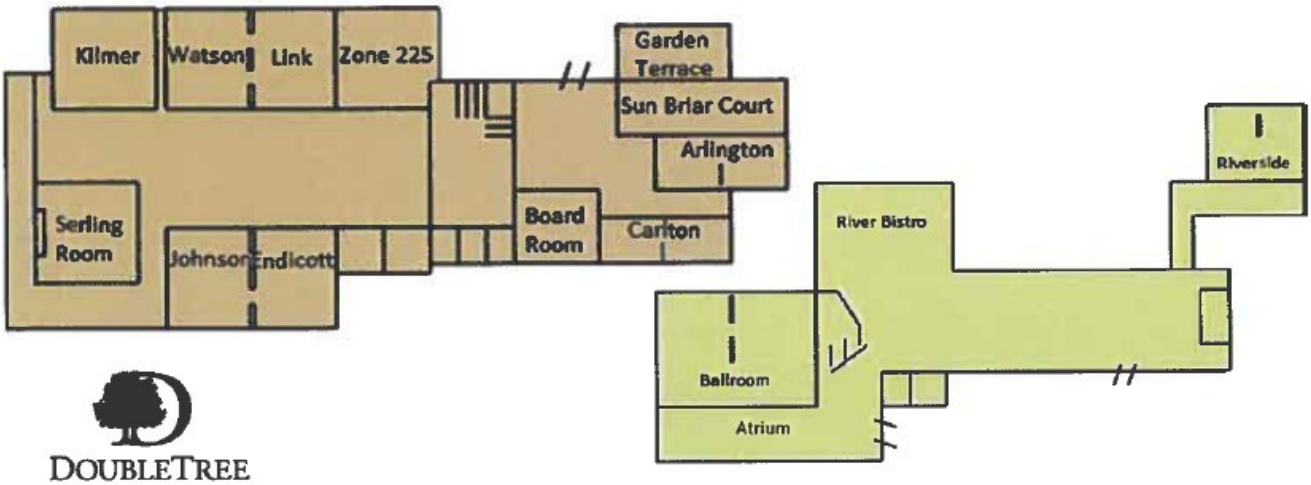
NYWFIA

41st Annual
Training Seminar
Binghamton, NY 2026

Agenda at a Glance

	Sunday May 31	
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Registration and Merchandise	Lower Lobby
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Dinner on Your Own	Wherever
6:15 PM - 7:30 PM	Executive Board and Regional Representatives Meeting	River Bistro
8:00 PM -11:00 PM	NYWFIA Networking Event	Zone225
	Monday June 1	
6:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Continental Breakfast for Hotel Guests	Ballroom
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Registration and Merchandise	Lower Lobby
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Opening Session	Ballroom
9:30 AM - 10:30AM	Panel Discussion with OTDA A&QI	Ballroom
10:30 AM -10:45AM	*Break-Vendors-Merchandise*	
10:45 AM-12:00 PM	*Breakout Sessions*	
	EBT Account Takeover	Serling
	UR Protocol and Scam Awareness	Endicott
	Resources: The What and How	Johnson
12:15 PM - 2:00 PM	Luncheon	Ballroom
	Keynote Speaker Ed Robinson "From Facts to Foresight"	
2:00 PM – 5:00 PM	CWFI Exam	Kilmer
2:15 PM - 3:30 PM	*Breakout Sessions*	
	Leading through Uncertainty Disruption and Change	Serling
	Developing a Department of Leaders	Endicott
	Resources: The What and How	Johnson
3:30 PM - 3:45 PM	*Break-Vendors-Merchandise*	Lower Lobby
3:45 PM - 5:00 PM	*Breakout Sessions*	
	Leading Through Disagreement	Serling
	Calculating TA Overpayments	Endicott
	Interviewing: Digging Out the Facts	Johnson
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Dinner on your own	Wherever
5:30 PM - 9:00 PM	Optional Activity	
	House of Reardon Irish Pub Cost: $35	
9:00 PM - 11:00 PM	NYWFIA Networking Hospitality	Zone225
	Tuesday June 2	
6:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Breakfast Buffet for Hotel Guests	Ballroom
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Registration-Vendors-Merchandise	Lower Lobby
9:00 AM -10:15 AM	*Breakout Sessions*	
	The SLEB Process	Serling
	Developing a Department of Leaders	Endicott
	SNAP: Hot Topics	Johnson

10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	*Break-Vendors-Merchandise*	Lower Lobby
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Members Business Meeting and Election	Ballroom
	All attendees are members	
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Lunch On Your Own	Wherever
1:30 PM - 2:45 PM	*Breakout Sessions*	
	Cyber-Enabled Financial Crimes	Serling
	UR Protocol and Scam Awareness	Endicott
	Child Care Assistance Overpayments	Johnson
	Fraud Directors Meeting	Link/Watson
2:45 PM - 3:00 PM	*Break-Vendors-Merchandise*	Lower Lobby
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Mock Grand Jury	Ballroom
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Reception	Atrium
7:00 PM -10:30 PM	Banquet and Awards Gala	Grand Ballroom
	Wednesday June 3	
6:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Breakfast On Your Own	Wherever
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Registration	Lower Lobby
9:00 AM - 10:15 AM	*Breakout Sessions*	
	Cyber-Enabled Financial Crimes	Serling
	Calculating TA Overpayments	Endicott
	The SLEB Process	Johnson
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	*Break-Vendors*	
10:30 AM - 11:45 AM	*Breakout Sessions*	
	SNAP: Hot Topics	Serling
	Maximizing FEDS	Endicott
	The Improper Payment Review	Johnson
12:15 PM - 2:00 PM	Executive Board and Regional Representative Meeting	River Bistro



DOUBLETREE
BY HILTON
BINGHAMTON

2026 Seminar Agenda

Sunday, May 31, 2026

Business Casual

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Registration and Merchandise	Lower Level
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Dinner on your own	
6:15 pm – 8:00 pm	Executive Board & Regional Representatives Meeting	River Bistro
8:00 pm – 11:00 pm	Networking Reception	The Zone225

Monday, June 01, 2026

Business Casual

6:30 am – 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast for Hotel Guests	Ballroom
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Registration and Merchandise	Lower Lobby
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Opening Remarks NYWFIA Board Members **Barbara Guinn, OTDA Commissioner** **Merideth Infantino, OCFS** **F. Paul Battisti, Broom County District Attorney** **Nancy Williams, Broome County DSS Commissioner** **Jason Garner, Broome County Executive** **Frederick Akshar, Broome County Sheriff**	Ballroom
9:30 am – 10:30 am	Panel Discussion w/ OTDA A&QI and OCFS Rebecca Lynch, OTDA	Ballroom
10:30 am – 10:45 am	Break - Vendors - Merchandise Sponsored by Equifax	Lower Level
10:45 am – 12:00 pm	Breakout Sessions: ***EBT Account Takeover** Rebecca Lynch, Rebecca Schoonmaker,	Serling

10:45 am – 12:00 pm	***UR Protocol and Scam Awareness** Nicole McNamee-Wicks	Endicott
	***Resources: The What and How** Jamal Hodges	Johnson
12:15 pm – 2:00 pm	**LUNCHEON KEYNOTE SPEAKER PRESENTED BY ED ROBINSON** From Facts to Foresight Sponsored by NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance	Ballroom
2:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Certified Welfare Fraud Investigator Exam *Must be pre-registered to take the exam.	Kilmer
2:15 pm – 3:30 pm	Breakout Sessions	
	***Leading Through Uncertainty, Disruption, & Change** Ed Robinson	Serling
	***Developing a Department of Leaders** Catherine Arman-Santana, Nina Herman-Schlissel	Endicott
	***Resources: The What and How** Jamal Hodges	Johnson
3:30 pm – 3:45 pm	Break, Vendors, Merchandise	Lower Level
3:45 pm – 5:00 pm	Breakout Sessions	
	***Leading Through Disagreement:** Conflict Strategies for Professionals Ed Robinson	Serling
	***Calculating TA Overpayments** Michelle Ray, Chris VerWys	Endicott
	Interviewing: *Digging Out the Facts John Melville & Steve Peglow	Johnson
5:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Dinner on your own – See NYWFIA.org for local eateries and more	
5:30 pm – 9:00 pm	Optional Activity—House of Reardon Irish Pub: $35	
9:00pm-11:00pm	NYWFIA Networking Hospitality	Zone225

Tuesday, June 02, 2026

Business Casual

6:30 am – 8:30 am	Breakfast for Hotel Guests	Ballroom
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Registration and Merchandise	Lower Level
9:00 am – 10:15 am	Breakout Sessions	
	***The SLEB Process**	Serling
	Ken Constable, Patrick Hayden	
	***Developing a Department of Leaders**	Endicott
	Catherine Arman-Santana, Nina Herman-Schlissel	
	***SNAP: Hot Topics**	Johnson
	Sherry Tomasky, Jamie Weeks	
10:15 am – 10:30 am	Break, Vendors, Merchandise	Lower Level
10:30 am – 12:00 pm	General Session – Annual Business Meeting & Elections General Membership	Ballroom
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	Lunch on your own	
1:30 pm – 2:45 pm	Breakout Sessions	
	***Cyber-Enabled Financial Crimes**	Serling
	Jason Fazio & NYSP Cyber Analysis Unit	
	***UR Protocol and Scam Awareness**	Endicott
	Nicole McNamee-Wicks	
	***Child Care Assistance Overpayments**	Johnson
	Erin Duffy & Tara Fix	
	***Fraud Directors Meeting**	Link/Watson
2:45 pm – 3:00 pm	Break, Vendors, Merchandise	Lower level
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Mock Grand Jury	Ballroom
	Andrew Weiss, et al	
6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Banquet Reception – Semi-formal	Atrium
7:00 pm – 9:30 pm	Banquet and Awards Gala	Grand Ballroom

Wednesday, June 04, 2025

Business Casual

6:30 am – 8:30 am	Breakfast on Your Own	
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Registration	Lower Level
9:00 am – 10:15 am	Breakout Sessions	
	***Cyber-Enabled Financial Crimes**	Serling
	Jason Fazio & NYSP Cyber Analysis Unit	
	***Calculating TA Overpayments**	Endicott
	Michelle Ray, Chris VerWys	
	***The SLEB Process**	Johnson
	Ken Constable, Patrick Hayden	
10:15 am – 10:30 am	Break, Vendors	Lower Level
10:30 am – 11:45 am	Breakout Sessions	
	***SNAP: Hot Topics**	Serling
	Sherry Tomasky, Jamie Weeks	
	***Maximizing FEDS**	Endicott
	Bob Antonacci	
	***The Improper Payment Review**	Johnson
	Darci Primeau & Emily Sylvester	

2026 Seminar Concludes

12:15 pm – 2:00 pm	NYWFIA Executive Board and	River Bistro
	Regional Representatives Meeting	

NEW YORK WELFARE FRAUD INVESTIGATORS ASSOCIATION
STATE OF NEW YORK
NYWFIA

Presenters and Speakers
NYWFIA 2026

Keynote

Ed Robinson

As a thought leader in the areas of leadership development, succession planning, and revenue growth, Ed helps people level-up from average professionals to leaders and Rainmakers. On stage, he brings new ideas that add value to both veterans and new professionals. Ed teaches audiences how to let go of the idea that influence and persuasion is “dirty,” and instead apply a mindset and principles that are based on the concept of ease and integrity when promoting products and services.

Every presentation is relevant to today’s issues and catered to the needs of each audience. Ed Robinson, often known as “The Rainmaker,” is a former CPA who has dedicated the last two decades to helping accountants and professionals service firms develop leadership and business development skills. He built and sold two accounting practices, and then used this hands-on experience to maximize financial outcomes for other companies. Ed is CEO of Robinson Performance Group, Inc., a Houston-based firm that specializes in developing leaders, professionals, and business developers. He has consulted, coached and
spoken to thousands of audiences and hundreds of businesses in more than 35 countries and multiple industries.

His published books showcase the expertise that he brings to each presentation:
- Million Dollar Rainmaker
- Million Dollar Rainmaker for Attorneys
- Million Dollar Rainmaker for Financial Advisors
- 4 Giant Steps to Leadership
- Leadership: Winning Through Influence

As a Certified Speaking Professional, Ed has presented an average of 55 presentations to 70 clients per year for the last 25 years. He often presents to professional service groups including attorneys, auditors, bankers, CPAs, and sales professionals. Businesses and CEOs hire Ed "The Rainmaker" Robinson when they are looking for speaking, facilitating and training opportunities. He is experienced in a variety of presentations, including keynotes, breakouts, seminars, workshops, and problem-solving facilitation.

Ed Robinson, CPA, CSP, is a globally recognized leadership expert, author, and high-impact keynote speaker. Known as the Rainmaker, Ed helps professionals in financial services, accounting, and investigative roles become influential leaders who drive results and growth. He’s spoken to over 1,000 organizations, authored multiple books, and delivers with energy, humor, and insight.

Barbara C. Guinn

Barbara C. Guinn was confirmed by the New York State Senate as Commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance in May 2024. As Commissioner, she serves as a member of Governor Hochul's cabinet.

OTDA is responsible for a range of essential programs that help low- and no-income residents meet their basic needs by providing benefits that help them secure housing, food and other basic necessities. OTDA is also responsible for the delivery of services to families and individuals including assistance obtaining child support and federal disability benefits, refugee resettlement and helping those who can work obtain and retain employment.

Guinn was appointed Acting Commissioner in July 2023, while concurrently serving as Executive Deputy Commissioner, a position she had held since March 2017. She successfully led the agency through the COVID-19 pandemic, helping it implement many new assistance programs and delivering more than $18 billion in additional benefits to help New Yorkers navigate the financial impacts of the public health crisis. Prior to serving in this role, she was deputy commissioner for the Division of Integrated Family Assistance, which was responsible for policy development and oversight of public assistance programs, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, supportive housing, energy assistance, employment services, refugee services and child support services. Before joining the agency, Guinn worked for the New York State Department of Labor and the New York State Division of the Budget.

Guinn received her master's degree in public administration from the University at Albany's Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy. She also has bachelor's degrees in political science and business management from North Carolina State University.

Robert Antonacci

Bob Antonacci started his state career with the Department of Taxation and Finance in 2001. He worked in the Personal Income Tax section of the Taxpayer Contact Center for six years. In 2007, he accepted an offer to join OTDA as a Management Specialist trainee. His primary responsibility was to oversee the Lottery Intercept Match, but he was also involved in the Cost Avoidance initiative, the e-Batch portion of the NDND project, and the AccuriZ Program. July 2014, he was promoted to Management Specialist 2 and assumed responsibility of the Front-End Detection System (FEDS) and Eligibility Verification Review (EVR) programs. Bob earned an Associates of Science degree in Business Administration from Hudson Valley Community College and a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance and Management from the State University of New York at Albany, School of Business.

April Carbone-Barnum

April Carbone-Barnum started her state career with the Department of Health in 2018. In 2020 she accepted a position with the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. Her primary responsibility was to work with the Assistant Commissioner of Compliance Standards as well as other executive staff to conduct audits throughout the state facilities. In 2024, she accepted an offer to join OTDA as a Management Specialist trainee. Her primary responsibility is to help oversee the Front-End Detection System (FEDS) and Eligibility Verification Review (EVR) programs. She is also involved in the Cost Avoidance initiative. April earned an Associate's degree in Human Services from Quincy College in Massachusetts.

Ken Constable

Ken Constable serves as the Acting Deputy Administrator for the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's Office of Retailer Operations and Compliance. Over his nearly 20-year tenure with FNS, he has dedicated his career to SNAP retailer management, with a strong focus on fraud detection and compliance. Prior to his current acting role, Ken was the Director of the Retailer Compliance Division, where he oversaw fraudulent detection efforts, investigation initiation, case development, due process, and the sanctioning of program violators. His leadership continues to strengthen program integrity, ensure accountability across SNAP retailer operations, and safeguard taxpayer dollars.

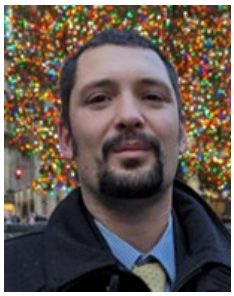
Jason Fazio

Jason R. Fazio is the Managing Investigator for Welfare in the New York State Offices of the Inspector General. . Fazio, a Marist College graduate, is recognized as a subject matter in public benefits fraud and is often consulted by local, state, and federal law enforcement partners. With over fifteen years of investigatory and law enforcement experience, including as an Unemployment Insurance Investigator for the NYS Department of Labor, Welfare Fraud Investigator at Albany County, and as a Deputy Sheriff in Schenectady County Sheriff's Office, Jason's experience in investigating complex cases of fraud and collusion of the New York State unemployment insurance program by recipients, vendors, contractors, and employees has made him an invaluable resource across New York State.

Rebecca Frederick

Rebecca Frederick has been with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) within Audit and Quality Improvement (A&QI) since December 2012. She spent the first three years learning different aspects of the Agency as part of the Internal Audit Unit before being promoted to the Administrative Unit, where she managed the Work Participation Manual Employment Verification (MEV) project. Becky joined the Program Integrity Unit in December 2019 where her current responsibilities include managing multiple computer matches, such as Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS), Prison, Border, and Web Fraud matches within the Recipient Fraud Matching System (RFMS), and the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH)/Verified Employment Data (VED). Additionally, Becky manages the Front End Detection System (FEDS) and Eligibility Verification Review (EVR) programs along with the TALX/Equifax contract, which allows local districts to access current employment data. Rebecca has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management from SUNY Institute of Technology and holds an MBA from SUNY Albany.

Jeffrey Handford



Jeffrey Handford began his career in public service in 2011 with the AIDS Drug Assistance Program where he worked for 5 years assisting people with HIV/AIDS to obtain access to health insurance and the medication and treatment needed to treat their illness. He began his career with OTDA in 2015 and has worked with SNAP, HEAP, and is currently the bureau chief of the EBT unit where he helps maintain the contracts for the EBT system as well as the EBT cards used to distribute benefits. He has bachelor's degrees in business administration as well as labor relations from SUNY Potsdam. He enjoys geocaching with his family as well as playing fantasy sports.

Patrick Hayden

Patrick Hayden began his federal career in 2006 as an Officer with the US Department of Justice, In 2009, Hayden transferred to the USDA as an investigator; was promoted to Senior Investigator in 2013, and Lead Investigator in 2019. Hayden's responsibilities include providing leadership and guidance to a team of investigators, conducting SNAP investigations throughout the U.S., and training investigators. Hayden is also involved in conducing multi-agency investigations/operations (including prosecution), as well as the innovation of investigative policies and practices, Hayden has completed multiple training programs and academies throughout his career including training in covert surveillance and undercover techniques. Hayden is also a Certified Technical Investigator (CTI) and Certified Economic Crimes Forensic Examiner (CECFE).

Jamal Hodges

Jamal Hodges NCDSS Social Welfare Examiner-Office of Investigations. Special Investigations, 2017 Bachelors of Science in Criminology, Former New York City Department Correction Officer.

Merideth Infantino

Merideth Infantino presently serves as the Director of Child Care Assistance and Enrollment Services with the Division of Child Care Services at the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. She has over 25 years of experience in government focusing on program and policy issues affecting children, youth, and families with specific concentration on promoting the health, safety and well-being of vulnerable populations. Merideth received her Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from SUNY Geneseo, a Master of Science in Education from the College of Saint Rose, and a Master of Arts in Security Studies from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security.

Tara Fix

Tara Fix brings over 20 years of experience and has held numerous positions, on the county and state level. Currently, Tara is the Supervisor of the Legally Exempt Policy Unit, and has been with the OCFS Division of Child Care Services' Child Care Assistance Program Policy team since 2019. Tara has dedicated her career to serving children and families within her community and throughout the state. She values working as part of a team and takes a collaborative approach to improve and expand services for families, children, and stakeholders in the community.

Rebecca Lynch

Rebecca Lynch has worked at the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance since October 2006. For the first five years, she was with the Eligibility and Quality Assurance Unit in OTDA's Bureau of Audit and Quality Improvement. She then joined the Program Integrity Unit in June 2012. Her responsibilities included managing EBT Fraud Investigations, IPV Reporting, the Quarterly Fraud Report, eDRS (Electronic Disqualified Recipient System), the Lottery Intercept Match, and the Treasury Offset Program (TOP). She also provided specialized fraud trainings and presentations to local districts. As the SLEB (State Law Enforcement Bureau) Program Manager, she worked in conjunction with the USDA and local law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute SNAP trafficking. Rebecca also worked as the Project Coordinator for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and Landlord Rental Assistance Program (LRAP), which provided rental assistance to tenants and landlords impacted by the COVID pandemic. In January 2025, Rebecca was promoted to the Director of Program Integrity, where she leads this unit in its continued effort to fight fraud and abuse in our assistance programs. Rebecca has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Hobart and William Smith College and holds a n MBA from Union Graduate College.

Kyla Marsh

Kyla Marsh has worked at the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance within the bureau of Audit and Quality Improvement (A&QI) since April 2018. For the first four years, she was the program contact for Intentional Program Violations (IPVs) within the Program Integrity Unit. In this role, she acted as the policy liaison with local districts, compiled the Quarterly Fraud Report (QFR), and maintained the Electronic Disqualified Recipient System (eDRS). In June 2022, Kyla was promoted to an Information Systems Auditor as part of the Data Analytics team within the Program Integrity Unit. She helps assist the team with various data analytic projects. In addition to her regular job duties, she actively assisted with the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and Landlord Rental Assistance Program (LRAP) in an administrative role. Kyla has a Bachelor of Arts in History from SUNY Albany.

Lauren Mathews

Lauren Mathews started her State career as the Automated Finger Imaging System (AFIS) Project Coordinator within the Program Integrity Unit in OTDA's Bureau of Audit and Quality Improvement (A&QI). In that position, she served as the primary point of contact for local Social Services Districts to resolve all AFIS matters. From August 2015 through February 2022, she was the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) Coordinator, where she served as the New York State representative for the Federal Government for all TOP related matters, as well as the TOP liaison between A&QI and the local district offices. Since February 2020, Lauren has been working with the SLEB (State Law Enforcement Bureau) Program, EBT Fraud Investigations, IPV Reporting, the Quarterly Fraud Report, eDRS (Electronic Disqualified Recipient System), and TOP. Lauren holds a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from Bentley University.

John Melville

John Melville is a Certified Inspector General Investigator, having retired as a welfare fraud investigator for the Monroe County Department of Human Services after 23 years of service. A licensed Private Investigator for 12 years, he was also an Executive Board member of the New York Welfare Fraud Investigator's Association from 2006-2015, serving as president for three terms. In 2017 and 2024 he received the NYWFIA Annual Service Award, acknowledging his dedication to the organization. He has presented training on numerous topics, including field safety, interviewing techniques, use of computers and social media in investigations, report writing, and ethics.

Steve Peglow

Steve Peglow is a Certified Inspector General Investigator. Prior to joining OPI, he served over 20 Years with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and other New York State police departments, working as a deputy in Road Patrol, Warrant Services and in plain-clothes capacities. His last 10 years were as a Major Crimes Investigator for the Sheriff's Office before retiring in 2016. Since 1999, he has also served the MCC Public Safety Training Facility as a defensive tactics instructor and as a classroom teacher. He works part-time for OPI and part-time as a private investigator for other entities

Jennifer Pelletier

Jennifer Pelletier started her state career with NYS Department of Social Services, which is now the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, in 1987. She was the Administrative Assistant to the Director of Audit & Quality Improvement (A&QI) until March 2018 when she was promoted to Management Specialist 1 within Program Integrity Unit of A&QI. Jennifer is the Project Coordinator between A&QI and the local districts for TALX/National Directory of New Hires (NDNH).

David Raimo

David Raimo has worked at the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance within Audit and Quality Improvement (A&QI) since 2016, where he started as the Project Coordinator for the Automated Finger Imaging System (AFIS) in the Program Integrity unit. As the AFIS project was winding down, he volunteered for multiple agency initiatives, including a large-scale homeless outreach assignment where he led outreach teams in New York City's subway stations, assisting on the helpline for P-EBT recipients, and taking on a coaching role in an interagency effort to expedite initial Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) application processing. He is currently in the ERAP unit of Program Integrity supporting the close out process of this program. David holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany.

Catherine Arman-Santana

Catherine Arman-Santana Westchester County DSS

Erin Duffy

Erin Duffy is the Supervisor of the newly formed Program Integrity Unit within the Bureau of Child Care Assistance and Enrollment Services at the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. The primary responsibilities of this bureau are to administer the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) through oversight and partnership with the local departments of social services and legally exempt caregiver enrollment agencies throughout the state. The Child Care Assistance Program Integrity Unit specializes in collaborative work within the bureau, local districts, and state and local agencies to uphold the program's integrity. Erin has worked within OCFS for nearly five years, and prior to joining OCFS, Erin was a caseworker at a local department of social services.

Michelle Ray

Michelle Ray is a Senior Trainer with the Professional Development Program of Rockefeller College at the University at Albany. Michelle has over 30 years of experience implementing training programs to social services district staff. Michelle came to PDP in 1996 as an Education Specialist. She spent over 20 years supporting a range of child welfare training initiatives in coordination with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. This included providing technical assistance and training to caseworkers, supervisors, youth services providers, and youth in foster care. Prior to working at PDP, Michelle was an Independent Living Coordinator/Foster Care Worker at the Fulton County Department of Social Services and a Marketing Consultant/Account Executive for a capital region radio station. Michelle has a Bachelor of Arts in Industrial and Labor Relations from SUNY Potsdam.

Justin Rising

Justin Rising has worked for the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Audit and Quality Improvement Bureau since September 2022. He started in the Upstate/Albany Regional Field Office performing a variety of audits covering multiple program areas. In February 2026, Justin was promoted and joined the Program Integrity Unit to manage multiple computer matches in the Recipient Fraud Matching System (RFMS). These matches include; Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS), Prison, Border, and Web Fraud. He also acts as the primary contact for the aforementioned matches in Program Integrity and assists local Social Service Districts with questions and user access for RFMS. Justin has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with concentrations on Marketing and Management from SUNY Albany.

Nina Herman-Schlissel

Nina Herman-Schlissel is a learning and development leader with over a decade of experience in the public sector. She previously worked at the NYC Mayor's Office of Contract Services, where she led training and user adoption for PASSPort, a major initiative to digitize procurement operations across NYC agencies. At the Westchester County Department of Social Services (WCDSS), she leads the design and implementation of professional development initiatives, with a particular focus on building leadership capacity across the organization. Nina is also a certified professional coach through the University of Denver's Butler Institute for Families and provides coaching support to WCDSS employees

Rebecca Schoonmaker

Rebecca Schoonmaker has worked for the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Audit & Quality Improvement (AQI) bureau since February 2016. She started in Program Integrity (PI), spent five years in Eligibility & Quality Assurance (EQA), and returned to PI in July 2025. Rebecca currently manages the SLEB (State Law Enforcement Bureau) program, EBT Fraud Investigations, IPV Reporting, the Quarterly Fraud Report, eDRS (Electronic Disqualified Recipient System), the Lottery Intercept Match, and the Treasury Offset Program (TOP). Rebecca also reviews PI training initiatives and provides specialized fraud training and presentations to local districts. Rebecca has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of South Florida, Tampa and a Master of Fine Arts degree from SUNY Albany.

Samantha Sennett

Samantha Sennett has worked at the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance in the Program Integrity Unit of Audit & Quality Improvement (A&QI) since October 2019. She is the Project Coordinator for the Lottery Intercept Match. She is the point of contact for the local social services districts to resolve Lottery Intercepts. Prior to state service, she worked in the nonprofit sector with United Tenants of Albany as a Housing Counselor and at CARES as the Continuum of Care Unit Coordinator. Samantha has a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and a Bachelor of Social Work from SUNY at Albany.

Sherry Tomasky

Sherry Tomasky serves as the Director for Food and Nutrition Policy at the NYS Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance. In this role, she provides policy and operational oversight for the State's SNAP program including SNAP policy guidance development, waivers, federal compliance, Summer EBT, SNAP outreach contracts, and communications. Her career includes former roles with NYS Department of Health's state Health Exchange, Hunger Solutions New York, and the American Cancer Society. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Manhattan College, and a Master of Arts in Health Communication from Emerson College.

Chris VerWys

Chris VerWys is a Senior Education Specialist with the Professional Development Program of Rockefeller College at the University at Albany. Chris has over 25 years of experience working in higher education and designing, developing, and delivering courses to adult learners. Chris came to PDP in 2021 as an Education Specialist, and he teamed with colleagues to deliver the following training programs: *Welfare Fraud Investigator Training Institute; Front End Detection System (FEDS) Training; Establishing TA and SNAP IPVs Through Administrative Disqualification; Telephonic Fair Hearings: District Preparation and Participation; SNAP Training Institute; Case Processing Review for NTA-SNAP Supervisors; Preventing SNAP Case and Procedural Errors; SNAP Reporting Requirements;* and *SNAP Overpayments and Claims* among other programs in support of NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance training initiatives. Prior to working at PDP, Chris was a Lecturer of Behavioral Sciences at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and served as the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Assessment Program Coordinator. In addition, Chris is a veteran and served five years in the US Army. Chris received his Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University at Albany and completed graduate coursework in Cognitive Psychology.

Jamie Weeks

Jamie Weeks SNAP Bureau Chief • Employment and Income Support Programs (EISP)

Darci Primeau

Darci Primeau is a Program Manager in the Child Care Assistance Program within the Bureau of Child Care Assistance for the Division of Child Care Services (DCCS) in the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The Bureau of Child Care Assistance is responsible for the oversight and monitoring of the administration of the New York State Child Care Block Grant. Darci has been with the Division for almost five years and currently oversees the System Support Units, Policy, and Program Integrity Units responsible. Prior to joining DCCS, Darci spent five years in the Child Welfare and Community Services Division at OCFS and spent 11 years at a local department of social services including supervising the foster care unit.

Andrew Weiss

Andrew Weiss Andrew Weiss is the Attorney in Charge for Welfare Fraud and is responsible for supervising the Inspector General's welfare fraud unit, in her role as the Welfare Inspector General under Executive Law §74. In this role, Andrew leads the Inspector General's efforts to investigate fraud, abuse or illegal acts perpetrated within the State and county departments of social services. Investigations include allegations of fraud and criminal conduct done by contractees, recipients of public assistance, and internal investigations. Andrew also works with other agencies on the Federal, State and local levels to identify fraud and ensure that social services resources are used in a proper and efficient manner. Andrew has over 20 years of experience investigating and prosecuting government fraud. Andrew previously served as the Deputy Chief of the Economic Crimes Bureau in the Nassau County District Attorney's Office, and prosecuted government fraud as a Special Assistant Attorney General in the New York Attorney General's Criminal Prosecutions Bureau. Andrew also served as First Deputy Inspector General at the New York City Department of Investigation, supervising fraud cases involving NYC Health + Hospitals, NYC's public health system. Andrew served for eleven years on the Board of Directors of the New York Welfare Fraud Investigators Association, and six years as Vice President. Andrew received his law degree from Albany Law School.

Nicole McNamee-Wicks

Nicole McNamee-Wicks Nicole's decorated career in the Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General (SSA OIG) focused on program integrity, reducing fraud, and all aspects of crime relating to identity theft. For over two decades, she conducted complex and strategically impactful investigations in areas of fraud and detection, internal and external employee violations, disability pre-effectuation and continuing disability fraud, identity fraud, and impostor detection. A Certified Economic Crime Forensic Examiner (CECFE), Nicole is the recipient of more than 40 performance and recognition awards, including the WIFLE Outstanding Federal Law Enforcement Employee, New York State Police (NYSP) Letters of Commendation for working in the command post during the David Sweat and Richard Matt manhunt, and a Commissioner Award and other recognition for participation in the government response to the 9/11 attacks. As the Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Investigative Support Division, Nicole provided country-wide guidance on agency policy and procedures and was responsible for over 40 other tasks that included reporting to the FBI and Congress.

Derek Wright

Derek Wright began his civil service career in 2022 with the Rensselaer County Department of Social Services as an eligibility employee, interviewing and processing Public Assistance and SNAP applications. After transitioning to full time SNAP employee in early 2023, he moved to the State of New York in June of 2024 and joined the Program Integrity unit in OTDA's Bureau of Audit and Quality Improvement as the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) coordinator. He maintains this position today, serving as a liaison between A&QI and the local districts regarding all TOP related issues including offsets, reviews and policy and procedures. Derek holds a Bachelor of Sciences degree in Criminal Justice from the College of St. Rose in Albany, and enjoys long walks on the golf course.

Emily Sylvester

Emily Sylvester is a Children and Family Services Specialist with the Child Care Assistance Program in the Division of Child Care Services at the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. In this role, she contributes to the oversight and monitoring of the NYS Child Care Block Grant, with a focus on program integrity. As a member of the Program Integrity Unit, she collaborates with local districts and partner agencies to develop and implement strategies that reduce errors and strengthen program accountability. Emily brings nearly two years of experience within the Division, complemented by her prior work with the Professional Development

Course Descriptions

EBT Account Takeover

Presenters: **Rebecca Lynch, Rebecca Schoonmaker, & Jeffey Handford**

This session will provide information on the latest trends regarding EBT account takeover and the associated benefit theft. It will also provide guidance on the actions that districts can take to help protect client benefits, as well as the options available to clients to mitigate card vulnerability. Additionally, updates on the conversion to chip cards will be shared.

UR Protocol and Scam Awareness

Presenter: **Nicole McNamee-Wicks**

Fraudulent documents have evolved to a point where even qualified document experts require lab testing to determine document authenticity. Additionally, people haven't gotten any better at detecting impostors. Nicole will delve into this evolution and discuss liveness detection and the new UR Protocol that will be appearing on documents globally.

Next Nicole will discuss how the 4Ps of scams exist regardless of technique used by the scammer and how you can spread the word in your communities as well as direct them to free resources for assistance.

Resources: The What and How

Presenter: **Jamal Hodges**

The nature of this presentation will be to inform and elaborate on how we as Investigators can maximize our investigative resources. Understanding, that in the course of our investigations, we may not get the participation we would hope. So how will we maximize our resources if that was to happen.

- Government resources our county provides:
- Social Media
- Engaging more with clients from the personal level
- Building rapport with other Investigators from other counties
- Basic internet searches that can uncover so much more
- Learning how to use Social Media as an Investigator and not as an individual at work
- Not being scared to ask the hard questions
- Leading by example and appearance has so much power that we miss

Leading Through Disagreement - Conflict Strategies for Professionals

Presenters**: Ed Robinson**

Conflict is a normal part of doing business. Employees working together may have conflicting goals and work styles. However, if you know how to handle conflict and how to interact with difficult people, you can turn this potentially destructive force into an opportunity for creativity and greater productivity.

This session examines situations that can cause conflict and offers a "road map" for resolving the issue—first informally and then using a formal process.

The learning objectives include:

- An understanding of the root causes of conflict
- A working knowledge of the informal conflict management process

An understanding of the formal conflict resolution process
Discussion of situations that can cause conflict:

- Absenteeism
- Misunderstandings or lack of information
- Changes in the workplace
- Actions taken by a supervisor.
- Evaluation of work performance

Personal situations that affect work performance
One of the biggest challenges managers have is dealing with the distractions caused by workplace dysfunctionality. In this session you will learn several techniques that will enable you to anticipate, manage and diffuse conflict and other communication issues.

Learning Objectives:

- The ego states of communication
- 5 different ways of dealing with conflict
- Critical steps for diffusing toxic situations
- Six types of behavioral issues
- Dealing with difficult colleagues and customers
- Dealing with distractions caused by workplace dysfunctionality

Implementing techniques to anticipate, manage and diffuse conflict and other communication issues

Developing a Department of Leaders

Presenter**: Catherine Arman-Santana and Nina Herman-Schlissel**

In public service, where civil service exams often determine who rises, how can organizations cultivate a strong pipeline of effective and efficient leaders? This presentation will showcase how Westchester County DSS (WCDSS) has embraced a proactive approach to leadership development that extends beyond titles. Learn how WCDSS fosters a leadership culture at every level through a strategic plan designed to equip staff with the skills and growth mindset necessary for innovation and enhanced service to the community. Join us to discover practical strategies for empowering your workforce and transforming your organization into a department of leaders.

Leading Through Uncertainty, Disruption, & Change

Presenters**: Ed Robinson**

What do leaders do when the storms of uncertainty hit? They learn to *dance in the rain*. In this inspirational keynote, Ed Robinson helps professionals embrace change with resilience, optimism, and leadership clarity. Drawing from his book, Ed shares practical tools and real stories to turn disruption into momentum.

Learning Objectives:

- Shift from managing change to leading it
- Build resilient, adaptable teams
- Apply Ed's change-leadership model during uncertainty
- Inspire confidence and calm in chaotic environments
- Lead transformation with purpose and energy

**Best For: ** Leaders, investigators, risk teams, and professionals facing high-stakes transitions

Calculating TA Overpayments

Presenters**: Michelle Ray and Chris VerWys**

This workshop reviews selected job tasks associated with Temporary Assistance (TA) overpayments, with a focus on the steps involved in identifying the overpayment period and calculating the TA overpayment amount. Topics include determining the TA overpayment period, calculating the TA overpayment amount, determining TA benefits received, and determining corrected TA benefit amounts.

This workshop is appropriate for welfare fraud investigators involved in identifying and calculating TA overpayments and establishing TA claims, as well as for supervisors who review and approve cases with TA overpayments.

Workshop Objectives

Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Determine the TA overpayment period based on case circumstances.
- Calculate the overpayment amount for the TA overpayment period, including the amount received and the corrected benefit amount.

The SLEB Process

Presenters**: Ken Constable, Patrick Hayden**

State Law Enforcement Bureau (SLEB) investigative processes and how these efforts help detect and deter SNAP fraud.

Interviewing: Digging out the Facts

Presenters**: John Melville & Steve Peglow**

In this session we will discuss ideas and tips for interviewing individuals who may not want to answer our questions immediately. From witnesses, family members- to the target themselves-not everyone wants to talk but we need their information.

Interviewing is a skill that can add to your effectiveness as an investigator and bring success to cases, and is an investigative resource that is easy to maximize.

Cyber-enabled Financial Crimes

Presenter**: Jason Fazio & NYSP Cyber Analysis Unit**

Using the physical skimming devices to forensically analyze data

Child Care Assistance Overpayments

Presenters**: Erin Duffy & Tara Fix**

This interactive session is intended to take a deeper dive into the requirements of the Child Care Assistance Program rules and evaluate tools available to provide insight that will assist investigations, as well as, seek input where OCFS can further support investigations. Discussion will entail how to determine if a child care overpayment occurred, who is responsible, and how to recover funds, along with requirements for tracking overpayments, providing resources for investigation, and policies and procedures around disqualifications.

Fraud Directors Meeting

Hosted by**: OTDA-A&QI Program Integrity and the Office of the Welfare Inspector General**

An annual session for OTDA Program Integrity staff and local district Fraud Directors to discuss a wide range of fraud topics and concerns. This year, the Office of the Welfare Inspector General will be joining as well!

Maximizing FEDS

Presenter**: Bob Antonacci**

Join us for a session to identify ways to maximize your district's Front End Detections System (FEDS) program by focusing on best practices and current procedures used by the district. This session is intended to be an interactive and collaborative discussion between OTDA and the districts to build a better FEDS plan

SNAP Hot Topics

Presenters**: Sherry Tomasky & Jamie Weeks**

OTDA SNAP Policy staff will provide updates and responses to frequently asked questions regarding verification rules for SNAP, income budgeting with a focus on unconventional income sources, and how payment errors are calculated and can be mitigated.

Improper Payment Review

Presenter**: Darci Primeau and Emily Sylvester**

This session will provide an overview of the federal Improper Payment Review (IPR) process and other program integrity requirements for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). OCFS will review common errors identified within the previous IPR phase, describe OCFS enhancements and initiatives and discuss opportunities to promote strengthening internal controls and improve overall program integrity.

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2026 OTDA & NYWFIA Program Integrity Regional Trainings

Meeting begins: 9:00 AM, Meeting ends: 4:00 PM, Registration: 8:30 AM

Morning beverages, lunch, and afternoon refreshments provided.

September 23, 2026

Buffalo Marriott Niagara
1340 Millersport Highway
Amherst, NY 14221
(716) 689-6900

Registration Deadline: August 24, 2026

September 24, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton Syracuse
6301 State Route 298
East Syracuse, NY 13057
(315) 432-0200

Registration Deadline: August 21, 2026

October 14, 2026

Sleepy Hollow Hotel
455 S Broadway
Tarrytown, NY 10591
(914) 631-5700

Registration Deadline: September 22, 2026

October 22, 2026

Desmond Crowne Plaza Albany
660 Albany Shaker Road
Albany, NY 12211
(518) 869-8100

Registration Deadline: September 29, 2026

Target Population: SSD Eligibility and Fraud staff and supervisors, SSD legal/hearings staff, contract investigative staff and other SSD staff and supervisors that interact with cases of potential TA and FS fraud.

Course Prerequisites: Participants are encouraged to attend the meeting closest to their county seat.

Tentative Agenda

(08:30 - 09:00) - Registration
(09:00 - 09:15) - Welcome
(09:15 - 12:00) - OTDA Program Integrity
(12:00 - 01:00) - Lunch (provided)
(01:00 - 03:45) - TBA
(03:45 - 04:00) - Closing Remarks

**Each participant will receive a certificate of training*

See HSLC announcement for complete details.

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