program. He recently co-led an analysis of the experimental National Job Corps study, which found exceptionally positive impacts on earnings and negative impacts on disability benefits for the subgroup of enrollees with medical limitations, possibly because of Job Corps' intensive collaboration with employers. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

**Aryn Taylor, Ph.D., CRC,**  
Colorado Office of Employment  
First

Aryn Taylor works on expanding competitive integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Colorado. She is developing sustainability and evaluation plans and programs to monitor Employment First practices and principles in her role as grant writer, analyst, and evaluator at the Colorado Office of Employment First. Before undertaking that work, Dr. Taylor worked in vocational rehabilitation as the training coordinator and as a program specialist and counseling supervisor for the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation. She has a background in direct client services, having previously worked as a substance abuse counselor at a nonprofit agency. Dr. Taylor has also worked in higher education as an instructor at the University of Arizona, where she taught undergraduate and graduate courses on disability rights and on the prevention of substance abuse. Her published work is in the *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, and the *Rehabilitation Professional*. Dr. Taylor holds a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona in rehabilitation counseling and education, with a minor in public health. She is a certified rehabilitation counselor.

**Richard Tulikangas, M.Ed.,**  
Vermont Division of Vocational  
Rehabilitation

Rich Tulikangas is director of Linking Learning to Careers, a statewide initiative of the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to increase career and college readiness for high school students with disabilities. For more than 30 years, Mr. Tulikangas has led numerous programs and organizations with the goal of helping prepare young people for life beyond high school, both in Vermont and nationally. He served as the founding executive director of Linking Learning to Life/Navicate, the work-based learning director for the National Academy Foundation, and consultant and program director for the Vermont Agency of Education; he also served in the governor's office to develop the state's school-to-work plan. Mr. Tulikangas holds a master's of education degree in human and organizational resource development from the University of Vermont and teaches a course at Castleton University on supporting secondary educators with successfully developing and managing high-quality, work-based learning opportunities. He has presented on various topics at numerous state, regional, and national conferences.

## Discussants

**Jeffrey Hemmeter, Ph.D.,** Social  
Security Administration

Jeffrey Hemmeter is the acting deputy associate commissioner in the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support at the Social Security Administration (SSA), where he helps design, conduct, and oversee research, evaluation, and policies related to disability and return to work. Dr. Hemmeter's research focuses on transition-age youth and Supplemental Security Income, and he has worked on several SSA demonstrations, evaluations, and studies, including as SSA's lead on the Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI evaluation. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

**Richard Luecking, Ed.D.,**  
Center for Transition and Career  
Innovation, University of  
Maryland

Richard Luecking is co-director of the Center for Transition and Career Innovation and is a research professor at the University of Maryland (UMD). He previously served for 28 years as President of TransGen, Inc., a national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving employment success of people with disabilities. At UMD, he leads research and demonstration projects that feature work-based learning experiences for high school students with disabilities. Dr. Luecking has also served as a policy advisor to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, where he helped establish its national Employment First initiative. He consults throughout the United States and internationally on issues related to employment and school-to-work transition for people with disabilities. His research interest is translating knowledge for both policymakers and practitioners.

**Christopher McLaren, Ph.D.,**  
U.S. Department of Labor, Office  
of Disability Employment Policy

Christopher McLaren is a senior economist at the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. His research focuses on policies aimed at helping newly ill and injured workers remain in the workforce and leveraging public data to identify opportunities to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. He manages the programmatic technical assistance for the Retaining Talent after Injury/Illness Network demonstration projects and the stay-at-work/return-to-work component of the State Exchange on Employment and Disability initiative. Before his work at ODEP, Dr. McLaren led the workers compensation and disability policy research at the National Academy of Social Insurance. He holds a Ph.D. in policy analysis from the Pardee RAND Graduate School and a master's degree in economics from San Diego State University.

**David Rosenblum, M.A.,**  
U.S. Department of Labor, Office  
of Disability Employment Policy

David Rosenblum is a senior economist with the Research and Evaluation Team at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Disability Employment Policy, where he engages in statistical and economic analysis and has overseen the Retaining Talent after Injury/Illness Network efforts, the Disability Employment Initiative evaluations, and the Survey of Employer Policies on the Employment of People with Disabilities. Before joining DOL, Mr. Rosenblum worked for the Social Security Administration on disability insurance issues. He holds degrees in economics from Williams College and Cornell University.

**Paul Wehman, Ph.D.,**  
Virginia Commonwealth  
University

Paul Wehman has been a tenured faculty member with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) since 1980. Originally with the VCU School of Education (SOE), he moved to a joint appointment with SOE and the School of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and has now returned to an exclusive faculty appointment with SOE. His highly interdisciplinary background and pioneering work in the beginning of supported employment has facilitated millions of people with neurodevelopmental disabilities, brain injury, and spinal cord injury in countries all over the world to gain and retain competitive employment. As director of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center and director of the VCU Autism Center for Excellence, he has written extensively on issues related to transition from school to adulthood and special education as it relates to young adulthood and employment and is founding editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*. Dr. Wehman has been the recipient of numerous awards, most recently the 2018 VCU Distinguished Scholarship Award and the 2017 Leader of the Year Award from the Virginia Division of Career Development and Transition. He has been the principal investigator on more than \$80 million worth of federal grants since joining VCU.

## U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability and Employment Policy Staff

**Kirk Lew, M.P.L.,**  
U.S. Department of Labor, Office  
of Disability Employment Policy

Kirk A. Lew is the supervisor for the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy's (ODEP) Youth Policy Development team. Mr. Lew currently oversees more than \$10 million in investments intended to research, evaluate, implement, and test initiatives that will improve the employment outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities. He currently leads five policy advisors with concentrations in workforce development, career pathways, youth, and family engagement, education, and systems coordination. He participates in several workforce-related policy initiatives that involve key federal partners and national organizations such as the Federal Partners in Transition working group. Before coming to ODEP, Mr. Lew provided case management, job coaching, and mentoring services to New Jersey-based youth and adults transitioning from education and training programs to competitive integrated employment settings. He has worked with various youth populations since starting his professional career as a residential counselor at New Jersey's Edison Job Corps center. He has also managed a supported employment vendor, created several school transition-related programs, and transitioned young adults out of foster care services. Mr. Lew served as a policy advisor for New Jersey's State Workforce Development Board, concentrating on policy development and system collaboration around employment topics on youth, disability, and adult literacy.



**Jennifer Sheehy, M.B.A.,**  
U.S. Department of Labor, Office  
of Disability Employment Policy

Jennifer Sheehy is the acting agency head and deputy assistant secretary at the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. Previously, Ms. Sheehy held many roles at the U.S. Department of Education, including acting director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, acting deputy commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and special assistant to the assistant secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Ms. Sheehy came to the education field from the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities, where she was senior policy advisor and served a detail as associate director in the White House Domestic Policy Council. Before the task force, Ms. Sheehy was vice president of the National Organization on Disability and director of its CEO Council. She has worked for Marriott, Sheraton, and Anheuser-Busch, receiving civic and leadership honors. She holds a B.A. from Cornell University and an M.B.A. from Georgetown University.

**John Tambornino, Ph.D., U.S.**  
Department of Labor, Office of  
Disability Employment Policy

John Tambornino is senior advisor to the assistant secretary for Disability Employment Policy in the U.S. Department of Labor, providing strategic advice on cross-cutting research, evaluation, policy, and interagency issues. Previously he was senior advisor at the White House Office of Management and Budget, leading efforts to promote evidence-based policymaking across government. Before this, he was director of economic support for families in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), senior advisor to Congressman Jim McDermott (D-WA) on the House Ways and Means Committee, and in senior analyst positions in ASPE, HHS' Administration for Children and Families, and the Social Security Administration, covering a breadth of poverty, disability, safety net, health care, financial services, and community development issues. He began his federal career as a Presidential Management Fellow at Food and Nutrition Services within the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dr. Tambornino has served on the faculty at Brown University, Johns Hopkins University, New York University, and Western Washington University. He holds a B.A., Phi Beta Kappa, in philosophy from Macalester College and a Ph.D. in political science from Johns Hopkins University and is an elected member of the National Academy of Social Insurance.

## Mathematica Staff

**Amal Harrati, Ph.D.,**  
Mathematica

Amal Harrati is a researcher at Mathematica who focuses on disability policy and the health and well-being of people with disabilities. In addition to the SSI Youth Solutions project, Dr. Harrati works on the impact evaluation for the Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI demonstration and leads two other projects in Mathematica's disability area funded by the Social Security Administration and the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. Dr. Harrati holds a Ph.D. in demography from the University of California, Berkeley. Before joining Mathematica, she was a faculty member at the Stanford University School of Medicine.

**Todd Honeycutt, Ph.D.,**  
Mathematica

Todd Honeycutt is a senior researcher at Mathematica whose research focuses on vocational rehabilitation and employment programs for youth, young adults, and working-age people with disabilities. Dr. Honeycutt leads the SSI Youth Solutions project, which promotes interventions that seek to improve the employment outcomes of youth receiving Supplemental Security Income, for the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. He is also currently evaluating two long-term demonstration projects offering work-based learning experiences to high school students. He holds a Ph.D. in health systems and policy from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

**Andrew Langan, Ph.D.,**  
Mathematica

Andrew Langan is a researcher at Mathematica. He serves on several of Mathematica's projects for the U.S. Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Office studying the application of behavioral science to labor-related programs. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from Princeton University with a concentration in labor and education issues.