

ELL Workforce Navigator Convening: Speaker Bios

Alison Ascher Webber develops and leads innovative projects for the EdTech Center at World Education, including advising the new Employment Technology Fund and leading its field testing. She also manages the Mobile Up! Project bringing mobile learning and career coaching to low-wage immigrant service workers. Alison helped grow Cell-Ed as its first Education Director. As Associate Director at Avasant Foundation, she supported edtech and employment initiatives for youth globally. She also served as first Executive Director of the Leadership Training & Education Fund for janitors across California and helped form the associated non-profit, Building Skills Partnership.

Amanda Bergson-Shilcock is Director of Upskilling Policy at the National Skills Coalition. She leads NSC's work on adult education and workforce policies that support US-born and immigrant adults with foundational skills gaps. In this role, she analyzes policies, makes recommendations, and coordinates with National Skills Coalition member organizations to address issues facing adult learners and jobseekers, including immigrant workers. Amanda has authored numerous publications and policy recommendations on immigrant integration, workforce development, and adult education. She has extensive experience engaging state and federal policymakers.

Ursula Bischoff is an independent consultant working with ALLIES to lead TA and Evaluation for the ELL Workforce Navigator Pilot Project. Her work fosters public-private partnerships across education, workforce and human services to transform systems and programs for underserved and marginalized groups, including foster youth, English learners, long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, and individuals involved with criminal justice and mental health systems. She currently serves on a national project team providing technical assistance to multi-sector partnerships improving young adult diversion programs and is an approved trainer of the California Training Institute managed by the California Workforce Association. Ursula has extensive experience in management consulting, strategic and program planning, resource development, grant and project management, stakeholder engagement, training, technical assistance, evaluation and research, and has worked directly with diverse clients as a mental health services provider, community organizer and public interest litigator.

Ilse Escobar is a parent and community organizer at United Teachers of Los Angeles.

Jennifer Hernandez serves as the Associate Secretary for Farmworker and Immigrant Services at the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. She has spent much of her career working on farmworker and labor issues. Prior to joining the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, Jennifer worked for the National AFL-CIO where she served as regional director. She has extensive background in the non-profit and advocacy community working with farmworker and immigrant communities.

Stewart Knox heads the CA Employment Training Panel. He has over 23 years of experience working in the Workforce Development, and Economic Development industry in California. He has been instrumental in transitioning several Workforce Development entities into productive, performance based and accountable organizations, and held executive level positions including, Yuba Community College Workforce Development Director, and Executive Director of four workforce investment boards - Verdugo, North Central Counties Consortium, NoRTEC an 11 county JPA, and San Mateo County Workforce and Economic Development. With his broad multi-functional experience base, Stewart understands the complex interactions between Workforce and Economic Development.

Natalie Roesler is Director of Nursing and Clinical Practice at Kaiser Permanente.

Hugo Romero is a Project Manager at the UCLA Labor Center focusing on labor, immigrant, and young worker issues. Hugo oversees the labor cohort that forms part of Dream Summer, a national fellowship program for immigrant youth. Hugo participates on the *I am a #YoungWorker* team, a multimedia research project that combines data, stories, and images by and for young people to advance the rights of young workers nationally. He recently launched the first multi-union immigrant worker leadership development program in the country and contributed to the formulation of a three year strategic plan for the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. In 2014, he successfully launched the UCI Community & Labor Project dedicated to research in Orange County, CA. His passion for social and worker justice emerged from his experience working in the car wash and warehouse industries, and his involvement with the immigrant youth movement that led to the enactment of DACA. He has coauthored reports at the UCLA Labor Center and is working on an upcoming book about the Justice for Janitors campaign.

Abby Snay, Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Vocational Services. Abby began her career with JVS in 1975 and served as Assistant Director before becoming Executive Director of JVS in 1984. Since then she has become JVS's Chief Executive Officer, and under her leadership, the JVS budget has increased from \$300,000 to over \$10 million, the staff has grown from 15 to a team of 80. Abby serves as Board Chair of the National Skills Coalition, was appointed by Governor Brown to the California Workforce Investment Board and the State Rehabilitation Council and was appointed as the Workforce Representative of Mayor Lee's Our Children, Our Families Council.

Heide Spruck Wrigley is a researcher and adult educator with Literacywork International, based in New Mexico. She has long been involved in the education and training of immigrant adults who are not yet fully proficient in English. She has written extensively on the topic, including *The Language of Opportunity: Expanding the Employment Prospects of Adults with Limited English Skills*, which argues for the integration of English language acquisition and training. Her recent work includes a brief and an online course on *Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways* funded by OCTAE. She has been a long-time consultant to English Innovations, a blended learning approach that integrates English, digital literacy, and community engagement, and was instrumental in designing *Ready to Work*, a pre-employment model for Seattle's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs. She has conducted numerous workshops and seminars on supporting adults preparing for skills training with an eye toward developing cross cultural and bilingual competence. Her work in assessment includes professional development on creating alternative assessments, a chapter in a book on Biliteracy as well as evaluations of workplace literacy programs serving refugees and immigrants. She has served on two panels for the National Academy of Sciences and is a non-resident fellow with the Migration Policy Institute in Washington, D.C.

Andrea Willis, Director of Internet and Media Services at the Sacramento County Office of Education, applies more than twenty years of project management experience to ensure that complex technical projects are completed on time, within budget, and that they meet the unique needs of their target audience. By pulling together a skilled team of content experts, multimedia developers, programmers, artists, and videographers, she harnesses the power of technology to build high-quality educational websites, online databases, and multimedia projects. Her flagship project is USA Learns, a free website that teaches English to adults around the world and helps immigrants prepare for U.S. citizenship.