



**Appalachian  
Leadership  
Institute**  
an ARC initiative

## **Session III: Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem**

**February 14-16, 2024 | Tupelo, MS  
Cadence Bank Arena**

**Wednesday, February 14**

Attire for the Day: Business Casual

- 7:00 – 8:00 am **Breakfast** | Magnolia
- 8:00 – 8:05 am **Welcome & The Day Ahead** | Sweetgum  
*Jessica Mosley, Program Manager, Appalachian Regional Commission*
- 8:05 – 8:15 am **Welcome to Mississippi** | Sweetgum  
*Andrea Rose, ARC Program Manager, Mississippi*
- 8:15 – 9:00 am **Foundations: Trends in Ready Workforce** | Sweetgum  
*Tim Ezzell, Ph.D., Assistant Research Professor, ISSE and Political Science,  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville*  
*Cat Wilt, Research Director, University of Tennessee Knoxville*
- 9:00 – 10:15 am **HBCUs and Workforce Trends** | Sweetgum  
*Cadavious Jones, Ph.D., Dean, Math & Science Department, Rust College*  
*Rita Gibson-Rayford, Director of Corporate & Foundation Giving, Rust College*  
*Alice Periotti, Grant Writer, Rust College*  
*Kaysha Jackson, Director of Economic Development Center, West Virginia State  
University*  
*Moderator: Tasha Hargrove, Ph.D., Associate Extension Research Professor,  
Agricultural and Resource Economics, Tuskegee University*
- 10:15 – 10:45 am **Break** | Magnolia
- 10:45 – 11:45 am **Community Needs Assessment and Asset Mapping** | Sweetgum  
*Bruce Decker, Owner, Collective Impact, LLC*
- 11:45 am – 12:45 pm **Lunch** | Magnolia
- 12:45 – 2:00 pm **Healthy Workforce Roundtable: Public Health and Access to Healthcare** |  
Sweetgum  
*Randy Wykoff, MD., MPH, & TM Professor and Dean, ETSU College of Public  
Health*  
*David Wilson, Chief Operating Officer, North Mississippi Health Services*  
*Moderator: Denise Burgess, RN, Senior Educator, Vandalia Health*

- 2:00 – 2:30 pm **Finding Your Blue Ocean** | Sweetgum  
*Tim Ezzell, Ph.D., Assistant Research Professor, ISSE and Political Science, University of Tennessee, Knoxville*
- 2:30 – 3:00 pm **Break** | Magnolia
- 3:00 – 5:00 pm **Team Challenge: Finding Your Blue Ocean** | Various
- 6:30 – 8:00 pm **Networking Reception** | GumTree Museum of Art

## Thursday, February 15

Attire for the Day: Business Casual

- 7:00 – 8:00 am **Breakfast** | Magnolia
- 8:00 – 8:10 am **The Day Ahead** | Sweetgum
- 8:10 – 9:30 am **Building Opportunities for New Appalachian Workers** | Sweetgum  
*Philip Cooper, Executive Director, Operation Gateway*  
*Sherye Price, Executive Director, Franklin County Economic Development*  
*Guillermo Vasquez, Insurance Agent and Member, Russellville Collective Board*  
*Moderator: Albine Bennett, Vice President, Director of Environmental, Social, and Governance Operations, Cadence Bank*
- 9:40 am **Bus Departs for Itawamba Community College**
- 10:00 – 10:45 am **Itawamba Community College Tour**
- 11:00 am – 12:00 pm **Toyota Experience Center Tour**
- 12:30 pm **Bus Returns to Cadence Bank Arena**
- 12:30 – 1:30 pm **Working Lunch: Book Discussion** | Magnolia  
*Katie Cahill, Ph.D., Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives, Howard H. Baker Jr. School for Public Policy, University of Tennessee Knoxville*
- 1:30 – 3:00 pm **Breakout Discussion: Developing A New Narrative** | Sweetgum  
*Cat Wilt, Research Director, University of Tennessee Knoxville*
- 3:00 – 5:30 pm **Team Challenge Work Time** | Various
- \*\*\*Dinner on Your Own\*\*\*

## Friday, February 16

Attire for the Day: Nice Casual

- 7:00 – 9:00 am **Breakfast & Team Challenge Work Time** | Magnolia & Various
- 9:00 – 11:00 am **Team Challenge Presentations** | Sweetgum
- 11:00 am **Adjourn**