

REGION 8/CAPND CONFERENCE SPEAKER GUIDE

July 28-30, 2026

Savanna Arral

Staff Attorney | CAPLAW

Savanna Arral is a Staff Attorney at CAPLAW, where she advises Community Action Agencies nationwide on legal matters including corporate governance, federal grant compliance, and tax-exempt law.

Prior to joining CAPLAW, Savanna was an associate at Ropes & Gray LLP, where she advised public and private companies, institutional investors, and strategic organizations on employment, benefits, tax, and compliance matters. She also developed an extensive pro bono practice focused on immigration, including naturalization and asylum cases.

Savanna previously served as a legal intern with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and is a graduate of Harvard University and Boston College Law School.

Dr. Shellie Beeker

Director, Counseling Center | North Dakota State University

Dr. Shellie Beeker is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor and Supervisor who serves as Director of the Counseling Center at North Dakota State University.

She earned her Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from NDSU and has dedicated her career to helping individuals build the skills and resilience needed to foster both their own mental well-being and the well-being of others.

Since entering the counseling profession in 2012, Dr. Beeker has worked extensively with individuals, students, and organizations to promote emotional wellness and mental health through practical, evidence-based approaches.

Mac Berns

Creative Director | Absolute Studios

Mac Berns is part of the creative leadership team at Absolute Studios, where he specializes in visual storytelling, branding, and strategic communications. His work helps organizations communicate their mission through compelling photography, videography, and digital media.

Mac has partnered with Community Action organizations throughout North Dakota to capture authentic stories that demonstrate the impact of programs and services on individuals, families, and communities.

His passion for creative storytelling allows organizations to effectively communicate their mission while inspiring supporters, partners, and policymakers.

Jerry Bruzek

Retirement Plan Consultant | Mutual of America

Jerry Bruzek joined Mutual of America in 2012 after serving as a Chartered Retirement Plan Specialist (CRPS®) and advisor with Merrill Lynch in Minneapolis.

He works with organizations throughout Minnesota and North Dakota, helping plan sponsors effectively promote retirement plans as valuable employee benefits that assist with recruitment, retention, and long-term financial wellness.

Jerry is proud to work with all of North Dakota's Community Action Agencies and often jokes that many North Dakotans may remember him from an earlier chapter in life as a performer in the Medora Musical, where he sang, danced, acted, and even yodeled as one of the Burning Hills Singers.

Dedra Carey

North Dakota State Director | U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Dedra Carey serves as the North Dakota State Director for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), bringing extensive experience in housing policy, community development, and organizational leadership.

She joined HUD in 2008 as a Federal Career Intern in the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer before serving in several leadership roles at HUD Headquarters, including positions within the Office of Public and Indian Housing and the Office of Field Policy and Management.

In 2025, Dedra relocated to North Dakota to assume leadership of HUD's North Dakota State Office. Throughout her career, she has successfully led initiatives supporting affordable housing, workforce development, family self-sufficiency, and community development.

Prior to joining the federal government, Dedra spent more than 20 years working with Florida governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community-based programs. She earned both her Bachelor of Science in Business Management and Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix.

Originally from Miami, Florida, Dedra is the proud mother of two adult children and grandmother to five grandchildren.

Susan Carr

President | Region 8 Community Action Association

Susan Carr serves as President of the Region 8 Community Action Association and Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers chapters in Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

With more than fifteen years of leadership experience in human services, nonprofit management, community development, and grant administration, Susan has dedicated her career to strengthening communities and expanding opportunities for individuals and families experiencing poverty.

Her previous leadership roles as Executive Director of Wyoming's CSBG State Association and Chief Executive Officer of a Wyoming Community Action Agency provided opportunities to collaborate with social workers, educators, healthcare professionals, and community leaders to address complex community challenges.

Susan is passionate about the Community Action mission and believes strong partnerships, meaningful data, and local innovation are essential to helping individuals and families achieve stability and economic mobility. As Region 8 President, she remains committed to strengthening collaboration across the region while advancing excellence throughout the Community Action Network.

Norris Elshaug

Weatherization Coordinator | Dakota Prairie Community Action

Norris Elshaug has dedicated nearly five decades of service to Dakota Prairie Community Action.

Beginning his career as a Weatherization crew member, Norris steadily advanced through the organization, serving as Crew Foreman before becoming Weatherization Coordinator.

Throughout his 49-year career, Norris has remained passionate about helping others and improving the lives of families throughout northeastern North Dakota. His extensive field experience, practical knowledge, and commitment to quality have earned him tremendous respect across the Community Action Network.

Norris considers it a privilege to have spent his career serving communities through the Weatherization Assistance Program.

Ashley Engel, CPA

Partner | Brady Martz

Ashley Engel is a Partner with Brady Martz and has spent her entire professional accounting career with the firm.

A graduate of the University of North Dakota, Ashley became a partner in 2021 and specializes in nonprofit auditing, tax services, and consulting. She works extensively with nonprofit organizations throughout the region, helping them maintain strong financial practices and regulatory compliance.

Ashley was raised in Crookston, Minnesota, and currently resides in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Nick Fletcher, CFP®

Retirement Plan Consultant | Mutual of America

Nick Fletcher joined Mutual of America in 2017 and is a Certified Financial Planner™ (CFP®) professional serving organizations throughout Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana.

His primary focus is helping employers effectively manage and administer retirement plans while educating employees through financial wellness programs that promote long-term retirement readiness.

Outside of work, Nick enjoys snowboarding, hiking, and attending live music events. He often jokes that his "retirement job" would be working part-time at Lowe's helping people with home improvement projects or serving as an outdoor tour guide in the mountains.

Dave Gutterud

Director | University of North Dakota Environmental Training Institute

Dave Gutterud has worked in the safety and environmental industry since 1984, beginning his career with one of the nation's largest hazardous materials remediation contractors.

Since 1988, he has trained thousands of professionals in environmental safety, initially serving as an assistant instructor for asbestos training through the University of Minnesota. Today, Dave serves as Director of the University of North Dakota's Environmental Training Institute, where he oversees a wide variety of training programs including OSHA safety, asbestos, lead-based paint, mold remediation, hazardous materials, and clandestine laboratory cleanup.

Dave is widely recognized throughout the Weatherization Network for his practical instruction, engaging teaching style, and extensive technical expertise.

Madison Hanson

Founder | Madison & Co. Advocacy Consulting

Madison Hanson is a behavioral health advocate, policy strategist, and founder of Madison & Co., a North Dakota-based advocacy consulting firm.

She serves as Chair of the Advocacy Committee for the National Association of Social Workers – North Dakota Chapter and works closely with organizations, policymakers, and community leaders to advance meaningful behavioral health policy.

As a certified NAMI Smarts for Advocacy trainer, Madison is passionate about helping individuals and organizations transform their experiences, ideas, and priorities into effective public policy and meaningful legislative action.

Denise Harlow, CCAP, NCRT

Chief Executive Officer | National Community Action Partnership

Denise Harlow has served as Chief Executive Officer of the National Community Action Partnership since 2014.

Since joining the Partnership in 2011, she has held several executive leadership positions, including Senior Director of Training and Technical Assistance and Interim Chief Operating Officer. Prior to joining the national office, Denise served as CEO of the New York State Community Action Association and Senior Vice President for Capacity Building with the New York Council of Nonprofits.

Denise has devoted nearly three decades to strengthening nonprofit organizations and advancing Community Action. She began her Community Action career as a social worker with the Schenectady Community Action Program.

She holds both bachelor's and master's degrees in Social Work and has served on numerous nonprofit boards while also serving as an appointee to New York State's Early Childhood Advisory Council.

Jennifer Henderson ("HUD Jen")

Community Housing & Grants Management Director | North Dakota Housing Finance Agency

Known affectionately throughout North Dakota's Community Action Network as "**HUD Jen**," Jennifer Henderson oversees the Community Housing and Grants Management Division for the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency.

Her division provides technical assistance and financial resources that help communities create affordable housing, identify local housing needs, develop strategic housing initiatives, and position communities for long-term growth. Jennifer also oversees programs that support organizations serving individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Jennifer has become one of North Dakota's most trusted housing experts, working alongside Community Action Agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and state and federal partners to strengthen housing opportunities across the state. Her practical guidance, deep understanding of HUD policies, and collaborative approach have made her an invaluable resource to communities throughout North Dakota.

Dr. Jeremy Holloway

Professor, Speaker & Cross-Cultural Communication Educator

Dr. Jeremy Holloway is an internationally recognized speaker, educator, and consultant specializing in health equity, social connection, workforce resiliency, and cross-cultural communication.

A former Director of Geriatric Education at the University of North Dakota and current professor at New Mexico Highlands University, Dr. Holloway has worked extensively with healthcare systems, educational institutions, and community organizations to improve organizational culture and strengthen communication.

His work focuses on the Social Determinants of Health, helping organizations reduce burnout, improve collaboration, strengthen workforce resilience, and enhance outcomes for the communities they serve through practical, evidence-based strategies.

Matt Igard

Field Coordinator | Community Action Partnership Region VIII

Matt Igard began his Weatherization career in 2004 as a Crew Technician with Community Action Partnership Region VIII in Dickinson.

Over the years, he advanced through the organization, serving as Assistant Foreman, Foreman, and Quality Control Inspector before being promoted to Field Coordinator in 2026.

Today, Matt provides leadership for field operations, overseeing work specifications, inspections, cost estimates, and weatherization measures. His extensive field experience and commitment to quality have made him a respected leader within North Dakota's Weatherization Network.

Lauren Johnson

National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP)

Lauren Johnson serves with the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP), where she supports state agencies and Community Action partners through training, technical assistance, and program development.

Working closely with state CSBG offices and Community Action leaders across the country, Lauren helps strengthen program implementation, promote best practices, and support organizational excellence throughout the Community Action Network.

Her experience and collaborative approach make her a valuable resource for agencies seeking innovative solutions and continuous improvement.

Jerry Kapp

Energy Auditor | Community Action Program Region VI

Jerry Kapp has dedicated more than 30 years to Community Action Program Region VI in Jamestown, North Dakota.

He began his career in 1994 as a Weatherization Crew Member before advancing to Crew Foreman in 2001. In 2009, Jerry became an Energy Auditor and later earned his Quality Control Inspector (QCI) certification in 2015.

Throughout his career, Jerry has earned a reputation across North Dakota's Weatherization Network for his extensive hands-on experience, technical expertise, and practical leadership. His deep

understanding of field operations, crew leadership, and quality workmanship has made him a trusted mentor and invaluable resource for weatherization professionals throughout the state.

Sara Kemp-Tabbut, LCSW

Program Manager | ND HOPES & ND THRIVES

Sara Kemp-Tabbut serves as Program Manager for North Dakota HOPES and North Dakota THRIVES.

A Licensed Clinical Social Worker with more than fifteen years of experience in mental health and suicide prevention, Sara has devoted her career to improving behavioral health outcomes through both direct clinical practice and public health initiatives.

She is highly experienced in suicide prevention best practices, including safety planning, community-based intervention strategies, and Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM), for which she serves as a certified trainer. Prior to joining ND HOPES and ND THRIVES, Sara spent ten years with the Veterans Health Administration supporting Veterans through mental health services and suicide prevention initiatives.

Alyssa Kroshus-Helling

Weatherization Program Manager | North Dakota Department of Commerce

Alyssa Kroshus-Helling serves as the Weatherization Program Manager for the North Dakota Department of Commerce.

A graduate of North Dakota State University, Alyssa began her career in case management before advancing into leadership roles administering a variety of state and federally funded programs.

She is a Building Performance Institute (BPI) Certified Energy Auditor, holds a Building Analyst Professional certification, and maintains an active North Dakota Real Estate license. Alyssa also serves on the Board of Directors for Energy OutWest and is an active committee member with the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP).

She is passionate about strengthening North Dakota's Weatherization Network while supporting innovation, workforce development, and high-quality service delivery throughout the state.

Jennifer Mueller, CCAP

Fiscal Director | Southeastern North Dakota Community Action Agency (SENDCAA)

Jennifer Mueller serves as Fiscal Director for Southeastern North Dakota Community Action Agency (SENDCAA), where she oversees the agency's financial operations, compliance activities, budgeting, and reporting.

Jennifer earned degrees in Accounting and Healthcare Finance from Concordia College in Moorhead before spending eight years in public accounting. She has now devoted nearly a decade to nonprofit financial management within the Community Action Network.

Prior to joining SENDCAA, Jennifer served as Fiscal Director for the Community Action Partnership of North Dakota (CAPND), bringing valuable statewide financial leadership experience to her current role. She is also a Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP).

Outside of work, Jennifer enjoys coffee, cats, attending concerts, and playing volleyball several times each week. A proud spreadsheet enthusiast, she even planned her entire wedding using Google Sheets—from the budget and guest list to the ceremony schedule and music selections.

Kevin C. Myren

Chief Financial Officer & Vice President of Administration | CommonBond Communities

Kevin C. Myren serves as Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Administration for CommonBond Communities, the largest nonprofit provider of affordable housing in the Upper Midwest.

Based in St. Paul, Minnesota, Kevin oversees financial operations for numerous nonprofit housing organizations while also serving as Secretary/Treasurer for CommonBond Housing Corporation and CommonBond Investment Corporation.

In addition to his executive leadership responsibilities, Kevin owns a consulting practice providing financial management, administrative services, and strategic consulting for nonprofit organizations.

Throughout his career, Kevin has become widely recognized for his expertise in nonprofit financial management, Uniform Guidance, federal grants management, and organizational leadership.

Jake Nuckolls

Manager | Building Performance Center

Jake Nuckolls has worked in the Weatherization and building performance industry since 2009 and currently manages the Building Performance Center in Bellingham, Washington.

Throughout his career, Jake has served in nearly every Weatherization role, including Crew Member, Crew Leader, Energy Auditor, Lead Risk Assessor, Inspector, Trainer, and Proctor. His broad experience gives him a unique understanding of both field operations and workforce development.

Jake is a frequent conference presenter known for making technical topics approachable and engaging. He believes the best training borrows from elementary school teaching methods—keeping participants involved, curious, and having fun while they learn.

Outside of work, Jake enjoys baking artisan bread and creating block-print artwork.

Doug Peters

Leadership Speaker & Executive Coach | Doug Peters Enterprises

Doug Peters is a nationally recognized leadership speaker, executive coach, and team development expert with more than twenty-five years of experience helping individuals and organizations build stronger leaders and healthier workplace cultures.

His career has included leadership roles in collegiate athletics, where he developed high-performing teams and mentored emerging leaders. More recently, Doug has answered a calling into ministry, where he continues to inspire individuals to lead with authenticity, courage, and purpose.

Doug's passion is helping people "lead themselves first" so they can effectively lead others. His energetic and engaging presentations challenge audiences to embrace personal growth, strengthen relationships, and develop leadership practices that create lasting impact both professionally and personally.

Hugh Poole

CSBG Director | National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP)

Hugh Poole serves as CSBG Director for the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP), where he provides leadership and oversight for national CSBG State Assistance initiatives.

Prior to joining NASCSPP, Hugh served as the CSBG Program Manager for the State of Kansas and previously spent fourteen years in leadership positions with the Kansas Department of Corrections overseeing fiscal management, operations, and personnel.

Hugh is a Nationally Certified ROMA Implementer, a certified Crucial Conversations trainer, and an experienced facilitator committed to helping organizations transform challenges into opportunities through collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Outside of work, Hugh enjoys spending time with his wife, children, and four grandchildren.

Fred Richmond

Founder & President | Center for Applied Management Practices (CAMP)

Fred Richmond is the Founder and President of the Center for Applied Management Practices (CAMP), with offices in Pennsylvania and Colorado. CAMP is dedicated to strengthening nonprofit and public human service organizations through management consulting, organizational development, training, and innovative web-based software solutions.

In 1998, Fred partnered with the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania to co-found the National ROMA Peer-to-Peer Training Program. He is co-author of *Introduction to Results-Oriented Management and Accountability* and *The Accountable Case Manager*, two publications that have become foundational resources throughout the Community Action Network.

Fred earned a Master of Science/Master of Health Administration degree and began his career as a hospital administrator before serving as an officer in the U.S. Public Health Service. He later held executive leadership positions in state government and the nonprofit sector before founding CAMP in 1996.

During his time as a nonprofit executive and human services advocate in Pennsylvania, Fred helped develop the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which ultimately became the model for today's national program.

Across Region 8, Fred is affectionately known as "the coolest cat in the Community Action Network," a reflection of both his expertise and the genuine relationships he has built with Community Action professionals across the country.

Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev, CCAP, NCRT

Director of Organizational Capacity Building | National Community Action Partnership

Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev serves as Director of Organizational Capacity Building for the National Community Action Partnership.

Since beginning her Community Action career in 2010, Maribeth has served at the local, state, and national levels. Her experience includes providing direct services within a Community Action Agency, leading Kentucky's administration of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, CSBG, and LIHEAP as Director of Family Support, and serving as CSBG State Assistance Director for the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP).

Maribeth is a Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP), Nationally Certified ROMA Trainer (NCRT), Accountability Trainer, and certified Project Management Professional (PMP). She holds a bachelor's degree in Human Services Management from the University of Phoenix and a Master of Public Administration with a specialization in Law and Public Policy from Walden University.

She is passionate about building organizational capacity, strengthening leadership, and helping Community Action Agencies achieve measurable outcomes that improve lives and strengthen communities.

Outside of work, Maribeth enjoys hiking, spending time outdoors, and sharing life with her spouse and their beloved dog.

Jeremy Ulmer, CPA

Partner | Brady Martz

Jeremy Ulmer is a Partner with Brady Martz and specializes in nonprofit audits and employee benefit plan audits.

A graduate of North Dakota State University, Jeremy began his accounting career with Fiebiger, Swanson, West & Co. immediately after graduation. Following the firm's merger with Brady Martz in 2019, he continued serving nonprofit organizations throughout the region while expanding his leadership within the firm.

Jeremy has extensive experience working with Community Action Agencies and other nonprofit organizations, helping them strengthen financial accountability, improve internal controls, and maintain compliance with federal grant requirements.

Originally from a farm near Fullerton, North Dakota, Jeremy now lives in Fargo.

Sara Wiederholt, LCSW

Homeless Program Manager | Fargo VA Health Care System

Sara Wiederholt is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with more than twenty-four years of experience serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

Her professional experience spans emergency shelters, street outreach, PATH case management, Veteran homelessness initiatives, and permanent supportive housing programs.

Sara currently serves as Homeless Program Manager for the Fargo VA Homeless Program, where she oversees housing initiatives, outreach efforts, permanent supportive housing, and coordinated system planning for Veterans throughout the region.

She has practiced and taught Motivational Interviewing for more than fourteen years and is a frequent presenter on engagement strategies, trauma-informed care, and effective homelessness response systems. Sara also serves as an Adjunct Professor at the University of North Dakota.

Cheryl Williams

Executive Director | National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP)

Cheryl Williams serves as Executive Director of the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP).

She brings more than twenty years of leadership experience in federal policy, nonprofit management, and public affairs. Prior to joining NASCSPP, Cheryl served as Vice President of the Women's Congressional Policy Institute, where she worked alongside policymakers and national partners to advance issues affecting women and families.

Her previous leadership roles include Associate Director of Government Affairs for the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) and Senior Legislative Assistant to Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, where she advised on education, appropriations, labor, voting rights, and other public policy issues.

Cheryl earned her bachelor's degree from Spelman College and her Juris Doctor from American University. A lifelong Washington, D.C. resident, she remains active in numerous community organizations and nonprofit boards dedicated to strengthening communities and expanding opportunity.

Susan Williams

Trainer & Gallup Certified Strengths Coach | The Village Family Service Center

Susan Williams is a trainer with The Village Family Service Center in Fargo, North Dakota. She holds a Master of Arts in Education and is a Gallup Certified Strengths Coach.

Drawing upon a diverse background in education, corporate business, and organizational consulting, Susan designs engaging learning experiences that help individuals better understand themselves, strengthen workplace relationships, and maximize their natural talents.

She has presented throughout the United States and internationally, earning recognition for her warm, relatable presentation style and her ability to create learning environments that are both practical and engaging.

Originally from Jamestown, North Dakota, Susan now lives in Staples, Minnesota, with her husband. She enjoys spending time outdoors, participating in local trivia competitions, and visiting with her two adult daughters.

Dr. Yao Yu

Associate Professor | North Dakota State University

Dr. Yao Yu is an Associate Professor in the Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering at North Dakota State University.

His research focuses on indoor environmental quality, building energy modeling, HVAC system optimization, and the application of advanced technologies—including data-driven methods and digital twins—to improve building performance, sustainability, and occupant health.

Before joining NDSU, Dr. Yu worked as an energy engineer in the private sector, giving him practical experience that complements his academic research.

He is a LEED Accredited Professional and an ASHRAE Building Energy Modeling Professional (BEMP), and his work continues to advance the science of healthy, energy-efficient buildings through both research and industry collaboration.