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## Aligning Incentives to Build a Skilled Technical Workforce

By: Sujai Shivakumar



The United States needs a skilled technical workforce to remain competitive in the global economy and to ensure that its workers participate in the nation's economic growth. As a nation, we make substantial public and private investments in achieving a broad range of education and training goals, spending an estimated \$618 billion on public K-12 education and an additional \$701.5 billion on postsecondary education and training each year. Even so, questions remain of whether

the U.S. supply of skilled technical workers in various sectors and regions adequately meets demand now and in the foreseeable future.

We also have rigorous evidence that the returns on investments in technical skills in the labor market are strong when students successfully complete their training and gain credentials sought by employers. At the same time, in many instances, we find that workers either are not taking advantage of these opportunities or are failing to complete their training programs.

To understand these puzzles, it is necessary to recognize that in the United States, the responsibility for developing and sustaining a skilled technical workforce is fragmented

*Continued on page 2*

### NAWDP Member Profile



#### Jodi McNamara

##### How did you get started in Workforce Development?

I started working in workforce development officially in 2012, when I was offered a job as a Career Coach for WIA Youth through a contractor, Henkels & McCoy. In 2015 the Board of CareerSource Research Coast asked me to join their administrative team to oversee all youth programs. Prior to

2012 I worked with at-risk youth in a variety of programs and always found myself trying to help them seek employment, so workforce development seemed like a natural fit for me. At the beginning of 2017, I decided to go into business for myself as a Consultant for at-risk youth programs. I still regularly work for CareerSource Research Coast on a variety of youth-focused initiatives and I love every minute of it.

##### What do you value most about your NAWDP membership?

I value the ability to network with other workforce development professionals in my field and I also really enjoy the NAWDP Youth Summit.

##### If you could give one piece of advice to a new workforce development professional, what would it be?

Don't be afraid of barriers. Sometimes the clients with the most barriers turn into your greatest success stories. When I was 18, I met three of the WIOA Youth barriers (offender, pregnant, and in foster care). If no one had taken a chance on me because of my barriers my path would have been so different and I wouldn't be able to devote myself to helping at-risk youth find their path to success.

# NAWDP

National Association  
of Workforce  
Development  
Professionals

## Aligning Incentives to Build a Skilled Technical Workforce

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across many groups, including educators; students; workers; employers; the federal, state, and local governments and the programs they fund; labor organizations; and civic associations. For the system to work well, these groups need to be able to coordinate and cooperate successfully with each other.

**Unlike most other advanced economies, the United States lacks formal mechanisms that require governments, educators, labor representatives, and employers to coordinate on workforce development policies and practices at the national level.** In fact, workforce development in the United States is polycentric in nature, driven by a variety of private and public investments in workforce education and training. These investments are shaped by a complex and uncoordinated set of policies associated with achieving divergent goals related to economic development, education, employment, public safety, health and human services, and veterans' affairs.

While these goals are each worthwhile, they also can unintentionally raise the costs and lower the returns to investments in education and training. For example, the diversity of state and local credentialing and licensing requirements increases the costs of preparing for and entering skilled technical jobs, and makes it more difficult and costly for workers

to move from one job to another or from one location to another.

In this polycentric system, making better use of available resources and generating better outcomes requires improving coordination between students and educational or training institutions, between secondary and postsecondary institutions, and especially between training institutions and employers through a variety of public, private, and hybrid mechanisms.

In this regard, standardizing credentials would provide certainty to employers and workers about the value of the credentials. The evidence suggests that efforts to ensure that education and training accomplishments and licenses transfer across education and training programs, employers, industries, and geographic boundaries can reduce the costs of education and training and improve returns on investment.

**A committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has recently released a report, Building America's Skilled Technical Workforce, which diagnoses the many challenges of cooperation inhibiting a better return on investments in education and training by students, workers, employers, and state and national governments.** It finds that integrating academic education, technical

training, and hands-on work experience improves outcomes for students in secondary and postsecondary education and for skilled technical workers in different career stages.

The report calls on state and federal policy makers to support and enhance strategies that help students complete their training for the skilled technical workforce. It encourages efforts of local workforce boards to harmonize key features related to the quality, portability, and labor market value of credentials. In addition, it recommends that public policies should ensure that stakeholders, including students, workers, employers, and educational organizations have the right incentives to improve the quality of technical education and training, encourage experimentation and collaboration, and improve the collection and use of relevant information.

Those interested in reading the full report this article is based on, can download it at <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/23472/building-americas-skilled-technical-workforce>

*Sujai Shivakumar is the staff director of the National Academies' study of The Supply Chain for Middle-Skill Jobs. He also directs the Academies' Innovation Policy Forum, a focal point for a national and international dialogue on innovation policy.*

## The Solar Industry: Job Opportunities Abound

By: Terri Bergman, CWDP: MS



There were more than 51,000 new solar jobs in the United States in 2016, and employers are having difficulty finding the skilled workers they need:

- There are not enough individuals applying for jobs in the solar industry. Half of solar firms report a shortage of applicants.
- Employers are having the most difficulty finding candidates with adequate soft skills, as well as some form of hands-on electrical, roofing, or construction experience.

These deficiencies are having a negative effect on the solar industry. Sixty-five percent (65%) of solar employers reports that difficulty finding qualified workers has led to increased costs. Sixty-eight percent (68%) reports that it impacts their ability to grow. Some solar employers calculate that the recruitment costs and opportunity costs of delayed hiring amount to more than \$10,000 for each open position.

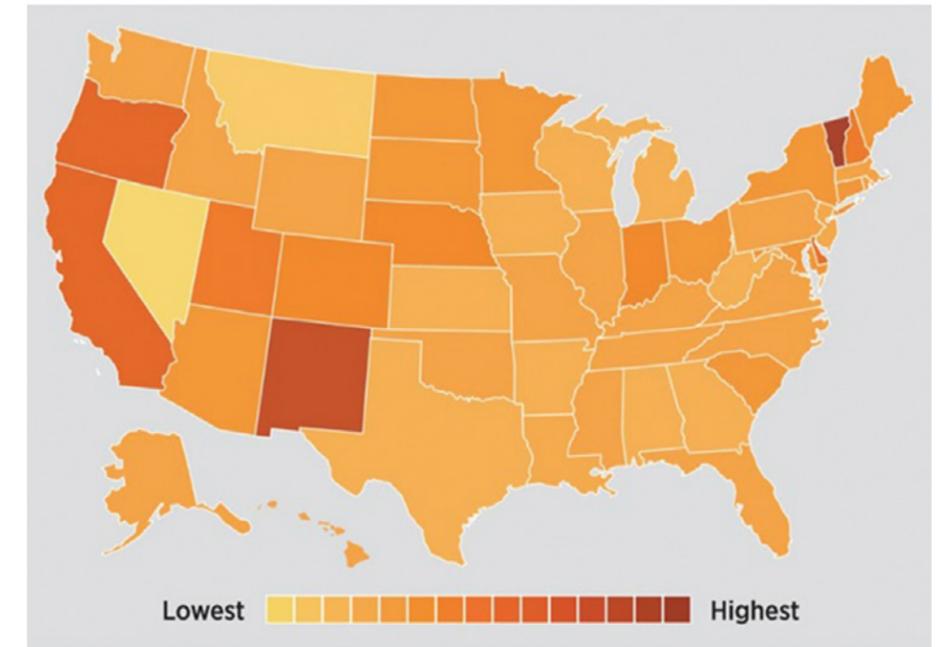
Post-hire training is important, too. On average, companies that invest more in post-hire training have lower installation labor costs. With continued and expanded investments in training, solar companies have the potential for increased labor efficiencies and decreased callbacks (i.e. returning to job sites to re-install or correct site errors) that could save the industry more than \$10 million annually.

**According to Andrea Luecke, President and Executive Director of The Solar Foundation,** "making strategic investments in training can help the industry save millions of dollars and ultimately pass the reduced costs on to consumers."

Benefits from training extend well beyond the firm. When qualified applicants do join the solar industry as entry-level solar installers, there are staggering opportunities for rapid advancement and pay raises, likely to try and reduce turnover. Most solar installers say that their entry-level installers were typically promoted at least once within a six-to-12-month period, and saw an average increase in pay of 45 percent after promotion.

These statistics, should make you, as a workforce development professional, interested in supporting your local solar industry and

TOP STATES WITH DEMAND FOR SOLAR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



suggesting that your job clients consider a career in solar. A good place for you to start is a visit to the Solar Training Network's website (<http://www.solartrainingusa.org/>). This website is an online solar career platform that connects solar employers, solar trainers, solar job seekers, and the workforce development system.

Check the website out and encourage solar employers and trainers that you know to sign up and create a profile. Have your job clients visit, and if they think they might want to work in solar, encourage them to sign up and create a profile as well. If you are a workforce board, register as a member yourself. Workforce boards should join so that they can communicate with solar employers, trainers, and job seekers, and publicize the services they have to offer these groups. When you register you'll be put on the interactive map so people and companies will know where they can find help.

More information is available on the solar industry's training needs in the research report *Solar Training and Hiring Insights 2017* (<http://www.solartrainingusa.org/research/>), which provides information on U.S. solar training, hiring practices, and market trends. The report aggregates and analyzes data from several research efforts, including an extensive survey of more than 400 solar installers; in-depth case studies of 10 solar installation firms; interviews with dozens of solar employers, trainers, and

workforce development boards; and The Solar Foundation's *National Solar Jobs Census* series (<http://www.thesolarfoundation.org/national/>).

The report also provides a state-by-state demand index that helps decision makers predict which states are most likely to need the most additional workforce development resources in the coming years. (see accompanying map). This map may be especially helpful for workforce development professionals in determining where to improve training and workforce development, but remember that solar growth is still expected nationwide.

The Solar Training Network is administered by The Solar Foundation and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative. The Network helps meet the workforce needs of the solar industry through solar training and strategic employment partnerships.

*Terri Bergman is director of research and programs at the National Association of Workforce Boards and interim manager of certification at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals. She has been a member of NAWDP since its inception in 1988. She can be reached at [bergmant@nawb.org](mailto:bergmant@nawb.org).*

Does your  
**NAWDP**  
membership  
expire in  
**June 2017?**



If so, now is the time to renew. Look for your renewal notice in your office or home mailboxes based on the address you provided us.

## Congratulations, NEPs!

The NAWDP New and Emerging Professionals (NEP) Initiative announces the 2017-2018 cohort.

Lindsey Almond  
Angelica Hernandez  
Keidrian Kunkel  
Courtney Popp  
Kristen Thorton  
Rebecca Toolsie

Maryland  
Arizona  
South Carolina  
Colorado  
Hawaii  
Florida

*Join us in congratulating them!*

# Congratulations! 2017 NAWDP Advancing the Profession Awards Program

## Pamela Nabors

Recipient

2017 Peter E. Kaiser Leadership Award



Pamela Nabors is President and CEO of the second largest Regional Workforce Board in the state of Florida -- CareerSource Central Florida. Always one to embrace a challenge, Pam led the agency through both

significant reputation repair, as well as a complete financial and operational overhaul in her first year on the job, in 2012. Pam's vision is focused on making Central Florida the best destination for talent. To accomplish that vision, she is leading CareerSource Central Florida through a corporate culture renaissance, championing regional partnerships and tailoring service delivery through a concierge approach that meets the talent needs of businesses.

With 20+ years of experience in workforce development and leadership, Pam's career

progression spans roles from college career counselor, industry trainer, and training manager to planning director. Prior to joining CareerSource Central Florida, Pam directed program operations for Capital Workforce Partners, the Workforce Investment Board in Hartford, Conn., and worked as workforce planning director for Brevard Workforce Development Board in Cocoa. She has also taught both undergraduate and graduate courses in career development, human resources, and psychology.

Pam earned the Certified Workforce Development Professional (CWDP) credential with a Management endorsement from the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP). She is often invited to serve on executive search panels for colleges and workforce agencies, as well as review grant proposals for federal labor programs and national associations. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in English from the State University of New York College at Buffalo (which could partially explain her unwavering support of the

Buffalo Bills), and a Master's Degree in Personnel Psychology from Florida Institute of Technology.

Pam is relentless in her commitment to innovation and talent development for the Central Florida community and the national workforce development system. She has been recognized for this passion by several partner organizations. Capital Workforce Partners named her Employee of the Year in 2008, or the "hardest working woman in workforce development". More recently, she was honored as one of the Orlando Business Journal's "Women Who Mean Business" Executives of the Year in 2015, and again as a CEO of the Year in 2016. She was also honored in 2015 by the Girl Scouts of Citrus Council with the Woman of Distinction, Visionary (Courage) Award. Pam is also excited this year to be chosen as a member of Leadership Florida Class XXXVI.

## Marla W. Rye

Recipient

2017 Thomas Ahlers System Building Award



Marla Rye is President and Executive Director of Workforce Essentials, Inc. in Clarksville, TN and holds the title of Executive Director of the North TN Workforce Board. Workforce Essentials provides workforce

and economic development services in 41 counties in Middle and West Tennessee. She holds a Bachelors of Business Administration from Austin Peay State University in Business and Accounting.

Marla has been with Workforce Essentials for nearly 25 years. She has been the recipient of

numerous awards and has been recognized on local, state, and national levels for leadership through community service and economic development.

Her professional memberships and activities include: National Association of Workforce Development Professionals; National Association of Workforce Boards; National Workforce Association; South Eastern Employment and Training; Board of Region III Finance and Administrative Committee; Mid Cumberland Action Agency, Board of Directors; and Clarksville Women's Network.

Her civic and community activities include: Graduate of Leadership Clarksville, Clarksville, TN; Graduate of Leadership Middle TN; Member, AUSA, Association of the United States Army; and APSU Foundation Board.

Additional professional activities include: Tennessee Hospital Association Center for Health Workforce Development Advisory Committee; Member Clarksville Area Chamber of Commerce; Leadership Clarksville Trustee 2010-2011; Leadership Clarksville Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) 2013-2014; CMCSS Foundation Board Member; Austin Peay State University President's Circle of Advisor's 2012-2015; TN College of Applied Technology Advisory Committee 2015-2016; and the Nashville State Workforce and Community Development Advisory Board.

## Michael Lawrence

Recipient

2017 H.G. Weisman Award



Michael "Mike" Lawrence is a Maryland-based workforce development consultant who is currently serving as the Interim Executive Director of NAWDP.

He assumed the role in January and will guide the organization until a permanent executive director is selected, and onboarded.

Mike brings nearly four decades of diverse experience in the workforce development field. His experience includes: leading three

local workforce development boards; engaging workforce development within higher education and economic development; and consulting in related capacities to assist local, regional, and state organizations with project management, innovative program design, and transitioning to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Working with Coffey Consulting, Mike has assisted with U.S. Department of Labor H1B and REO projects. He has also assisted numerous State and Local Workforce Investment Boards, and American Job Centers in aligning their personnel and resources. With the National Association of Workforce Boards and Rutgers University Center for Women and Work, assisted in a Lumina funded project to align Adult College Completion with the public workforce system.

At Penn State University, Mike was the Director of Workforce Development Initiatives in the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. Prior to that, Mike was the Workforce Investment Board director for the North Central Workforce Investment Board and the Private Industry Council Director prior to that.

Mike holds a Bachelor of Science in Education from Clarion University of Pennsylvania and completed coursework at Penn State University in the Masters of Science in Workforce Education with emphasis in Human Resources and Training.

## Michelle Blanchard

Recipient

2017 NAWDP Professional Development Award



Michelle Blanchard, General Manager and Director of Adult Online Education for Dynamic Works Institute, has over 12 years' experience in Workforce Development, seven of which have been in a leadership role. Her operational

experience including WIA/WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker, Non-Custodial Parent, TANF and Employer Services programming have been influential in the growth of workforce operations and the development of workforce professionals throughout Southeastern Wisconsin. She obtained her Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from University-Wisconsin-Parkside. While completing her undergraduate education, Michelle worked on a National Science Foundation Grant where she led a team of research assistants studying the underrepresentation of women in IT majors.

As a result of this research, Michelle was a co-author on scholarly journal articles, conference publications and was a published contributor to the book, Women and Information Technology: Research on Underrepresentation. She went on to complete her Master of Science Degree in Administrative Leadership from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Michelle entered into the workforce industry as a Case Manager with Goodwill Industries in Kenosha, WI. From there, Michelle moved into a Career Coach position with Kaiser Group in Milwaukee, WI. Her career with Kaiser Group opened up many opportunities, a Trainer role, where she designed, developed and facilitated curriculum on soft and job search skills, Medical Terminology, Retail and Customer Service, and Community-Based Residential Facilities for TANF participants. Her passion for teaching, training and learning led her to several leadership roles with Kaiser Group, now Dynamic Workforce Solutions, where she was able to positively influence not only the lives of the career seekers served, but her staff as well.

In 2013, Michelle merged her experience in Workforce Development with her education to become the General Manager for Dynamic Works Institute. She is now able to positively impact the professional growth of workforce professionals, career seekers, college students, and employer customers nationwide through Dynamic Works training services. She actively works with her team of highly qualified Project Managers, Instructional Designers, Customer Service Representatives, and Subject Matter Experts to consult with customers within and outside of the workforce industry to discover, design and create high-quality eLearning solutions that meet their needs and exceed their expectations.

As General Manager for Dynamic Works Institute, Michelle uses her project management and industry expertise to positively impact training and product development according to customer needs.

# How Would You Answer the Hard Questions About Workforce Development?

By: Larry Robbin



## 1. What do your program participants think of your services?

Just because you help people get jobs does not mean they think you do fantastic work. We should not confuse helping people get jobs with delivering an outstanding customer service experience to them. I have found that less than five percent of workforce organizations do any meaningful gathering of the opinions of program participants. We talk about being employer driven, but what about also being driven by the feedback of our program participants?

## 2. The mantra of the workforce field is high wage high growth sectors.

The irony is that people working in workforce development are in a relatively low-paid, low-growth sector. We do this work to help job seekers and businesses because we care about the well-being of our communities. Not everyone wants to be in a high wage high growth job. People in our field want to be in high contribution high reward jobs. Why isn't public service one of our sectors for job seekers to consider? Why aren't we helping people get into jobs and careers like ours?

## 3. Are your workforce program employees engaged in their jobs?

How do they feel about working in your organization? Are stress, burnout and disengagement problems? Very few workforce organizations use any mechanism to measure staff engagement. We will not know what our employees really think about their jobs and workplaces unless we ask them using anonymous job satisfaction surveys. We also need to use other strategies to get candid feedback from our personnel that can make our program a better, healthier and more productive place to work.

## 4. Why do so few of our business board members hire people from our organizations?

It is interesting to see business people who are board members advocating to other businesses that they should use the services of the workforce system, when in many cases these very board members are not using the services for their own businesses! I know there may be good reasons for this phenomenon. However, are we talking about these reasons so we know they are valid? Is this issue the elephant in the workforce living room?

## 5. We talk about training for job seekers, but what is your workforce organization doing to support professional development?

Now would be the time for organizations to form Regional Staff Capacity Building Collaborations. Training could be bartered among organizations using existing personnel and money could be cooperatively invested in bringing in professional trainers.

## 6. Does your organization have a zero tolerance for unfilled job leads?

We often complain about employers not putting job leads into our system, but many businesses have given us job leads and they went unfilled. The program that got the job lead did not have a match with the people they serve so the job lead

died. Programs should have enough linkages with government, nonprofit, for profit and academic workforce organizations locally and regionally so they can fill every job lead that comes into their system. Do not expect employers to keep putting job leads to a system that cannot fill them. Once we have a system wide effort and a zero tolerance for unfilled job leads, we will see many more employers give us job leads.

## 7. Do you worry about funding for your program and your job?

Are you frustrated by rules and regulations that are barriers to employment? What are you doing about those issues? What are you doing to help support the organizations like National Association of Workforce Development Professionals, National Youth Employment Coalition, National Association of Workforce Boards, National Skills Coalition and other local and national groups that are on the front lines fighting for funding and better policies for our work? If you are not helping to support the organizations that are fighting for you, then you should not complain when funding cuts happen or unworkable policies make your job impossible.

*Larry Robbin, Executive Director of Robbin and Associates, has over 45 years of experience in workforce development. He has done more training for NAWDP than any other individual. For information on his 300 training topics, consulting services, get free job seeker handouts and to sign up for his free newsletter go to [www.LarryRobbin.com](http://www.LarryRobbin.com).*



## Tips:

### Keep Track of Your Membership Number

1. Keep your membership card in an easy-to-find place.
2. Email your membership number to yourself at an address you always have access to.

## Join the National Youth Employment Coalition!

NYEC improves services for the 5 million young people who are out of school and out of work by advancing policy and practice for youth development and employment. Learn more and join our national network of organizations at [www.nyec.org/join-us](http://www.nyec.org/join-us). Organizational memberships start at only \$250.



As an NYEC member you'll receive access to exclusive peer-learning opportunities and convenings, policy analyses, original research on best practices, funding information, and discounted rates at our popular Annual Forum ([www.nyec.org/forum](http://www.nyec.org/forum)).



## PLAN AHEAD!

### JULY 31

CWDP APPLICATIONS – NEXT QUARTERLY DEADLINE

### AUGUST

PEAK VACATION TIME FOR COWORKERS

### SEPTEMBER

Workforce Development Professionals Month

### OCT. 30 - NOV. 1

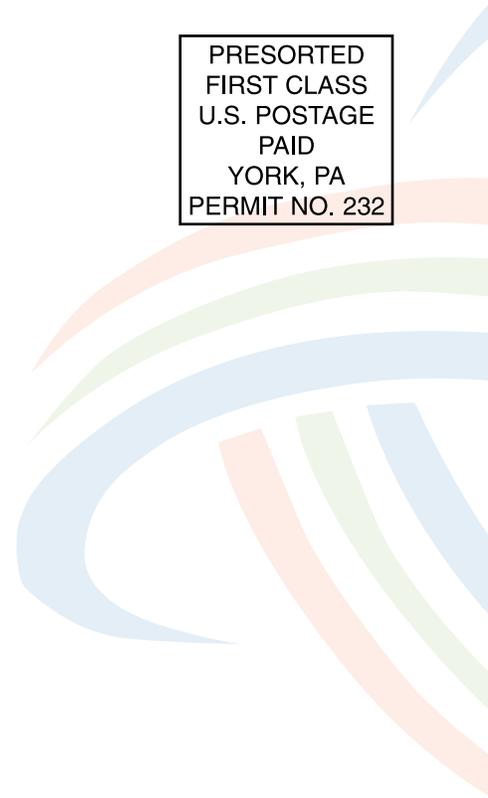
NAWDP 2017 Youth Development Symposium  
(info available late June)



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# The Big Three: Operations, Fiscal and Quality

3-part series

**Dates:** Thursdays June 29, July 6 and July 13  
**Time:** 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. ET  
**Fees:** Member - \$225 | Nonmember - \$255

**PRESENTERS:** Provided by Dynamic Works (DW)

To read the complete session descriptions, visit: [www.nawdp.org](http://www.nawdp.org) (click Training tab).



NAWDP Monthly Webinar

## Session 1: Quality is Everyone's Responsibility

The session will begin with a welcome to the series, an overview of how the webinar will flow and the topics DW will be covering. With the launching of WIOA final regulations this past August and TANF reauthorizations on the horizon, workforce boards, staff and contractors must think about quality in service delivery and workforce programming differently. WIOA states that customers must have access to a seamless system of high-quality services through coordination of programs, WIOA regulations and TANF reauthorization discussions place an emphasis on high-quality, innovative education and training opportunities through the Local Workforce Board and One Stop Centers.

## Session 2: Quality Systems

This session will introduce a general overview of quality systems, such as Six Sigma or ISO 9001, which DW is certified and qualified to present, and discuss how the usage of the quality concepts impact workforce quality measures. By gathering and sharing relevant data, root causes can be determined and tools and strategies that influence quality can be effectively implemented.

## Session 3: Continuous Improvement

Once a new process or system is launched, the "Big Three" should remain vigilant in looking at ways to develop the system further. By not only looking at ways to continuously improve service delivery through work design, but also through the culture of an organization, employees, customers, efficiencies and outcomes are positively affected.

Space is limited. To register, visit: [www.nawdp.org](http://www.nawdp.org).