EARN
Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability

EARN Webinar:
Building Skills and Advancing Career Pathways: Mentoring Disabled Apprentices
December 16, 2026

Featured Speakers

Deborah Williamson, Ph.D



Vice President

Institute for Workplace Skills and Innovation America (IWSI America)

Deborah Williamson is a workforce and education leader with extensive experience in juvenile justice, apprenticeship, and education policy. She spent nearly 25 years with the Kentucky Court of Justice, serving in senior leadership roles, including general manager of Juvenile Services and secretary of Judicial Branch Education. During her tenure, she helped develop innovative juvenile justice policies, community-based intervention programs, and statewide education initiatives for the judiciary.

Deborah earned a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Kentucky, specializing in crime, deviance, and education policy, and served as an adjunct sociology professor for nearly two decades. She has published and presented nationally and internationally on justice, civic education, and youth development.

Her career later expanded into workforce development, where she served as director of Kentucky's Apprenticeship Program and director of Labor Relations for New Mexico's Workforce Solutions Department. She is currently vice president of the Institute for Workplace Skills and Innovation America (IWSI America), overseeing youth apprenticeship and workforce initiatives that create pathways to education, employment, and long-term success for young people.

Ellice Switzer

Senior Extension Associate

Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability



Ellice is a senior extension associate for the K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability. In this role, she leads projects designed to promote disability in the workplace, conducts program evaluations, and provides national technical assistance and training on topics related to disability and employment and U.S. disability policy. Ellice develops content and conducts trainings for EARN. Her areas of focus include employer efforts to support disability employment, demand-side strategies to improve employer engagement among disability service providers, disability employment policy, and evidence-based practices to support post-school success for youth with disabilities.

The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability (EARN) is a resource for employers seeking to recruit, hire, retain, and advance qualified employees with disabilities. This publication is fully funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) under cooperative agreement No. 23475OD000002-01-00 with Cornell University. The total five-year cost of this agreement amounts to $11,000,000. This document does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.