

FIRST2 NETWORK
AND
WV JOBS NETWORK
**SPRING 2025
CO-CONFERENCE**



**ALIGNING COLLEGES, COMMUNITIES, AND EMPLOYERS TO
TRANSFORM EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

MAY 15TH - 17TH
FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON IN CHARLESTON, WV

THIS CO-CONFERENCE WILL FOCUS ON:

- **FOSTERING A CULTURE OF LEARNING AND COLLABORATION AMONG STUDENTS, JOB SEEKERS, FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS, WORKFORCE TRAINEES, EMPLOYERS, AND INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS.**
- **CHAMPIONING INTERDISCIPLINARY, COOPERATIVE STRATEGIES TO DRIVE SYSTEMS CHANGE AND ENHANCE THE IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND STEM EDUCATION INITIATIVES.**
- **FACILITATING MEANINGFUL DISCUSSIONS ABOUT POLICIES AT ALL LEVELS THAT INFLUENCE STEM EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTING ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES TO DRIVE IMPACTFUL POLICY CHANGES.**
- **SHOWCASING SUCCESSES AND BEST PRACTICES TO ELEVATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND STEM EDUCATION OUTCOMES.**
- **IDENTIFYING STRATEGIC NEXT STEPS TO ENHANCE AND EXPAND BOTH NETWORKS.**

**QUESTIONS? EMAIL MARGARET@HIGHROCKS.ORG OR
CREE@HIGHROCKS.ORG**



The First2 Network is supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation under Award Numbers: HRD-1834586, WV Higher Education Policy Commission; HRD-1834601, Green Bank Observatory; HRD-1834575, Fairmont State University; HRD-1834595, High Rocks Educational Corporation; HRD-1834569, West Virginia University.

The WV Jobs Network is powered by the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Economic Development Administration, and the Benedum Foundation

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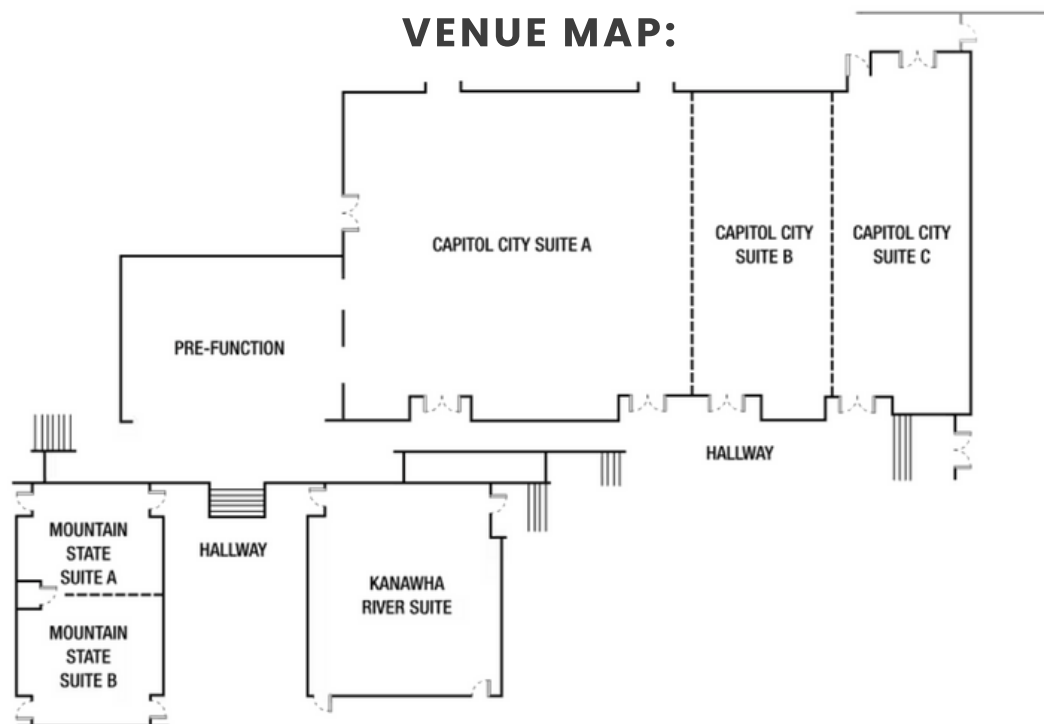
WEST VIRGINIA



JOBS NETWORK

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TRANSFORM EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

VENUE MAP:



FIRST2 NETWORK



WV JOBS NETWORK



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AGENDA: THURSDAY, MAY 15TH

TIMES	ACTIVITY	SESSION TITLE	LOCATION	FACILITATOR(S)
9:00AM-11:00AM	REGISTRATION	---	Moutain State Suite	---
9:00AM-10:00AM	FIRST2 NETWORK STEERING MEETING	---	Capitol City Suite A	First2 Network Leadership
9:00AM-10:00AM	WV JOBS NETWORK STEERING MEETING	---	Capitol City Suites B & C	WV Jobs Network Leadership
10:00AM-11:00AM	WELCOME	Overview Presentations of the First2 Network and the WV Jobs Network	Capitol City Suite A	First2 and WV Jobs Network Leadership
11:00AM-11:50AM	FACILITATED NETWORKING	Networking Activity	Capitol City Suite A	Margaret Falletta, High Rocks
12:00PM-1:00PM	LUNCH	Generational Diversity and Labor Market Trends in West Virginia	Capitol City Suite A	Chris Rich, Workforce WV
1:10PM-2:10PM	CONCURRENT SESSION A	Data 'Walkshop': From Stats to Action - Understanding, Interpreting, and Using Current Workforce Data	Capitol City Suite A	Maribeth Saleem-Tanner and Cree Lahti, High Rocks; Josiah Hannah and Dreama Buck, Coalfield Development
1:10PM-2:10PM	CONCURRENT SESSION A	WVU Change Ideas: Supplementing STEM Career Mentoring Through Bi-Weekly Emails and the 'You Belong in STEM!' Video Project	Capitol City Suites B & C	Ty Landis and Michelle Richards-Babb, West Virginia University
2:20PM-3:20PM	CONCURRENT SESSION B	WV Entrepreneurship Ecosystem	Capitol City Suite A	Lauren Prinzo, West Virginia University; Carrie White, E3 WV

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AGENDA: THURSDAY, MAY 15TH

TIMES	ACTIVITY	SESSION TITLE	LOCATION	FACILITATOR(S)
2:20PM-2:50PM	CONCURRENT SESSION B	TRUE ACCCESS and the First2 Network: Building and Sustaining Higher Education Collaboration Across States	Capitol City Suites B & C	Madhura Kulkarni, Northern Kentucky University; Erica Harvey, First2 Network
2:50PM-3:20PM		Learnings from First2's Improvement Science Ticket and Tracker		Emily Helton and Mary Ellen Sullivan, First2 Network
2:20PM-3:50PM	CONCURRENT SESSION B	Screening of "Small Town Universe"	Kanawha River Suite	---
3:20PM-3:50PM	SNACK BREAK	---	Moutain State Suite	---
3:50PM-4:50PM	CONCURRENT SESSION C	Beyond the Camera: Film Industry Careers, Communities, and Creative Economies in WV	Capitol City Suite A	Ben Berry, Mtn Craft; Dave Lavender, WV Film Office and Department of Economic Development; Tijah Bumgarner, Marshall University; Deana White, WV All STAR
3:50PM-4:50PM	CONCURRENT SESSION C	Exploring and Analyzing Statewide Higher Education Data	Capitol City Suites B & C	Zornitsa Georgieva and Jennifer Grossman, WV HEPC
5:00PM-5:30PM	CLOSING	Closing Remarks, Evaluations, and Door Prizes	Capitol City Suite A	First2 and WV Jobs Network Leadership
6:00PM-7:00PM	DINNER	---	Capitol City Suite A	---

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AGENDA: FRIDAY, MAY 16TH

TIMES	ACTIVITY	SESSION TITLE	LOCATION	FACILITATOR(S)
8:00AM-9:00AM	BREAKFAST	---	Capitol City Suite A	---
9:00AM-9:15AM	WELCOME	Opening Remarks	Capitol City Suite A	First2 and WV Jobs Network Leadership
9:15AM-10:40AM	PLENARY PANEL	Aligning Colleges, Communities, and Employers to Transform Education and Workforce Development	Capitol City Suite A	Andy Malinoski, WV Secretary of Commerce Office; Jonathon Compton, Workforce WV; Alexia Biafore Burge, The Thrasher Group; Jacob Hannah, Coalfield Development; Michelle Morrison, Marshall University; Rodney Sanders, Mountwest Community and Technical College
10:50AM-11:50AM	CONCURRENT SESSION D	Navigating Workforce Development Resources in West Virginia	Capitol City Suite A	Lorrie Smith, Governor's Workforce Resiliency Office; Deb Harris, Jobs & Hope WV
10:50AM-11:50AM	CONCURRENT SESSION D	ARC POWER Career Collaborative for North Central WV	Capitol City Suites B & C	Erica Harvey, First2 Network; Cliff Jackson, Fairmont State University
10:50AM-11:50AM	CONCURRENT SESSION D	Professional Headshots	Kanawha River Suite	Erin Hurst, Erin Hurst Photography
12:00PM-1:00PM	LUNCH	---	Capitol City Suite A	---

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AGENDA: FRIDAY, MAY 16TH

TIMES	ACTIVITY	SESSION TITLE	LOCATION	FACILITATOR(S)
1:10PM-2:10PM	CONCURRENT SESSION E	Unlocking Potential, Power, and Purpose in your Workforce	Capitol City Suite A	Coalfield Development Crew Members
1:10PM-2:10PM	CONCURRENT SESSION E	Hard Conversations: How Do I Talk to my Family About Being a First-Generation Student on a College or Industry Path?	Capitol City Suites B & C	Eric King, AVN Corp.; Craig Thomas, Syensqo
2:20PM-3:20PM	CONCURRENT SESSION F	Network Wide Change Ideas Discussion	Capitol City Suite A	Sue Ann Heatherly, First2 Network
2:20PM-3:20PM	CONCURRENT SESSION F	Empowering Jobseekers, Employers, and Training Providers Through Local American Job Centers	Capitol City Suites B & C	April Campbell and Bradlee Jordan, HRDF WV
2:20PM-3:20PM	CONCURRENT SESSION F	First Ascent: Work Anywhere, Choose Home	Kanawha River Suite	Emily Huguenin, West Virginia University
3:20PM-3:50PM	SNACK BREAK	---	Mountain State Suite	---
3:50PM-4:50PM	WORKSHOP	From Gaps to Gains: Strengthening Workforce and Education Pathways	Capitol City Suite A	Sarah Riley, High Rocks
5:00PM-5:30PM	CLOSING	Closing Remarks, Evaluations, and Door Prizes	Capitol City Suite A	First2 and WV Jobs Network Leadership
6:00PM-7:00PM	DINNER	---	Capitol City Suite A	---
7:00PM-8:00PM	POSTER PRESENTATIONS	Change Idea Posters by First2 Network Students	Capitol City Suites B & C	---

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AGENDA: SATURDAY, MAY 17TH

TIMES	ACTIVITY	SESSION TITLE	LOCATION	FACILITATOR(S)
8:00AM-9:00AM	BREAKFAST	---	Capitol City Suite A	---
9:00AM-9:15AM	WELCOME	Opening Remarks	Capitol City Suite A	First2 and WV Jobs Network Leadership
9:15AM-10:40AM	INSTITUTIONAL SHARING	First2 Institutional Team Round-Robin: Sharing Successes, Challenges, and Future Plans	Capitol City Suite A	First2 Institutional Teams
9:15AM-10:40AM	POWER SKILLS AND INTERNSHIPS PANEL	Interactive Panel Session and Discussion on Employee Development	Capitol City Suites B & C	Maribeth Saleem-Tanner and Cree Lahti, High Rocks; Power Skills Participants
10:50AM-11:50AM	CONCURRENT SESSION G	Opportunity Ready: How to Interview with Confidence and Impact	Capitol City Suite A	Samantha Mitchell, High Rocks
10:50AM-11:30AM	CONCURRENT SESSION G	Discussing Barriers for Undergraduate Students to Participate in Research	Capitol City Suites B & C	Cinthia Pacheco, West Virginia University
11:30AM-11:50AM		Increasing STEM Belonging and Building Social Capital for Faculty for Student Success		Marjorie Darrah, West Virginia University
12:00PM-1:00PM	LUNCH	---	Capitol City Suite A	---
1:10PM-2:10PM	CONCURRENT SESSION H	Pipelines, Pathways, and Potential: Workforce Development as a Positive Force for Thriving People and Communities in Appalachia	Capitol City Suite A	Maribeth Saleem-Tanner, Van Preston, and Grace Geraghty, High Rocks

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AGENDA: SATURDAY, MAY 17TH

TIMES	ACTIVITY	SESSION TITLE	LOCATION	FACILITATOR(S)
1:10PM-2:10PM	CONCURRENT SESSION H	S-STEM Track 3 Student Focus Groups	Capitol City Suites B & C	Aida Jimenez-Esquilin, West Virginia University Institute of Technology
2:20PM-3:00PM	CLOSING AND REFLECTION	---	Capitol City Suite A	First2 and WV Jobs Network Leadership

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: THURSDAY, MAY 15TH

10:00AM– 11:00AM

Welcome and First2/WVJN Overviews

Join us to kick off our co-conference with an enthusiastic welcome and introductions to both the First2 Network and the WV Jobs Network. This session will provide an overview of each network's goals, accomplishments, plans for sustainability, and opportunities for engagement. Learn how these networks foster collaboration, support academic and professional growth, and drive collective impact across our communities. Whether you're new to our networks or already involved, you'll leave this session with a clearer understanding of how to get the most out of this co-conference experience.

11:00AM– 11:50AM

Facilitated Networking

Start building your conference connections so you can collaborate throughout the event! Through a series of facilitated networking activities and guided introductions you'll have the opportunity to meet fellow attendees, share your interests, and spark meaningful conversations. Whether you're a first-time attendee or a returning participant, this is a perfect opportunity to expand your network in a welcoming, engaging environment.

12:00PM– 1:00PM

Generational Diversity and Labor Market Trends in West Virginia

As West Virginia's economy continues to evolve, generational diversity is creating both challenges and opportunities for the state's workforce. In this session, Labor Market Analyst Chris Rich from Workforce West Virginia will examine how age demographics are shaping labor force participation, workforce growth, and long-term economic trends. The presentation will highlight West Virginia's distinctive age distribution—including its high share of older workers—and explore the implications for workforce development. Attendees will gain a clearer view of the state's labor market landscape and leave with actionable insights to better align education, workforce strategies, and employer needs.

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: THURSDAY, MAY 15TH

1:10PM – 2:10PM

WVU Change Ideas: Supplementing STEM Career Mentoring Through Bi-Weekly Emails and the 'You Belong in STEM!' Video Project

Learn about two change ideas at West Virginia University (WVU) aimed at improving STEM student retention. The first project uses targeted emails to connect underrepresented STEM students with research, career, and networking opportunities, promoting a sense of belonging and persistence. This work, guided by Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles, also gathered feedback through student surveys. The second initiative, the "You Belong in STEM!" Video Project, highlights the benefits of STEM careers and strategies for success, featuring voices from diverse students, faculty, and staff. Both efforts aim to strengthen connections, career mentoring, and student success in STEM fields.

1:10PM – 2:10PM

Data "Walkshop": From Stats to Action – Understanding, Interpreting, and Using Current Workforce Data

Join us for an engaging, interactive Data Walk where participants will examine key workforce and education data in small groups. Through facilitated stations, attendees will interpret trends, identify gaps, and connect seemingly disconnected data points to build a shared understanding of West Virginia's workforce landscape. This session is designed to foster cross-sector insights and support collaboration among West Virginia Jobs Network and First2 Network partners. Participant reflections will help shape future research and programming efforts.

2:20PM – 3:50PM

Screening of 'Small Town Universe'

Directed by Katie Dellamaggiore, 'Small Town Universe', "paints an intimate and captivating portrait of life in Green Bank, West Virginia, home to the world's most sensitive radio telescope and the only U.S. town where Wi-Fi and cell phones are either severely limited or basically useless. In this uniquely radio-quiet community, scientists use the U.S. National Science Foundation Green Bank Telescope (GBT) to search for signs of extraterrestrial intelligence and advance the field of radio astronomy while residents navigate through pivotal moments of existence, forming deep connections with the universe, science, and one another." (from <https://greenbankobservatory.org/news/small-town-universe/>)

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: THURSDAY, MAY 15TH

2:20PM – 2:50PM

TRUE ACCCESS and the First2 Network: Building and Sustaining Higher Education Collaboration Across States

This presentation will describe how productive collaboration and dissemination can be leveraged to accelerate systemic change and align efforts across higher education. The session will focus on the interchange between one relatively early-stage project (TRUE ACCCESS) and one mature project (First2), highlighting how both initiatives learn from one another. Both projects address student, faculty, and institutional-level change in support of undergraduate student success. Emphasizing the critical role of participants' voices in any change effort, the session will be structured to ensure an interactive learning experience for all attendees. The goal is to create a space where participants can recognize the intersections of their work across disciplines and build productive connections among higher education change agents. The session will highlight the processes and contexts of change within both early and mature projects.

2:50PM–3:20PM

Learnings from First2's Improvement Science Ticket System and Tracker

Learn what First2's new ticketing system makes possible in terms of automated workflows to support interactions between change idea testers and improvement science coaches – from initial ideas to completion of Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles for testing change. See early learnings made possible using the updated PDSA Tracker, such as the distribution of this year's change ideas across Drivers and the number and types of coaching interactions

West Virginia Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

The mission of the West Virginia Entrepreneurship Ecosystem is to connect and identify opportunities to help entrepreneurs and small business owners across the state by fostering collaboration and sharing resources. West Virginia is a role model for collaboration that expands opportunity and fosters innovation through information sharing, partnership development, and collaborative planning. In this session, we will share information on the ecosystem, resources and opportunities for West Virginians, and share success stories.

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: THURSDAY, MAY 15TH

3:50PM – 4:50PM

Beyond the Camera: Film Industry Careers, Communities, and Creative Economies in WV

This panel will explore diverse pathways into filmmaking and the broader film industry in West Virginia. Panelists will share personal and professional journeys, offering insight into how careers in film are built through entrepreneurship, innovation, and community collaboration. The conversation will expand traditional notions of the film industry, highlighting the many roles—both on and off set—that contribute to successful productions, much like a manufacturing process where many talents come together to create something greater. The session will also examine filmmaking as an engine for local economic development, demonstrating how creative industries can shape, strengthen, and transform communities. Panelists will discuss the power of narrative not just in film, but across sectors, emphasizing storytelling's critical role in shaping community identities and driving sustainable change. Participants will hear real-world examples of successes and challenges in the field, while gaining practical advice and inspiration for building careers in filmmaking and storytelling industries.

3:50PM – 4:50PM

Exploring and Analyzing Statewide Higher Education Data

Data is a vital part of understanding the impact initiatives have on students' success. In this session, we will review the statewide higher education data that is available from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. An overview of existing data exploration tools and how formal data requests can be made will be provided.

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: FRIDAY, MAY 16TH

9:15AM – 10:40AM

Plenary Panel: Aligning Colleges, Communities, and Employers to Transform Education and Workforce Development

This panel will explore how colleges, communities, and employers can collaborate to build impactful and sustainable education-to-career pathways. Workforce, state, organizational, and higher education professionals will share their thoughts about preparing individuals and students for a rapidly changing workforce. Ideas about how to build successful partnerships, ways to remove structural barriers, and policy changes that can accelerate alignment between education and workforce systems will be highlighted.

10:50AM – 11:50AM

Navigating Workforce Development Resources in West Virginia

West Virginia offers a range of workforce development programs designed to connect individuals with employment opportunities, training, and support services. The Governor's Workforce Resiliency Office plays a central role in coordinating these efforts, ensuring that businesses and job seekers alike can access the resources they need to thrive in a changing economy. One key initiative, Jobs & Hope WV, provides individuals facing barriers to employment—such as those in recovery from substance use disorder—with career training, education, and wraparound support services. By integrating workforce training with recovery and reentry services, Jobs & Hope WV helps participants build sustainable careers and achieve long-term stability.

10:50AM – 11:50AM

ARC POWER Career Collaborative for North Central WV

This session will introduce the ARC POWER grant funded project, “Building Connections to Grow Capacity: Breaking Down Regional Barriers in the STEM Workforce Pipeline” and invite participants to participate in refining project initiatives, with the longer term goal of participating in them. The project aims to develop the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) workforce in the service region of Fairmont State and Glenville State Universities by connecting industry, academics and educators, students and other jobseekers, and workforce entities through a Career Collaborative.

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: FRIDAY, MAY 16TH

10:50AM – 11:50AM

Professional Headshots

Whether you are updating your organizational bio or need a website profile picture, a recent and high-quality headshot is a valuable asset for any professional to have. All attendees are invited to visit this photography session with Erin Hurst Photography for a quick and easy photo shoot; after the conference, you will receive your professionally edited digital images that you can use across multiple professional platforms.

1:10PM – 2:10PM

Unlocking Potential, Power, and Purpose in your Workforce

Coalfield Development has been rebuilding the Appalachian economy from the ground up since 2010, focusing on overcoming barriers to employment, and this panel includes current participants from across multiple enterprises. Panelists will bring an experiential lens to Workforce Development in West Virginia's southernmost counties, recounting how they got here, what skills they've gained, what their future holds, and what lessons they've learned in their journeys through the Workforce Readiness and Professional Success (WRAPS) Trainee Program, the 33/6/3 Crew Member Program, and the Green Hat Leadership Program. Ashley Cain, Coalfield Alumna and Assistant Crew Chief from Revitalize Construction, adds a mentor's perspective to the panel, which will be moderated by Jess Toon, Coalfield's Manager of Strategic Communications. This session is for employers, training providers, job seekers, and educators interested in first-hand accounts about what truly unlocks and activates a workforce's potential, power and purpose.

1:10PM – 2:10PM

Hard Conversations: How Do I Talk to My Family About Being a First-Generation Student on a College or Industry Path?

The pathways to career success have evolved dramatically across generations; today's professionals are expected to navigate frequent job shifts, evolving application processes, and a rapidly changing work environment. This panel explores how we can better articulate these shifts to family members and other trusted advisors, especially those that may not be as familiar with current academic and professional trends. Panelists will also consider how educators and advisors can better recognize and support the delicate balance many students must maintain between work, school, and life responsibilities.

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: FRIDAY, MAY 16TH

2:20PM – 3:20PM

Empowering Jobseekers, Employers, and Training Providers Through Local American Job Centers

Discover the wide range of services offered by American Job Centers for jobseekers, training providers, and employers. Learn how these centers support career growth, connect talent with opportunity, and strengthen the local workforce through job matching, training access, and recruitment assistance.

2:20PM – 3:20PM

First2 Network Wide Change Ideas Discussion

Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles (PDSAs) are being tested across campuses. Campus Clubs are evolving. Let's talk - is it time for network-wide PDSAs? We'll discuss what we noticed this year and get your input on how to streamline our improvement science work even more; and, if you miss the session, you will have a week or so to still comment on ideas.

2:20PM – 3:20PM

First Ascent: Work Anywhere, Choose Home

Ascend West Virginia has taken an innovative approach to economic development by helping remote workers from across the country find their place in the Mountain State. In this session, Emily Huguenin will share insights and success stories from the first five years of the Ascend WV talent attraction program which spans five regions, and will introduce new opportunities for talent retention via the First Ascent program which supports recent university graduates to stay in the state while entering vibrant career paths. In this session, you'll hear stories of impact on local communities, learn about the potential of hybrid and remote careers to help our best and brightest stay in West Virginia, and find out how your business can tap into the top talent for your critical hiring needs.

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: FRIDAY, MAY 16TH

3:50PM – 4:50PM

From Gaps to Gains: Strengthening Workforce and Education Pathways

This interactive session will invite participants in diverse roles from across education, workforce, and industry to reflect on their experiences and help build a shared analysis of strengths and gaps within the state's current education and workforce development pathways. Opportunities for innovation across all sectors will also be discussed. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of where West Virginia is excelling, where strategic improvements are needed, and how stakeholders across education, industry, and community organizations can better collaborate to build a resilient workforce, as well as generating actionable ideas and new connections to build upon in their own work.

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: SATURDAY, MAY 17TH

9:15AM – 10:40AM

First2 Institutional Team Round-Robin: Sharing Successes, Challenges, and Future Plans

In this session, each institutional team will present a brief summary of their change idea work over the past year. Teams will share highlights, challenges, future plans, and event photos from their experiences with First2 during the 2024–2025 academic year. Following the presentations, there will be a facilitated discussion to dive deeper into common themes, share high-impact practices, and build connections across campuses. This session is an opportunity to celebrate our progress as a network, reflect on lessons learned, and collaborate on next steps.

9:15AM – 10:40AM

Power Skills and Internships Panel

This panel will explore strategies for building strong employees through internships, professional certification programs, and ongoing professional development opportunities. Panelists will share insights on how different programs can serve as pathways to full-time employment, the value of certification programs, and best practices for supporting employees' professional growth at every stage. Following the panel, panelists and participants will engage in an open discussion to share experiences, challenges, and innovative approaches to workforce development.

10:50AM – 11:50AM

Opportunity Ready: How to Interview with Confidence and Impact

Whether interviewing for a job, internship, or academic opportunity, strong interview skills are critical to making a positive first impression. This interactive workshop will equip participants with practical tips to excel in interviews. Topics will include how to effectively communicate academic and professional strengths as well as how to respond to common interview questions. Participants will be able to practice their responses in a supportive environment and receive real-time feedback. Whether just starting out or looking to refine existing skills, attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how to confidently showcase their story and experiences during an interview.

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: SATURDAY, MAY 17TH

10:50AM – 11:30AM

Discussing Barriers for Undergraduate Students to Participate in Research

The Office of Undergraduate Research (UgR) at West Virginia University (WVU) connects students with research opportunities. Each semester, hundreds of students complete an Interest Form (IF) but only a fraction follow through to work with a faculty mentor. Since research experiences boost college persistence and career success, UgR aims to identify and address barriers that prevent students from completing the process. They analyzed IF data from four semesters to find where students drop off and which majors are more likely to disengage, helping them to develop targeted recruitment strategies.

11:30AM – 11:50AM

Increasing STEM Belonging and Building Social Capital for Faculty for Student Success

While many focus on increasing STEM belonging for students, supporting faculty is equally vital. Faculty often lack a sense of community and professional support, which can hinder career advancement and lead to turnover—negatively impacting students. The First2 Network's improvement science initiatives have fostered STEM belonging and social capital among faculty in West Virginia, creating a more stable environment for student success. Learn more about data that shows that the Network has positively influenced faculty connections, career development, and student outcomes.

1:10PM – 2:10PM

S-STEM Track 3 Student Focus Groups

In this interactive session, STEM students will engage in a gallery walk of recent needs assessment survey results, sharing key observations and questions. Small focus groups will then dive deeper into students' lived experiences with academic challenges, barriers to resources, and support systems. These discussions will aim to uncover actionable insights around access and mentoring. The session will conclude with student reactions to proposed change ideas, offering valuable feedback to shape future institutional strategies.

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS: SATURDAY, MAY 17TH

1:10PM – 2:10PM

Pipelines, Pathways, and Potential: Workforce Development as a Positive Force for Thriving People and Communities in Appalachia

This session will engage the audience in reimagining a new version of “workforce development” in West Virginia and beyond. For too long, these discussions in Appalachia have been disconnected from public and higher education, as well as from broader efforts in youth, leadership, and community development. Many young people in the region believe they must choose between learning or earning, and many leaders assume that they must trade-off between building healthy self-determined local communities or attracting industries. To address the region’s most pressing challenges and opportunities we must unite conversations about business development and education; and these conversations must center the voices of workers, community members, and young people. Stories from AmeriCorps members will be featured, highlighting how their futures and communities are being transformed by place-based learning-and-earning opportunities.

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OUR PRESENTERS

Heather Arnett – First2 Program Coordinator, WV Higher Education Policy Commission

Heather taught biology and zoology at universities for 8 years; she worked at the University of Maine focusing on cross system introductory biology, Unity College which specializes in wildlife and sustainability, and the University of Charleston where she helped to establish a First2 institutional team. She now works at West Virginia's Higher Education Policy Commission as the First2 Program Coordinator.

Ben Berry – Business Development/Founder/Director, Mtn Craft

Ben, a native of Kirksville, MO, has been passionate about filmmaking since he first picked up a camera at age 10. After earning a BS in Digital Cinematography from Full Sail University, he founded Mtn Craft in 2013. As CEO, Ben has led the company's growth from a solo venture into a dynamic team of eight creatives, driven by his strengths in leadership and client relations. While he now focuses on steering the company's vision, he remains dedicated to fostering a culture of intentional creativity and storytelling. In 2023, Ben co-founded the Mtn Craft Film Festival, now recognized as one of West Virginia's leading platforms for Appalachian filmmakers. His work has earned him recognition as the Marion County Chamber of Commerce's Entrepreneur of the Year and WVFF's Impact Filmmaker of the Year. He is also a proud Leadership WV alumnus (Class of 2022).

Dreama Buck – Lead Training and Education Coordinator, Coalfield Development

Dreama Buck, a West Virginia native and current resident of Huntington, holds a Board of Governors Associate of Applied Science Degree from Mountwest Community & Technical College as well as a Regents Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in English from Marshall University. In addition to experience teaching at the collegiate level, Dreama has also developed and delivered employee and customer training programs for a variety of non-profit, for-profit, and governmental organizations. An award-winning multi-genre author, she is also the recipient of the civilian Molly Pitcher Medal from the US Army. Dreama has been with Coalfield Development since 2022.

Tijah Bumgarner – Associate Professor Filmmaking, Marshall University

Bumgarner is a filmmaker, scholar, and professor. She teaches narrative and documentary filmmaking at Marshall University. Since writing and directing her first feature film, Meadow Bridge, in 2017, she has co-directed and starred in the experimental short Becoming Annette (2020); co-created the web series Quarantine Life (2020); served as the 1st Assistant

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Director for Occupational Hazard (2021) directed by Ursula Ellis; co-wrote and directed the pilot episode of Her Hope Haven (2021); co-directed the short documentary Patchwork (2022); co-produced/directed/cinematographer on the feature documentary Picture Proof (2022) and served as a cinematographer for Small Town Universe (expected: 2023) directed by Katie Dellamaggiore.

Alexia Biafore Burge – Assistant Director of Human Resources, The Thrasher Group

Alexia has been working in Human Resources for the past 12 years in various roles and industries. Alexia received her bachelor's degree in business management with an emphasis in Human Resources, along with a master's degree in Industrial Relations from WVU. She is currently the Assistant Director of Human Resources at The Thrasher Group, Inc., based out of Bridgeport, West Virginia. Alexia specializes in talent development, employee engagement, and optimizing recruitment processes to identify top talent.

April Campbell – Executive Director, HRDF

April is a dedicated Workforce Development Professional with over 8 years of experience leading programs that connect individuals to meaningful employment and training opportunities. She specializes in building strong partnerships with employers, training providers, and community organizations to drive economic growth and workforce readiness.

Jonathon Compton – Assistant Director of Workforce Development, Workforce WV

Born and raised in West Virginia, and a WVU graduate, Jonathon brings a deep understanding of the unique struggles West Virginians face when seeking employment opportunities and furthering their education. He previously served as State Monitor Advocate overseeing farmworker rights and protections throughout the state, and has a strong relationship with many businesses and state agencies from his time in that position. In his current role as Assistant Director of Workforce Development, Jonathon works closely with the local workforce development boards in conjunction with the Department of Labor to facilitate WIOA funded projects and programs throughout the state. Additionally, Jonathan and his team coordinate WorkForce WV's dislocated worker grants, the state's Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, and various other workforce development projects and initiatives.

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Marjorie Darrah – School of Mathematical Sciences and Data Professor, WVU

Marjorie has 25 years of experience teaching at the university level, and has led three National Science Foundation projects connecting students and teachers to cutting edge technology and making a smooth pathway to IT careers. She also has expertise in project evaluation and has conducted over 25 project evaluations, specializing in evaluation of educational technologies and educational programs. Before coming to WVU, she was the Director of the Computer Sciences Group for the West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation and also taught ten years at a small private WV University, where she served as the Chair of the Natural Sciences Division. More recently her education research is related to the mitigation of math anxiety in students and determining factors that facilitate rural, first-generation STEM student success.

Margaret Falletta – Design and First2 Communications, High Rocks

Margaret first became involved with High Rocks in 2010 as a summer intern and after that served for various periods of time as an AmeriCorps member, staff member, and board member at High Rocks. She rejoined the staff of High Rocks full-time in 2023 and serves as a member of the First2 Network backbone team, co-chairs the First2 communication team, and oversees design projects for both First2 and High Rocks. She has experience working in both non-profit and higher education professional settings and she loves being able to inform people locally, regionally, and nationally about the important and transformational work being done at High Rocks and through the First2 Network.

Zornitsa Georgieva – Senior Director of Research: Division of Research and Analysis, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Zornitsa Georgieva is the Senior Director of Research in the Division of Research and Analysis at the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. She started at the agency as a College Access and Success Research and Policy Analyst. Her professional experience includes working for a federal GEAR UP and TRIO program where she worked with first-generation and low-income students ensuring that they successfully navigate the higher education system. Additionally, she has experience with program evaluation and higher education student retention and completion and her work has been focused on expanding student postsecondary opportunities and success in higher education.

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Grace Geraghty – Service Intern, High Rocks: High Rocks Academy

Grace first came to High Rocks in the summer of 2022 as an AmeriCorps summer intern for High Rocks Academy's two camps for teenage girls. She returned the next summer to serve as an intern again, and in the summer of 2024 she worked as a teacher at both camps. Grace's love for the state and the community she served led her to move to West Virginia last fall where she served as an AmeriCorps member; she has now transitioned to working as a Service Intern with High Rocks Academy. In her time with High Rocks, Grace has gained invaluable experience and skills in working with young people, facilitating educational classes and workshops, doing community outreach, and organizing community events.

Jennifer Grossman – Director of Research and Analysis, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Dr. Jennifer Grossman is the Director of Research and Analysis for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, where she leads research on statewide postsecondary education efforts. Prior to this role, Jennifer led the research and evaluation of WV's federal GEAR UP grant, whose goals are to increase the state's college-going rate and to improve student success in college. Jennifer has over 20 years of experience in measurement and evaluation. She holds a doctorate and a master's degree in measurement, statistics and evaluation from Columbia University, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Barnard College.

Jacob Hannah – Chief Executive Officer, Coalfield Development

Jacob has served as Coalfield Development's CEO since January 2024. Previously, Jacob held the role of Chief Conservation Officer at Coalfield Development since 2018. With 3 generations of coal mining in his family, and a 5th generation West Virginian, Jacob integrates an empathetic and grounded approach to the strategy of triple-bottom line sustainability; balancing People, Planet, and Prosperity in harmony with each other with a lens towards a fair and just transition. Jacob's background intersects the throughline of environmental considerations with social wellbeing and economic development. Jacob has consulted on Just Transition principles at The White House, The World Bank, and the Clean Energy Ministerial. He holds a bachelor's degree as a first-generation graduate in the study of Sustainability Management from Bucknell University, and an associate's degree in Business Administration from Garrett College.

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Josiah Hannah – Community Impact Director, Coalfield Development

A Wayne County WV native, Josiah is a graduate of Garrett College and Bucknell University where he specialized in nonprofit management, community development, and social sustainability. He worked in the field of social work for three years prior to coming to Coalfield Development.

Deb Harris – Manager, West Virginia Schools of Diversion & Transition (WVSDT) Reentry Programs and Jobs & Hope WV

Deb leads a team of thirty staff members who help individuals facing barriers to reentering the workforce by providing resources such as career training, high school equivalency, and career employment. Deb has extensive experience in assisting students and individuals with various challenges. Prior to her current role, she worked as a TANF and Peer Counselor at Bridge Valley Community and Technical College, where she supported students on academic probation and those needing state benefits to complete their education. In recognition of her outstanding work, Deb received the YWCA Women of Achievement Empowerment Award in 2020 and was appointed to the West Virginia Workforce Development Board in 2023. She holds a master's degree in Adult Continuing Education and Evaluation from Marshall University, a bachelor's degree in Leadership and Rehabilitation from West Virginia State, and an associate degree in Behavioral Health Addictions from Bridge Valley CTC.

Erica Harvey – Abelina Suarez Professor Emerita, Fairmont State University

Erica is one of the founding Principal Investigators (PIs) for the First2 Network and has been helping to support the Network's sustainability efforts, Improvement Science Team, and data gathering efforts this year. A chemistry professor for 34 years, she championed student-centered learning and led grant-funded projects focused on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) student persistence, online learning communities, and renewable energy research. Though retired from teaching, she continues her work at Fairmont State University on sustainability and student success initiatives, including the transition to careers.

Sue Ann Heatherly

Sue Ann is one of the founding Principal Investigators (PIs) for the First2 Network. She recently retired from being the Senior Education Officer at the Green Bank Observatory,

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where she led STEM education initiatives since 1987. Her work focused on engaging teachers, students, and the public in hands-on scientific research through programs such as teacher workshops, student camps, and research efforts like the Pulsar Search Collaboratory and First2 Network Internships. She began her career as a classroom science teacher and was inspired to shift into informal science education after participating in a transformative workshop at the Observatory in 1987. Over the past three decades, she has developed and led programs that provide authentic research experiences, helping to make science more accessible and inspiring to diverse audiences.

Emily Helton

Emily holds a PhD in Educational Research and Practice from West Virginia University, and has worked in STEM education for 13 years. She carried out the technical design of the automated improvement science workflow, with weekly input from First2 Improvement Science Team members.

Emily Huguenin – Director of Talent Attraction & Retention for the Brad and Alys Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative, WVU

Emily leads the Ascend WV program as its director and oversees the growing First Ascent program as well as other talent attraction and retention initiatives. She comes with a wealth of experience in team leadership and program development, successfully spearheading the expansion of Ascend WV and First Ascent over the last three years. Emily has been playing in the Mountain State most of her life and began her pursuit of outdoor education as a career in 2006 while guiding adventure trips in the New River Gorge. Whether it is trail running, caving, foraging or backpacking, she is passionate about helping others find quality of life through outdoor recreation while building up communities throughout the state.

Erin Hurst – Erin Hurst Photography

Erin is the gal behind the camera at Erin Hurst Photography based in Charleston, WV and Lewisburg, WV. Learn more about her work and services at erinhurstphotography.com.

Clifton Jackson – Director of Economic and Workforce Development, Fairmont State University

Clifton is lead of the Core Executive Team for the ARC project, has diverse experience in IT,

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healthcare, education, and business, and is “passionate about helping people find the career and life path they are supposed to be on.”

Bradlee Jordan – One Stop Coordinator, HRDF

Bradlee Jordan is in his second year of being a One Stop Coordinator. He previously worked at Job Corps and in Special Education. He focuses on building strong partnerships with organizations to provide training and employment to those in need.

Eric King – Research Supervisor, AVN

Eric is a Research Supervisor, responsible for managing the analytical group resources, and an organic chemist that joined AVN in 2011. Prior to his current role, he was a chemist, research chemist, and principal chemist. He has been a Kanawha Scholar, a West Virginia University Leadership Scholar, a Moore Scholar, a John H. Stohl Scholar, a 2020 and 2021 Ohio-State ASC Match Mentor, a 2019 Ohio-State University STEM Scholars Academy Advisor, a part of the American Chemical Society Science Coaches Program, a WV First2 Network Contributor, a ACS Project SEED Mentor, a WV SPOT (Science Public Outreach Team) Steering Committee Team Member, a Volunteer Judge for STaR Symposium WVSU 2012, and a part of the West Virginia State University Outside Committee on Curriculum. He has a bachelor of science and ACS Certified Chemistry degree from West Virginia University and a Ph.D. in Physical Organic Chemistry as well as post-doctoral experience from the Ohio State University. Eric serves as an Industry Advisory Board member for the First2 Network.

Madhura Kulkarni – Director of the Center for Integrative Natural Science and Mathematics (CINSAM) and Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, Northern Kentucky University

Dr. Madhura Kulkarni is director of Northern Kentucky University's Center for Integrative Natural Science and Mathematics and an Associate Professor of Biological Sciences. She is PI of NKU's NSF-funded TRUE ACCESS project, which is a dissemination partner with the First2 project. As part of this project, she has served as a faculty co-mentor for two groups of student co-mentors, which has been a very educational and fulfilling experience. She has also worked closely with First2 personnel on an INCLUDES Connector proposal to officially bring NKU and other Kentucky institutions into the First2 Network. Exchanging ideas and practices with First2 partners has been enormously helpful and she is happy to be coming back for her second First2 Network conference.

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Cree Lahti – WV Jobs Network Coordinator, High Rocks

Cree, a native West Virginian, is passionate about helping people find good jobs that allow them to live and thrive in the state. She holds a B.A. in Communication from Antioch College, an M.A. in Higher Education Administration from West Virginia University, and an M.S. in Library and Information Science from the University of North Texas, and her diverse career includes roles ranging from library director in Pocahontas County to ESL teacher in Istanbul and outdoor educator in the Monongahela National Forest.

Ty Landis – WVU Student Director, First2 Network

Ty is a first-generation STEM student who was interested in advocacy and community outreach coming into college. He learned about the First2 Network through the Research Apprenticeship Program at WVU during his first year of college; this introduced him to a wide community of other students who were working collaboratively to uplift others in the STEM community. He has since become a co-leader of the WVU Listserv change idea.

Dave Lavender – Coordinator, WV Film Office and Apprenticeships with WV Department of Economic Development

David is a veteran entertainment reporter who has worked across five states in print, broadcast, and digital media, including writing for NPR Music. Author of two travel books, he's leading the reboot of the West Virginia Film Office. His screen credits include portraying Devil Anse Hatfield in a History Channel documentary narrated by Kevin Costner. Lavender, who won Marshall University's 2019 Cultural Ambassador Award, serves on multiple nonprofit boards. He is board president of "Hope in the Hills," producer of Healing Appalachia—the world's largest recovery-based music festival. He also serves on the boards of the Huntington CVB, the Mayor's Council for the Arts, the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation's narrative change committee, and the Tamarack Foundation's creative network.

Andy Malinoski – Director of Communications, West Virginia Department of Commerce

Andy Malinoski leads the Office of Marketing and Communications for the West Virginia Department of Commerce, supporting a wide range of agencies across state government—including economic development, homeland security, and others—through strategic media relations, social media, and content creation. He also manages the #YesWV Advocacy Network and daily304.com, key platforms showcasing the many great things happening in

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West Virginia to audiences near and far. With nearly 30 years of experience spanning telecommunications, media, healthcare, insurance, marketing, and communications, Andy brings a seasoned, adaptable approach to every challenge and opportunity. A native of Follansbee, Andy is a proud graduate of West Virginia University and now resides in Charleston, WV.

Samantha Mitchell – First2 Student Coordinator, High Rocks

Samantha, a Pocahontas County native and longtime participant in High Rocks, holds a B.S. in Business Administration with a focus on Accounting and an M.A. in Public Administration from West Virginia University. She has worked as a Financial Analyst on government contracts, co-owned her own business, and served on the High Rocks Board of Directors before joining the staff. Currently, she coordinates college students statewide through the First2 Network.

Michelle Morrison – Senior Director of Student Engagement for Marshall Online, Marshall University

Michelle grew up in southern WV and is a Marshall graduate with a bachelor's in social work and master's in counseling. She spent the early part of her career working in the non-profit and government sectors and later transitioned to higher education. She has since served at multiple institutions in various roles. With over a decade of dedicated service in higher education, she brings a wealth of experience in admissions, recruiting, retention, student engagement, and student success initiatives. Michelle has actively contributed to the advancement of best practices in higher education, leveraging her expertise to enhance the recruitment process, bolster retention efforts, and cultivate meaningful student engagement strategies. Her career highlights include sharing her knowledge and expertise on a national platform. As a presenter at prestigious conferences such as NASPA and UPCEA, she engages with fellow professionals, sharing insights, and contributing to the broader discourse surrounding student success and equity in education. She is also a certified academic life coach.

Cinthia Pacheco – Director of Undergraduate Research, West Virginia University

Cinthia holds a B.S. in Dentistry, as well as master's and Ph.D. degrees in Pharmacology, all from the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Brazil. She has also served as a visiting scientist at the University of Pennsylvania (UPENN) and the University of Pittsburgh (PITT).

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Her passion for research began early in her life as an undergraduate student participating in a research program. During her 16-year tenure as a professor of Dentistry, she sought to create similar research opportunities for undergraduates, recognizing the profound impact research can have on their lives and future careers. Currently, as the Director of UGR, Cinthia is dedicated to continuously increasing the participation of both students and faculty mentors in undergraduate research.

Van Preston – Service Intern, High Rocks: The Hub Cafe

Van first encountered High Rocks in 2010, when his father became an AmeriCorps member in service with the program. After years of involvement as a participant of High Rocks, Van later served as a student manager and barista at The Hub Cafe in Lewisburg, WV, an AmeriCorps member at High Rocks Academy summer camps and The Hub, and now works as a service intern with High Rocks. He is focused on community outreach and event organization, and uses his creativity in the arts and love of education to host weekly songwriting and art workshops at The Hub Cafe.

Lauren Prinzo – Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist in Community and Economic Development, WVU

Lauren is a member of the West Virginia Entrepreneurship Ecosystem team and serves as the chair of the Youth Entrepreneurship Committee. Lauren's work in this area includes statewide initiatives focused on innovation, entrepreneurship, and workforce and community development.

Chris Rich – State Labor Market Analyst, Workforce WV

Chris Rich is the State Labor Market Analyst for Workforce West Virginia, where he transforms raw labor market data into actionable insights for workforce planning and policy. Before moving to West Virginia, he served for eight years as the Regional Economist for Eastern Oregon with the Oregon Employment Department. Chris holds a degree in Economics from Eastern Washington University and has built his career around making data and research accessible, understandable, and impactful. He's delivered nearly 50 presentations and authored over 100 reports and articles on topics ranging from employment dynamics and workforce trends to economic development and regional industry composition. His work focuses on connecting data to real-world decisions, and he enjoys helping others make sense of complex economic information.

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Michelle Richards-Babb – Professor and Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies for the C. Eugene Bennett Department of Chemistry

Michelle earned an ACS-certified B.S. in Chemistry from Ursinus College (1986) and a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Lehigh University (1993). She arrived at West Virginia University as a Postdoctoral Fellow (1993-1994) for Dr. Lane Wilson and Dr. Nar Dalal. She transitioned to teaching large enrollment chemistry courses and then into a faculty position with research in chemical education, particularly the freshmen chemistry learning experience, undergraduate research and STEM outreach. She was the recipient of a 2013/2014 Eberly College Outstanding Teacher Award.

Sarah Riley – Executive Director, High Rocks

Sarah, a Pocahontas County native and Harvard graduate with honors in history, co-founded High Rocks with her mother Susan Burt in 1996 and has been a driving force behind its growth through teaching, fundraising, and leadership ever since. Her impactful work has earned her numerous accolades, including the Helen Lewis Community Service Award, WV Wonder Woman recognition, the Zenith Award, the WV Red Wagon Award, and the Power of Performance Award. She is a Principal Investigator (PI) for the First2 Network and provides backbone leadership for the WV Jobs Network.

Maribeth Saleem-Tanner – Workforce Strategist for WV Jobs Network, High Rocks

Maribeth first came to High Rocks in 2002 as an AmeriCorps VISTA, unknowingly planting roots in what would become her forever home in Appalachia. Since then, she has held various roles—including Co-Director and Development Manager at High Rocks, project assistant for the Pocahontas Communications Cooperative, and leadership positions in civic engagement and food initiatives—while also earning a master's in conflict transformation from Eastern Mennonite University. Now serving as the West Virginia Jobs Network Workforce Strategist, Maribeth remains deeply committed to the transformative power of collaboration and community.

Rodney Sanders – Director of Technical Centers, Mountwest Community and Technical College

Rodney serves as the Director of Technical Centers at Mountwest Community and Technical College. He has worked at Marshall University as the Coordinator for Work-Integrated Education and Learning and as a Communication Systems Manager in the

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Office of Admissions; he was also an academic advisor for the Lewis College of Business. Rodney is a three-time graduate of Marshall University, where he earned an Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree in curriculum and instruction, a M.S. in Adult Education, and a Regent's Bachelor of Arts. Rodney is passionate about working with students and believes that experiential learning is crucial to a student's success.

Lorrie Smith – State Workforce Resiliency Officer, WV State Government and Director, Jobs & Hope WV

Lorrie Smith was appointed to head the new State Workforce Resiliency Office in 2022. Smith brings 26 years of workforce development, job training, and related experience on behalf of the State to the role. She also directs the Jobs & Hope West Virginia program, which offers support through a statewide collaboration of agencies providing West Virginians the opportunity to obtain career training and remove other barriers to job opportunities to ultimately secure meaningful employment. Smith also previously served as the Governor-appointed Director of the West Virginia Center for Professional Development. Smith earned her bachelor's degree in Business from Glenville State University and her master's in Business from Missouri State University.

Mary Ellen Sullivan – First2 Improvement Science Coach and Data Analyst

Mary Ellen has been working in education since her early college days. She has masters degrees in Educational Research Methodology (Pitt) and Special Education (Fairmont State). She has worked in schools and nonprofits and as a private education consultant and tutor. She joined the First2 Network in 2022 when the Improvement Science Team was just getting started. As an Improvement Science Coach and Data Analyst for the team, she continues to contribute to its pool of resources on change idea testing using plan-do-study-act cycles.

Craig Thomas – Regional Quality Manager, Syensqo

Craig Thomas is an accomplished professional with 20 years of experience in chemical research and manufacturing. He currently serves as the Regional Quality Manager at Syensqo in Willow Island, WV. Craig holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from West Liberty University and a Master of Science in Chemistry from West Virginia University. Throughout his career, he has held diverse roles that span the full spectrum of chemical manufacturing and quality assurance, including Manufacturing Excellence Leader,

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GMP/Quality Manager, Operations Engineer, Process Chemist, QC Laboratory Manager, and Analytical Chemist.

Carrie White - Vice President for Academic Affairs, Belmont College

Carrie is the Chair of the West Virginia Entrepreneurship Ecosystem "Talent" committee and a co-founder of Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Experts (E3). She has over 20 years of experience developing and teaching entrepreneurship curriculum including through her previous role as the Director of the WVU Launch Lab.

Deana White - Executive Director, West Virginia Alliance for STEM and the Arts and Board Member, First2 Network

Deana has a BS in Chemical Engineering from the University of Kentucky and worked at a refinery/petrochemical plant in various roles including process design and environmental/safety compliance, and in various ways from full-time to part-time to contracting. She recently advocated for the Green Bank Observatory during recent NSF funding decisions with the public and key members of Congress. She now dedicates her time to working on education projects including leading a STEM and the Arts Film Festival, co-developing a web-based learning game platform called STEAM Trek, and developing other programs that promote curiosity and engagement in STEM and the Arts.

Thank You to Our Presenters!

We appreciate you all sharing your expertise and insights.



CO-CONFERENCE EVALUATION