

# **OEDA** OREGON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION **WORKFORCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** **COLLABORATION SUMMIT**

## **SPEAKER BIOS**



### **Abisha Stone**

*Economic Development Manager - Yamhill County, SEDCOR*  
*OEDA Board Treasurer*

Since April 2018, Abisha Stone has served as the Yamhill County Economic Development Manager for SEDCOR. Working with traded sector businesses, community leaders and local stakeholders, Abisha “brings people to the table” to identify resources and solutions for industry partners in the Mid-Willamette Valley. Prior to her work with SEDCOR, Abisha had an extensive career in the food manufacturing industry, and as a private business consultant. Abisha is trained in strategic planning, business development, community development and emergency community response but it is her experience working in industry that allows her to have a unique perspective, and approach, when working with local traded sector partners. Abisha also currently sits on the boards of Cascade Capital Funding, Oregon Aglink, OEDA and is a Marion County CASA.



### **Alvin Elbert**

*President, A.R.E. Manufacturing*

For over 40 years, Alvin has been at the helm of A.R.E. Manufacturing, Inc., a contract CNC machine shop in Newberg, Oregon. Through his business, he has participated in many industry groups, including Willamette Workforce Partnership, Chehalem Valley Chamber of Commerce, and youth employment programs through Newberg High School and other area schools. In 2018, Alvin spearheaded the founding of Tiger Manufacturing, a for-profit machine shop run by and for Newberg High School students. In addition to machining, Alvin coached youth soccer for over 20 years, volunteers in his community and was recognized as the 2016 Newberg Citizen of the Year.



### **Amy Zulich Black**

*Youth Program Manager, Clackamas Workforce Partnership*

Amy Zulich Black serves as the Youth Program Manager at Clackamas Workforce Partnership, overseeing contracts with community organizations providing youth ages 14-24 with career coaching, workforce skills training, and paid work experiences with Clackamas County businesses. Coming to workforce services with an extensive background in mental health advocacy and supports for individuals with disabilities, she brings this service mindset to building pathways out of poverty for Clackamas County's youth.



**Ashley Espinoza**

*Executive Director, Lane County Workforce Partnership*  
[OEDA Board of Directors](#)

Ashley Espinoza, raised in Junction City and residing in the Willamette Valley, is a dedicated community leader with over a decade of experience serving in various roles. Her unwavering commitment lies in bridging the gap between underrepresented communities and the broader community. She excels in workforce and economic development, advancing collaboration between the public and private sectors, and actively engaging with the community. Currently, Ashley serves as the Executive Director of Lane Workforce Partnership. Additionally, she sits on multiple esteemed Boards, Councils, and Commissions, including the Bethel School Board, Connected Lane County Board of Directors, La Plaza Board of Directors, Oregon Economic Development Association Board of Directors, Leadership Council Member of the Oregon Community Foundation, and Leadership Council Member of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of the Arts. In addition to her notable roles and commitments, Ashley Espinoza is also the founder of Latino Professionals Connect, an organization dedicated to empowering and connecting Latino professionals within the community. Through this initiative, she continues to make a significant impact in fostering professional growth and networking opportunities for Latino individuals.



**Bob Fittin**

*RISP Employment Services Team, Catholic Community Services of Lane County*

Before resettling in Eugene in 2018 Bob spent 16 years as Director of Training for Greater West Town Training Partnership, a community-based organization providing employment and training for disadvantaged community residents of Chicago's West Side.

In this role Bob connected with Chicago businesses that hired program graduates, enabling those businesses to replace retiring workers while also providing them with a more diverse workforce that enhanced their ability to attract new workers.

Bob and spouse enjoy the volunteer spirit of the community, the natural beauty of the region, and not having to shovel snow!



**Bryden Huffman**

*Tiger Manufacturing Student, Newberg High School*

Bryden is going to be a senior next year at Newberg high school. He was in Tiger Manufacturing program last year and has been working as an intern for Alvin since last December. He plans to continue in Tiger manufacturing through his senior year and then go on to PCC to study machining.



**Erika Fitzgerald**

*Senior Economic Development Specialist, City of Gresham*  
[OEDA Board President](#)

Erika Fitzgerald is a Senior Economic Development Specialist at the City of Gresham, Oregon. Within this role, Erika manages the City's enterprise zone program, manages special projects, and engages in business retention, recruitment and workforce development activities. She currently sits on the Oregon Economic Development Association (OEDA) Board Executive Committee as President. Erika holds a MS in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Wisconsin - Madison and a BA in Anthropology from Lawrence University. Erika lives in Portland, Oregon with her husband and two children.



**Gary Chiaravalli**

*Regional Workforce and Business Coordinator for Vocational Rehabilitation, Oregon Department of Human Services*

Gary Chiaravalli serves as a Regional Workforce and Business Coordinator for the State of Oregon's Vocational Rehabilitation Program, a business-facing role supporting the Portland-metro area and surrounding counties. He has spent the last 25+ years working on behalf of adults experiencing disabilities with an emphasis on creating employment opportunities by identifying and addressing the needs of business. Prior to joining VR in the fall of 2021, Gary spent ten years working for VR-partner agencies in the Portland-metro area and served two, 3-year terms on Oregon's State Rehabilitation Council.



**Heather Stafford**

*Executive Director, Rogue Valley Workforce Partnership*

Heather Stafford is the Executive Director of the Rogue Workforce Partnership serving Jackson and Josephine Counties in Southern Oregon. Prior to joining the public workforce system, Heather worked in the private sector with business strategic consulting, supporting start-ups, investors and entrepreneurial ecosystems, including a tour with Business Oregon as their original Assistant Director for Innovation & Entrepreneurship. She is regularly quoted that "Entrepreneurs are going to save the world" but they cannot exist without a workforce. Heather has been honored for international entrepreneurial ecosystem-building work with the Global Entrepreneurship Network's local policy advocate award, Kauffman Foundations Entrepreneurial Ecosystem-Builder of the year, and the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland with an executed Bi-lateral Start-up Exchange Agreement.



**Henry Fields**

*Workforce Analyst, Oregon Employment Department*

Henry Fields is a workforce analyst with the Oregon Employment Department, where he provides quality labor market information to business leaders and decision makers across Lane and Douglas counties. He graduated from the University of Oregon and Indiana University, making him a member of the dreaded clan of HoosierDucks. In his free time he enjoys exploring all the beautiful nature Oregon has to offer with his family.



**Jennifer Purcell**

*Director of Future Ready Oregon, Higher Education Coordinating Commission*

Jennifer Purcell currently serves as Future Ready Oregon Director at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, overseeing implementation of the Oregon Legislature's historic \$200 million investment in education and training. Prior to her current role, Jennifer served as Oregon Governor Kate Brown's Workforce Policy Advisor where she facilitated the development of the Future Ready Oregon proposal and successfully introduced and advanced SB 1545 in Oregon's 2022 legislative session. Jennifer has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in marketing from Pacific Lutheran University and received an Executive Master of Public Administration from Portland State University's Hatfield School of Government in 2020.



**Jonath Colon**

*Deputy Director of Programs & Director of Prosperidad Economic Empowerment Center, Centro Cultural*

Jonath Colon Montesi is an experienced professional who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to assisting with economic mobility. He has provided a variety of services in a bilingual/bicultural manner and has demonstrated exceptional success in reaching out to Oregon's expanding yet underserved Latino and minority communities. Mr. Colón understands the cultural aspects of the community and has a reputation for producing results, culminating in several awards such as the SBA Minority Small Business Champion of the Year for the Portland District and the NW Region, and the Excellence in Partnering Award from the US Internal Revenue Service. Mr. Colón is also the former Vice President of Business Development for the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber (Hispanic Chamber) from 2003 to 2017 and was responsible for providing technical business services through the Hispanic Chamber's Business Assistance Program for 15 years. Mr. Colón has been the Director of Prosperidad for five years and continues to create connections with exceptional leadership for minority-owned small businesses and migrant families to thrive.



**Kathy Bishop**

*Human Resources Director, Jireh Semiconductor*

Kathy Bishop is currently the Senior Director of Human Resources and Public Relations for Jireh Semiconductor, Inc. located in Hillsboro, Oregon. Kathy attended Portland Community College and obtained a Bachelors of Science from Portland State University. Kathy's career in Human Resources (HR) has spanned over 35-years and has focused on HR in Manufacturing establishments. Kathy has joined forces with several local manufacturing companies with the support of the City of Hillsboro to try to encourage students and others to recognize the career opportunities that manufacturing companies offer. This and her current mission at Jireh of "Bringing Manufacturing Back to the United States Profitably" will continue to drive Kathy's action in support of the many hard-working individuals in manufacturing.



**Keira Carstensen**

*Former Student, Tiger Manufacturing*

A Tiger manufacturing student for her senior year. She excelled at the role of lead machinist and focused on lathes. She helped new students learn how to operate CNC machines, use and read measuring tools, problem solve, and program G- code. She graduated from Newberg High School in 2023 and is going to attend Oregon State University to pursue a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering with a minor in aerospace engineering. She plans to start a career in the aerospace industry as an engineering project planner.



**Kim Parker-Llerenas**

*Executive Director, Wilamette Workforce Partnership*

Over the course of her career, Kim has led a variety of public and nonprofit organizations. Prior to coming to Willamette Workforce Partnership she served as the Chief of Staff of the Department of Education's Early Learning Division. Earlier, she served as the Assistant Director for Business and Employment Services of the Oregon Employment Department (OED). In that capacity, she led more than 400 staff charged with serving Oregonians at over 36 WorkSource offices across the State. Prior to her work for the State, Kim served as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Board serving Clackamas County. While in that position, she also served as Executive Director of the Clackamas County Business Alliance. Earlier in her career, Kim was the Executive Director of the North Willamette Valley Habitat for Humanity affiliate; she began her professional life serving in a variety of leadership roles in early childhood learning. Kim has a son and daughter in their late twenties and she and her husband Salvador enjoy travel, camping, music, wine tasting and watching sports. Kim holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications from Willamette University.



**Kristi Wilson**

*Workforce Development Manager, City of Hillsboro - Economic Development Department*

Kristi joined the City of Hillsboro's Economic Development Department as a Workforce Development Manager in 2019. She recently celebrated 24 years with the City of Hillsboro and has held roles in the Parks & Recreation, Human Resources and Water Departments. She is a collaborative partner with a passion to design and implement collective workforce strategies to support local industry and increase economic mobility for community members. One of her roles in Economic Development is to convene the Hillsboro Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Partnership, an industry-led consortium that addresses local workforce needs in the advanced manufacturing sector. She also proudly serves on the Board of Directors for Portland Community College.



**Leni Tupper**

*PCC CLEAR Clinic Director: PCC CLEAR and Clean Slate Clackamas*

Leni Tupper- Co-Founder & Director, PCC CLEAR Clinic, paralegal instructor. Leni founded and developed the CLEAR Clinic to provide legal services strategically targeted at reducing barriers to success, teaching students the practical skills needed for success in the legal field, and increasing access to justice. The Clinic's projects include criminal record relief, housing justice, and immigration justice. Before coming to PCC Leni was a full-time immigration attorney, focusing on removal defense and humanitarian relief. Leni is committed to assisting people to remove legal obstacles so that our whole community can benefit from each member's full participation.



**Logan Garner**

*Youth Program Manager, Northwest Oregon Works*

Logan Garner is the Youth Programs Manager for Northwest Oregon Works, the LWDB for Columbia, Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln and Benton Counties. He works closely with CBOs and education and industry partners to identify and deliver supports to youth seeking career, postsecondary or core skills education. Braiding partnership services and opportunities around youth is his favorite part of the job.



**Lynne Carter, MS, CRC**

*Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services - ODHS*

I have earned my Masters in Vocational Rehabilitation from Wisconsin Stout and went on to be certified as a National Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, CRC. I have been a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor within Washington County for over ten years now. Nine of these years have specialization in business engagement and youth transition. Because of my passion for business a couple colleagues and I created the Interstate Disability Employment Alliance, IDEA, in 2016. We are an alliance of all South WA and Portland Metro VR agencies, VA, General VR's, Blind Commissions and the three local Tribals, as well as representatives from the OFFCP and the three local Workforce Boards. We hold events every year for businesses in a peer-to-peer format to learn successful hiring and inclusionary strategies for people with disabilities. IDEA is a resource for our local businesses to help them in their DEI efforts. Prior to this I worked in the hospitality field and management for 15 plus years. In this time, I worked six years in hotel and restaurant management. I am very much a people person.



**Matt Sayre**  
*Executive Director, Collaborative EDO*

Matt Sayre is the Executive Director at Collaborative EDO. In recent years Matt has focused on building the infrastructure necessary to support the regions transition to a knowledge based economy. This work has led to Eugene's designations as a 'Mozilla Gigabit City', 'US Ignite Smart Gigabit Community', and 'Top 10 up and coming tech cities in the Nation'. Matt has been recognized as a '20 under 40 Rising Business Star' by The Register-Guard for helping local startups thrive and successfully recruiting dozens of new employers to Eugene: Arcimoto, Nulia, Uber, SentinelOne and Southwest Airlines among them. Matt's passions are amplified through Collaborative EDO, which he co-founded with other economic development strategists, following years of listening to what the community wanted from an economic development organization.



**Melissa Pendergrass**  
*Coordinator of Career and College Pathways, Hillsboro School District*

Melissa Pendergrass, Coordinator of Career and College Pathways for Hillsboro School District focuses on the development of Career Technical Education programming that prepares students for careers in high wage, high skill, and in demand fields in the Portland Metro area. Melissa's work is centered around leading and supporting in spaces aimed at strengthening partnerships among K-12, industry, and postsecondary with the ultimate goal of increasing the representation of underserved and non-traditional students to ensure a more diverse workforce representative of the community served.



**Patrick Verdun**  
*Tiger Manufacturing Teacher, Newberg High School*

Patrick has been teaching for about 10 years now. He has been teaching engineering and design classes for 8 of those. He taught at Dayton High school and middle school up until COVID. Then, he came over to Newberg and have taught Tiger, CAD, and Design courses for the past 3 years. He came over with a ton of experience in 3D Printing, CAD, lasers, and other desktop CNC equipment. Nothing in machining or manufacturing, however in his own words "Alvin and his students stepped up to train me and have continued to do so in order for me to learn and effectively teach manual machining and encourage more kids to jump into Tiger Manufacturing.



**Ryan Kounovsky**  
*Workforce Program Manager, Lane Workforce Partnership*

Ryan is the Workforce Project Manager for Lane Workforce Partnership. Prior to coming to LWP, Ryan was the Chief of Staff for Representative Jeff Reardon, working on issues around Career and Technical Education, strengthening schools, and workforce development. One of his final pieces of legislation he worked on was passage of Future Ready Oregon, an innovative \$200 million dollar investment in workforce development across Oregon."



**Tami Erion**

*Principal, Newberg High School*

Tami Erion is currently serving as Principal at Newberg High School. This is Tami's 15th year as a building administrator and 28th year in education. Throughout her career, Tami has served in roles that support school to career options including Career Coordinator at Glencoe High School, Career & Technical Education administrator at Forest Grove High School, and administrator overseeing Career & Technical Education at Newberg High School. Tami understands the value of offering programs that provide workplace skills and seamless transitions to the workforce and is a fierce advocate for innovative and creative CTE options for high school students.



**Vince Porter**

*Economic Development and Workforce Policy Advisor, Office of Governor Tina Kotek*

Vince began his role as Economic Development and Workforce Policy Advisor to Governor Kotek in January of this year. His portfolio includes oversight of Business Oregon, Employment Department, Department of Revenue and the Office of Workforce Investments within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. This is his second stint in the Governor's Office serving previously as Governor Kitzhaber and Governor Brown's Jobs and Economy Policy Advisor from 2014 through 2016.

In between his tenure at the Governor's office Vince was the Director of Government Affairs at Cambia Health Solutions where he focused on healthcare policy issues such as drug price transparency and affordability.

Vince began his career in Los Angeles as a finance and production executive for television production companies ABC Productions and Showtime Networks before ultimately moving to Oregon with his family in 2008 when he assumed the role as the Executive Director of the Oregon Film and Video Office.