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GENERAL CONFERENCE INFORMATION

REGISTRATION:
October 22  9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. • Chastain Foyer
October 23  7:00 – 10:00 a.m. • Chastain Foyer
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. • 9th Level Terrace

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NEED HELP? Stop by the registration desk for assistance during the event.
Welcome to the 2019 Skills in the States Forum

Welcome to the 2019 Skills in the States Forum for Policy, Advocacy, and Impact. We are here because we want to support the economic ambitions of people in our communities while at the same time addressing the skill needs of our local businesses. In state capitols across the country, we have the chance to shape skills training policies that do just that.

As a steering committee, we represent colleges, unions, businesses, training providers, community-based organizations, and researchers who are calling on leaders to change the game for working people. When organizations like ours come together around a common agenda, we can help our policymakers see skills training as a key lever for growing an inclusive and strong economy.

Over the next two days, you will engage in conversations about:
• Changing policies so that everyone has a chance at economic success
• Giving a shared voice to our issues in order to elevate them
• Using advocacy to transform policy ideas into action

Thank you for coming to lend your voice to the discussion on skills policy, advocacy, and impact in the states.

The 2019 Skills in the States Steering Committee

Alex Camardelle  
Senior Policy Analyst at Georgia Budget and Policy Institute

Antiqua Cleggett  
Executive Director at Central Six AlabamaWorks!

Christian González-Rivera  
Director of Strategic Policy Initiatives at Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging, Hunter College, CUNY

Jenna Morey  
Vice President, Community Workforce at Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma, Inc.

James Reddish  
Executive Vice President at Little Rock Regional Chamber

Sarah Robbins  
Senior Manager of Youth Partnerships at District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund

Paula Schriefer  
President and CEO at Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning

Federico Zaragoza  
President and CEO at the College of Southern Nevada
Why we are here

We need skills training policies that reflect people's career aspirations and their desire to succeed in the economy.

Every day, in communities coast to coast, working people, students, and families are looking for opportunities to get ahead. Jobs that require skills training beyond high school are the backbone of the American economy.

Many people want to learn an in-demand skill, but they can't afford the training they need to step into a better career.

More than 93% of voters support increasing investment in skills and technical training.

Skills training can also boost local businesses.

Three-quarters of small and mid-sized business leaders say that more investment in skills training would help their businesses.

Racial equity is a workforce imperative

The U.S.'s increasing racial diversity is one of the country's unique strengths. Soon, most of the U.S. workforce will be people of color, including a significant and growing share of immigrants.

Generations of racist policies and practices have resulted in racial inequities in education, employment, and income. Since public policy decisions have played a key role in forming these inequities, workforce policies that proactively advance racial equity must be an integral part of the solution.

By 2050 most U.S. workers will be people of color.

State policymakers can adopt skills training policies that support the assets and aspirations of all workers and ensure that everyone has a fair shot at achieving economic success.
Advocating for skills training policies in the states

Through key initiatives, National Skills Coalition is organizing a variety of voices to bring skills training to the forefront of policy discussions in state capitals across the country.

SkillSPAN: a first-ever nationwide network of state coalitions that will expand skills training opportunities for thousands of people through state policy changes.

Business Leaders United (BLU) state affiliate network: a network of local chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, industry associations, and employers advocating for skills training policies in the states.

Voices for Skills: a coalition of working people, students, teachers, and business leaders coming together to call for a national commitment to significantly increase our investment in skills training.

Together we are working towards:

✓ A safety net that supports a career instead of work requirements
✓ Upskilling for entry-level workers
✓ Expanding apprenticeship and work-based learning for everyone
✓ College that works for working people
✓ Future of work re-skilling and re-employment
✓ Policies that improve data systems and tools
Wednesday, October 23, 2019

8:30 – 11:30 a.m.  Pre-conference meetings (invitation-only)
Data Policy Meeting – Chastain G – 6th Floor
Louisiana Skills Policy Academy – Chastain H – 6th Floor

12:00 – 2:00 p.m.  Welcome, lunch, and plenary discussion
Savannah Ballroom – 10th Floor
Welcome – Andy Van Kleunen, CEO, National Skills Coalition
Plenary discussion: How skills training can help advance economic opportunity and racial equity
Keynote - Taifa Smith Butler, Executive Director, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
Moderated discussion: During this interactive plenary session, speakers from our host state of Georgia will lead an audience-driven discussion about what it takes to build an effective state skills coalition to advance a policy agenda. PROSPER Georgia and Georgia BLU will discuss how a broad-based state skills coalition and network of business leaders can work together to advocate for increasing state investments in skills training and advancing a broader mission of economic opportunity and racial equity.
• Alex Camardelle, Senior Policy Analyst, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
• Amy Lancaster, Director of Workforce Development, Metro Atlanta Chamber
• Brenda J. Smeeton, J.D., Attorney & Criminal Records Program Director, Georgia Justice Project
• Moderator: Brooke DeRenzis, Managing Director, State Strategies, National Skills Coalition

2:00 – 2:15 p.m.  Break

2:15 – 3:45 p.m.  Concurrent Sessions
Session A  Amplifying business and worker voices in skills policy advocacy
Chastain D – 6th Floor
It is essential to have worker and business voices at the table to advocate and advance policies. In this session, participants will discuss ways to leverage and activate these stakeholders in the workforce policy conversation and discuss the best strategies to ensure their presence at the table.
Facilitator: Jessie Hogg Leslie, Managing Director, National Network, National Skills Coalition
Peer Discussants:
• Marcy Bowers, Executive Director, Statewide Poverty Action Network (WA)
• Nicholas Sherlock Holmes, Foreman, Anning-Johnson Company (GA)
• Shana Welch, Regional Director of Talent Acquisition, Trinity Health (MI)
• Edwin Parra, Operations Administrator, Anning-Johnson Company (GA)
Session B  
**Ensuring quality in non-degree credentials**  
*Chastain E – 6th Floor*

Most states today have postsecondary attainment goals that include not just degrees, but shorter-term credentials such as certificates, licenses, and industry certifications. These short-term credentials can be a stepping stone to a good career or an ineffective use of state, federal, and student resources. During this session, participants will learn how states can formulate policies to ensure that short-term credentials are of sufficient quality to help residents learn the skills required to find good jobs.

*Facilitator:* Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield, Senior Fellow, National Skills Coalition  
*Peer Discussants:*  
- Federico Zaragoza, President and CEO, College of Southern Nevada  
- Randy Stamper, Asst. Vice Chancellor, Career Pathways and Workforce Programs, Virginia’s Community Colleges

Session C  
**Beyond the legislative chamber: Achieving policy results without legislation**  
*Chastain F – 6th Floor*

Accomplishing skills policy change through state legislatures can be an incremental, fractious process. Attaining results through administrative policy is potentially a more efficient route to effective change. In this session, participants should be ready to discuss a skills policy issue they are facing in their state. Participants will collaborate with peers and seasoned advocates and examine how to solve the issue without legislation, learning strategies that have been effective elsewhere and getting practical advice to take home.

*Facilitator:* Andrew Bradley, State Network Director, National Skills Coalition  
*Peer Discussants:*  
- Alex Camardelle, Senior Policy Analyst, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute  
- Waymond Jackson, Vice President of Workforce Development, Birmingham Business Alliance (AL)  
- Dave Stone, Advocacy Officer at United Way of Central Iowa  
- Rich Pearson, Strategic Partnership Officer, Capital Workforce Partners (CT)

Session D  
**Leveraging policy for on-the-ground impact with community-based organizations**  
*Chastain H – 6th Floor*

Community-based organizations play a critical role in recruiting and training workers, providing culturally competent services, and supporting people as they work to fulfill their career aspirations. Yet too often, state skills policies fail to support these organizations. In this session, participants will examine how community-based organizations can inform and be supported by state skills training policies.

*Facilitator:* Devon Miner, State Network Manager, National Skills Coalition
AGENDA

Peer Discussants:
• Eric Flores, Policy Director, California Workforce Association
• Mari Castaldi, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Chicago Jobs Coalition (IL)
• David Oliver, Economic Empowerment Manager, International Rescue Committee (GA)

3:45 – 4:00 p.m. Break
4:00 – 5:30 p.m. Concurrent Sessions

Session A  From corrections education to reentry: Policies to support what works
Chastain D – 6th floor
One in every three Americans has a criminal record. States must create training and employment opportunities for this population in order to generate viable sources of talent. As state policymakers reform their criminal justice systems, they also have the opportunity to develop policies that support correctional education and training connected to re-entry for those who are already in jail or prison. In this session, participants will discuss state policies that can advance good practices in this area.
Facilitator: Devon Miner, State Network Manager, National Skills Coalition

Peer Discussants:
• Andrew Picard, Vice President of Operations, San Diego Workforce Partnerships (CA)
• Rachel Zolensky, Director of Student Success and Re-Entry Services, Tennessee Higher Education Initiative
• Shaketta Thomas, School Assessment Coordinator, Virginia Department of Corrections

Session B  Advocating for Adult Promise programs in your state based on what’s working
Chastain E – 6th Floor
After initially focusing Promise programs on students graduating from high school, states have realized they can’t be economically competitive and help their residents thrive unless they also provide adults access to free education and training. As a result, an increasing number of states are developing Adult Promise programs. In this session, participants will look at emerging leading practices among Adult Promise programs and share effective strategies for advocating for their development.
Facilitator: Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield, Senior Fellow, National Skills Coalition

Peer Discussants:
• Bridgett Strickler, Vice President of Network Engagement for The Graduate Network!
• Clarinda Barnett-Harrison, Director of Economic Prosperity and Executive Director of the Detroit Regional Workforce Fund, United Way for Southeastern Michigan
• Laura Ward, Vice President, Talent Development, Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce (TN)
Session C  Knowledge is power: Informing advocacy with crucial workforce data

Chastain F – 6th Floor

Data can help advocates inform policies, secure funding, and ensure that state programs are driving toward more equitable outcomes. In this session, participants will discuss how stakeholders can advocate for better workforce data systems and tools, and then use them to promote these goals.

Facilitator: Brooke DeRenzis, Managing Director, State Strategies, National Skills Coalition

Peer Discussants:
- Andrea Ferstan, Executive Director, Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council (MN)
- Valerie Lundy-Wagner, Senior Research Analyst, California Competes

Session D  The two Arkansas: Addressing the urban-rural divide in state policy

Chastain H – 6th floor

Urban and rural area distinctions in competitiveness, demography, and career progression complicate the role of advocates and policymakers in creating effective, inclusive state policy. This deep-dive session will explore a case study of how policy decisions can be mindful of the specific needs of both urban and rural communities, allow for those distinctions, and ensure equity in support and access for workers and providers in each environment.

Facilitator: Molly Bashay, State Policy Analyst, National Skills Coalition

Peer Discussants:
- James Reddish, Executive Vice President, Little Rock Regional Chamber
- Alison Williams, Chief of Staff, Office of Governor Asa Hutchinson
- Linsley Kindade, Senior Director, U.S. Programs, Winrock International

5:30 – 6:30 p.m.  Networking reception

Chastain 1 – 6th Floor

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

nationalskillscoalition.org/skillssummit

FEBRUARY 3-5, 2020   WASHINGTON, DC
Thursday, October 24, 2019

7:30 – 8:45 a.m.  Breakfast  
9th Level Terrace

8:00 – 8:45 a.m.  Network power: Breakfast table discussions on participant-identified topics  
Savannah Ballroom
During this session, participants will convene in groups based on a topic they are eager to discuss or learn more about. Topics include coalition building, state policy change, future of work, workforce equity, and workforce development funding. Participants will be asked to share ideas and questions on these topics with NSC ahead of the discussion.

8:45 – 9:00 a.m.  Opening remarks & review of the day

9:15 – 10:45 a.m.  Concurrent sessions

Session A  Using polling data and message research to improve advocacy communications  
Chastain D – 6th floor
Participants will examine national polling data on voter and business support of skills training and hear about the tested messages that work to build the case for skills training with various audiences and constituencies. As a group, we’ll discuss audiences; share how we can use tested messages in conjunction with storytelling, facts, and polling data to make the most powerful arguments or drive engagements; and workshop communications plans for your campaigns.

Facilitators:
• Nicky Lauricella Coolberth, Managing Director, Communications, National Skills Coalition
• Jimmy Donofrio, Digital Manager, National Skills Coalition
• Ayobami Olugbemiga, Press Secretary, National Skills Coalition
• Silvia Vallejo, Communications Manager, National Skills Coalition

Session B  Closing racial equity gaps in access to training through human services programs  
Chastain E – 6th floor
Structural racism and associated policy decisions have created racial disparities in earnings, poverty, and wealth. These gaps leave many people of color with fewer financial resources. At the same time, many advocates for human services programs (e.g. SNAP E&T and TANF) have shied away from talking about their benefits for people of color for fear of reinforcing racial stereotypes. In this session, participants will discuss how they use and talk about human services programs to provide high-quality training and support services to people of color to advance racial equity.

Facilitator: Melissa Johnson, State Policy Director, National Skills Coalition
AGENDA

Session C Bringing the outside in: Ensuring that marginalized populations are part of creating an inclusive skills agenda  Chastain F – 6th floor

To develop a skills policy agenda that is inclusive of people who are marginalized, advocates need to ensure that a variety of voices are at the table. Yet some of the very reasons that people are marginalized in the first place can make it hard for them to participate in policy development. In this session, participants will discuss strategies for creating an inclusive skills agenda. Bring a question you’re struggling with or an idea to share.

Facilitator: Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, Senior Fellow, National Skills Coalition

Session D A year to expand work-based learning: Lessons learned from NSC’s policy academy  Chastain H – 6th floor

NSC launched its first-ever policy academy in 2018 with five state teams focused on expanding work-based learning through policy change in their states. In this session, participants will have the chance to discuss strategies pursued by three state teams and how their experiences can help inform similar efforts in other states.

Facilitator: Brooke DeRenzis, Managing Director, State Strategies

Peer Discussants:
• Jenna Morey, VP, Community Workforce, Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma, Inc.
• Morgan Diamond, Midwest Program Manager, Young Invincibles (IL)
• Louisa Erickson, Workforce Development Programs and Policy Administrator, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

10:45 – 11:00 a.m. Break

11:00 – 11:45 a.m. Birds of a feather: Breakout conversations based on participants’ roles

During this session, participants are encouraged to attend based on the type of work they do to discuss their challenges, successes, and experience advocating for skills policies.

Facilitators:
• Rob Garcia, Manager, Business Leaders United – Chastain D, 6th Floor
• Michael Richardson, State Network Manager, National Skills Coalition – Chastain E, 6th Floor
• Sarah Robbins, Senior Manager of Youth Partnerships, District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund – Chastain F, 6th Floor
• Antiqua Cleggett, Executive Director, Central Six AlabamaWorks! – Chastain H, 6th Floor
12:00 – 2:00 p.m. Lunch and plenary discussion: The many futures of work in the states

Savannah Ballroom – 9th Floor

New technologies will fundamentally impact the future of work for millions of U.S. workers. Across intersections of geography, demographics, and industry, there are numerous overlapping futures of work, each affecting states and their communities in complex ways. States can use workforce policy to shape their economic futures toward equity and opportunity. This plenary panel will explore state policy and advocacy efforts and the unique opportunity they provide to elevate practical solutions for the real-world problems that workers encounter in the face of technological disruption.

**Moderator:** Molly Bashay, State Policy Analyst, National Skills Coalition

**Panelists:**
- Christian Gonzalez-Rivera, Director of Strategic Policy Initiatives, Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging, Hunter College
- Sarah White, Senior Advisor for Jobs and the Economy, California Office of Policy and Research
- Seung Kim, Vice President, Local Initiatives Support Corporation

**Closing remarks: Bringing Voices for Skills home**

Rachel Unruh, Chief of External Affairs, National Skills Coalition
How skills training can help advance economic opportunity and racial equity

**Featured keynote speaker**

**Taifa Smith Butler, Executive Director, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute**

Taifa Smith Butler is executive director of the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, where she leads and inspires the GBPI team to accomplish the organization’s mission and vision to improve economic opportunity for all Georgians. She is a problem solver, tireless champion for equity, working families, and investing early in children — Georgia’s greatest asset.

As a SkillSPAN partner, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute is leading PROSPER Georgia, a coalition of workforce advocates who champion an inclusive economy. The coalition’s goal is to eliminate poverty in Georgia by removing barriers to meaningful, family-supporting jobs.

**Alex Camardelle, Senior Policy Analyst, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute**

Alex is a senior policy analyst at GBPI, where he produces research that shows ways to reduce poverty, improve social services, and provide support for Georgia’s workforce.

**Amy Lancaster, Director of Workforce Development, Metro Atlanta Chamber**

Amy is the Director of Workforce Development at the Metro Atlanta Chamber. She is a native Atlantan who is passionate about increasing student, jobseeker and employer outcomes in the region and working closely with employer, education, and workforce systems partners to grow Atlanta’s globally competitive talent pool.

**Brenda J. Smeeton, J.D., Attorney & Criminal Records Program Director, Georgia Justice Project**

Brenda manages the direct service component of Georgia Justice Project’s Criminal Records Program. Brenda represents clients who have been denied employment, housing, or benefits as a result of their criminal history. Over the last few years she has traveled around Georgia speaking to thousands of people with a criminal history, service providers, and attorneys about barriers to reentry and criminal records. She has worked actively on criminal justice reform issues for over 15 years.

**Moderator: Brooke DeRenzis, Managing Director, State Strategies, National Skills Coalition**

Brooke leads National Skills Coalition’s efforts to advance skills policies at the state level. Brooke oversees the development of NSC’s state policy agenda and works with NSC’s network of state coalitions and partners to provide strategic guidance for policy development, advocacy, advancement, and implementation.

**Christian Gonzalez-Rivera, Director of Strategic Policy Initiatives, Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging, Hunter College**

Christian helps Brookdale to transform the way society addresses aging and older people specifically by helping to design policy recommendations and program designs that address the challenges New Yorkers face throughout the course of their lives.
Sarah L. White, Senior Advisor for Jobs and the Economy, California Office of the Governor

Sarah is leading California’s efforts to map an equitable transition to a high road, low carbon economy. Before joining the Newsom Administration, White served four years as Governor Brown’s Director for Equity, Climate and Jobs at the California Workforce Development Board, where she designed and institutionalized a progressive “future of work” agenda linking skill delivery to job quality. She has worked for two decades at the intersection of labor, education, and economic policy, and is a national expert on inclusive workforce development.

Seung Kim, Vice President, Local Initiatives Support Corporation

As the Vice President of LISC’s Family Income and Wealth Building unit, Seung leads the strategy and implementation of LISC’s national workforce and asset building initiatives. She helps LISC offices throughout the country design and establish Financial Opportunity Centers, and innovative initiatives such as Bridges to Career Opportunities. Under her leadership, LISC has employed a community-focused and data-driven approach to pilot, test, and scale promising programs.

Moderator: Molly Bashay, State Policy Analyst, National Skills Coalition

Molly is a State Policy Analyst with National Skills Coalition, working to advance skills policies through research and analysis of state workforce policies, advocacy assistance and policy implementation support.
Savannah Level, 9th Floor

Savannah Level, 10th Floor