

**2026 LED Partnership Hybrid Workshop  
Speaker/Presenter Biographies**



**Ron S. Jarmin** is the Deputy Director of the U.S. Census Bureau. Ron served as Acting Director from January 2021 to January 2022, performed the nonexclusive functions and duties of the director from July 2017 to January 2019, and previously served as the associate director for economic programs.

From 2011 to 2016, Ron served as Assistant Director for Research and Methodology where he oversaw a broad research program in statistics, survey methodology, and economics aimed at improving economic and social measurements within the federal statistical system. Since beginning his career at the Census Bureau in 1992, he has also served as the Chief Economist, Chief of the Center for Economic Studies, and as a research economist.

Ron holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Oregon. An elected fellow of the American Statistical Association, he has published papers in the areas of industrial organization, business dynamics, entrepreneurship, technology and firm performance, urban economics, data access, and statistical disclosure.



**Barbara Downs** serves as the Census Bureau's Acting Assistant Center Chief for the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Program and as the Bureau's Evaluation Officer leading the Evidence Group. In these roles, she focuses on providing statistics and evidence to support decision making at the local, state, and federal level.

Her previous roles at the Census Bureau include directing the Federal Statistical Research Data Center program from 2015-2022. Barbara received a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Michigan in 1998.



**Andrew Foote** is the Lead Economist for the LEHD Research in the Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies. He also serves as the lead researcher for the Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes. His research focuses on worker transitions following job loss and labor market outcomes for graduates, and how these differ based on local labor demand conditions. Foote received a Ph.D. from the University of California, Davis in 2015.



**Heath Hayward** is a Geographer and Applications Developer in the Center for Economic Studies (CES) at the U.S. Census Bureau. He has developed data tools for the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program since 2006. Prior to working at the Census Bureau, Heath completed his master's degree in Geographic Information Science at the University of Denver and his bachelor's degree in economics from DePauw University in Indiana.



**Raza Lamb** is a Data Scientist in the Center for Economic Studies (CES) at the Census Bureau. In his current role, he focuses on integrating data science techniques into the Census Bureau's data products and applications.

Raza has a Master of Science in Data Science from Duke University. During graduate school, Raza's capstone centered on evaluating the quality and bias of the decennial census in North Carolina at sub-state geographies. Before attending graduate school, Raza was a policy analyst for the Alzheimer's Association for four years, conducting statistical analysis and research to further the Association's legislative and regulatory agenda.



**Ellen Zentner** is managing director and chief economic strategist and global head of Thematic and Macro Investing for Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, and a member of the Firm's Global Investment Committee.

She and her team are responsible for generating event-driven and forward-looking secular thematic insights, identifying how they can contribute to Morgan Stanley's individual- and institutional investor portfolios, and guiding stakeholders and internal teams to support the firm's investment strategies. Concentration areas include fiscal and monetary policy, geopolitics, the diffusion of generative AI and technology, housing, infrastructure, healthcare, household behavior, and demographics.

Prior to her current role, Ellen spent nine years as chief U.S. economist for Morgan Stanley & Co., where she and her team received the Lawrence R. Klein Award for the most accurate economic forecasts spanning 2014 to 2020. She joined the Firm as senior US economist in 2013 from Nomura Securities International.

From 2003 to 2011, Ellen worked for Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ (BTMU) as senior U.S. economist. Before joining BTMU, she worked for five years in the Revenue Estimating Division at the Texas State Comptroller on a range of economic development and impact studies, including monitoring the fairness of the tax system in the state.

Ellen serves on the Treasury Borrowing Advisory Committee-where she advises the Treasury Department on the economy and technical debt management issues-as well as the Goeconomic Council of Advisers for the Center for Strategic and International Studies. She is past president of the National Association for Business Economics, a former member of the Economic Advisory Council for the Federal Reserve Banks of New York and Chicago, past Chair of the Economic Advisory Panel for the American Bankers' Association, and former chair of SIFMA's Economic Advisory Roundtable.

Ellen is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and served as trustee of the Graduate Center Foundation of the City University of New York.

In 2025, Ellen was named to Barron's list of the 100 most influential women in U.S. finance. She is an avid fly fisher and holds a BBA and an MBA in economics from the University of Colorado.



**Jeff McHugh** is the Economic Directorate's Team Lead for the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program at the U.S. Census Bureau. Jeff manages production and dissemination of three LEHD products, the Quarterly Workforce Indicators, Job-to-Job Flows, and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES).

He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Maryland, along with a master's in management. He has been with the U.S. Census Bureau since 1999.



**Bryan P. Grady, Ph.D.**, serves as the Assistant Executive Director for Labor Market Information at the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce. In this capacity, he oversees the production and dissemination of data and analysis on employment, wages, and related topics in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor as well as the South Carolina Coordinating Council for Workforce Development. Prior to his arrival at DEW in January 2022, he was Chief Research Officer at the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority for three years. Bryan earned a Ph.D. in planning and public policy from Rutgers University and degrees in economics from the University of Delaware and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

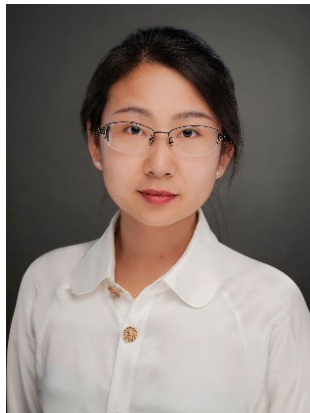


**Brenda Samman** is a Data Analyst at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, specializing in socio-economic data analysis, regional economic trends, and data-driven forecasting. Brenda holds a master's degree in Economics from Texas A&M University and is dedicated to transforming complex datasets into meaningful insights that inform planning and decision-making across Greater Houston.



**Yifan Wang** is a Research Economist at the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL), where she leads economic modeling, workforce analysis, and policy evaluation. Her work bridges the gap between data-driven insights and practical policy solutions. She specializes in applied econometrics and causal inference, using R to analyze large-scale administrative and survey datasets to

generate insights that inform workforce policy and planning. Her research examines how trade and technological development shape labor market outcomes. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics and an M.S. in Policy Economics from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



**Kaiyue Feng** is a socioeconomic modeler at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, where she analyzes regional labor market dynamics and real estate market trends. Her work integrates LEHD data products with spatial and econometric analysis to support regional economic development and land-use forecasting. Kaiyue holds a master's degree in urban data science from New York University and is currently pursuing a master's degree in economics at the University of Texas at Austin.



**Dylan Craig** is a Jr. Economic Research Analyst with the Labor & Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) at the North Carolina Department of Commerce, where he supports economic, workforce, and educational planning through data analysis, research, and the development of new data products and informational resources. He has a Master of Public Policy from the University of Virginia and a Bachelor of Arts in Government from William & Mary.



**Lucia Foster** is the Chief of the Center for Economic Studies (CES) and Chief Economist of the Census Bureau. In this role, she leads the economic research groups within CES including the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program. Foster uses Census Bureau micro data to conduct research on productivity and reallocation, management practices, and R&D performing firms.

She has a B.A. in Economics from Georgetown University and a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Maryland.



**Carol Aristone** is the Assistant Division Chief for Manufacturing, Corporate Profits and Business Dynamics in the Economic Indicators Division at the U.S. Census Bureau. Carol oversees multiple surveys and programs including the Quarterly Financial Report (QFR), Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders (M3) survey, Business Formation Statistics (BFS), Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), and the Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BTOS). Prior to this position, she spent 22

years working on the International Trade program.



**Gretchen Gooding** is a branch chief in the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Office. Her branch oversees data release activities for the American Community Survey website; manages the division's exhibits, presentations, and webinars; and provides customer support for data users. In 2015, Gretchen received a Bronze Medal Award from the Department of Commerce for her work on the Stats in Action video series, and she received the Outstanding Mentor Award in

2018. Gretchen received her bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and master's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also has a Master's Certificate in Project Management from The George Washington University.



**Tyson Weister** is a Survey Statistician on the U.S. Census Bureau's communications team for centralized data dissemination. In this role, he engages data users and helps them navigate data.census.gov, Microdata Access, and the application programming interface (API).

Tyson holds bachelor's degrees in economics and public affairs from Indiana University, and a master's degree in communication from Purdue University.



**Nidaal Jubran** is a Branch Chief in the U.S. Census Bureau's Economic Management Division (EMD). He leads the testing and outreach strategy for the Census Business Builder (CBB), a key data tool supporting small businesses, policymakers, and economic developers. Nidaal has worked extensively with all types of data users through presentations, training sessions, and collaborative engagements. He has also authored America Counts stories and Data Gems, helping audiences better understand and apply Census Bureau data through practical, accessible examples.



**William Gil** is a supervisory analyst at the New Jersey Department of Labor, Division of Economic and Demographic Research. He has been with the department for over nine years, providing Census data and transforming them into accessible reports and visualizations. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Montclair State University and a Master of Science in Data Science and Analytics from Thomas Edison State University.



**Nichelle Ruffin** is an Army veteran, educator, and aspiring school leader focused on workforce transitions from military service into public-sector careers. She brings experience in education, leadership development, and data-informed decision making to support veterans entering teaching and educational leadership roles. Her work centers on translating labor market and post-secondary data into actionable strategies for schools, workforce partners, and policymakers.



**Dani Sandler** is a principal economist at the U.S. Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies, where she leads research efforts, supports collaborative projects, and develops statistical products. With over a decade of experience at the Census Bureau, Dani has held various roles, including FSRDC administrator and research economist. She currently facilitates partnerships between the U.S. Census Bureau, Princeton's Evictions Lab, and the

Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Dani holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California, Davis (2012).



**Rachel Moskowitz** is the Bureau Chief for Economic Research and Analysis, a section of the New Mexico Dept. of Workforce Solutions that produces labor market information for the state.

She received her undergraduate degree from The Ohio State University and a master's in economics from the University of New Mexico.



**Chi Wong** is an economist with the Labor and Economic Analysis Division of the North Carolina Department of Commerce. His interests include employment and workforce data analysis, and his projects include employment projections and creating Tableau dashboards. Previously, he worked at RTI International. He has a master of arts in economics from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and a bachelor of arts from Xavier University.



**Kui Zhao** is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). She brings extensive experience from working with local government planning agencies in three Maryland counties. Kui has expertise in school planning, water and sewerage planning, research and testification on zoning map corrections, demographic and socioeconomic analyses, population and employment forecasts, health data management, and comprehensive planning.

In addition to her professional work for her employers, Kui also is committed to advancing equitable planning for diverse residential and business communities both within her home county and beyond.



**Liang Tian** is a Principal Overseeing Data Science; Management and Analytics work program areas at SANDAG.

Liang previously worked at top FinTech companies, where he gained extensive experience in data, science, analytics, and Machine Learning / Artificial Intelligence capabilities. He has led cross-functional teams to deliver high-performing predictive science and analytics solutions in various application domains across global markets.

Liang has published 20+ journal articles and book chapter and is the first-named inventor on U.S. patent applications in financial risk management domain.

Liang holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science with specialization in Computational Intelligence Methods and its applications.



**Paige Pagaduan** is a Data Science Intern at the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) under the Data Science, Management, and Analytics team. Previously, Paige was a research analyst at the Study of Latinos-Investigation of Neurocognitive Aging (SOLINCA) lab under the Department of Neurosciences at UC San Diego and an AI Fellow for Break Through Tech-AI. Paige is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Data Science from UC San Diego.



**Tim Garrett** is an Associate Regional Planner at SANDAG in the Mobility Planning team. Tim leads transit planning projects, including the planning and design for new Rapid transit routes, and monitors the performance of transit operations in the San Diego region. Tim holds a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Lafayette College and a Master of City Planning degree from San Diego State University.



**David Schmidt** is the Chief Economist for Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), where the Research & Analysis Bureau is nationally recognized for its efforts to innovate and expand access to labor market information.

He is an advocate for sharing tools and techniques for data analysis across the states, with a personal focus on R.

David serves as a member of the Workforce Information Advisory Council, on the board of directors for the Labor Market Information Institute, as the technical vice chair for the Workforce and Labor Market Information committee of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, and as the state co-chair for the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics policy council with the Bureau of Labor Statistics.



**Steve Scheetz** is the Research Manager at the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED), where he leads economic and fiscal analysis to support statewide policy, business development, and strategic planning efforts. His work focuses on evaluating the economic and tax impacts of business activity, workforce trends, and industry growth to inform decision-making across state and local partners. He collaborates with agencies, local governments, and private stakeholders to

translate complex data into practical insights that support Nevada's economic competitiveness.