

COHORT 2021 DAY OF INNOVATION

LEADER BIOS



SEAN ADAMS, STATE FUND

Appointed in early 2019, Sean Adams assumed the Senior Vice President of Innovation Design for State Fund. He is a technology leader with ten years of experience directing software products and applications through the definition, delivery, integration, and maintenance phases. Responsibilities include influencing stakeholders, resource allocation, market analytics, budget compliance, cost analysis, scope definition, project and program planning, and risk-mitigation analysis.



ANGELA BARRANCO, CNRA

Angela Barranco joined the California Natural Resources Agency in May 2019. As Undersecretary, Angela oversees an agency charged with protecting and managing California's diverse resources. This includes stewarding the state's forests and natural lands, rivers and waterways, coast and ocean, fish and wildlife, and energy development.

At the state, federal, and local levels, Angela has served as a non-profit executive, communications and outreach strategist, and Federal Presidential appointee. Before she was appointed Undersecretary, Angela was Chief Executive Officer at River LA, a non-profit focused on bringing together the Los Angeles region through the reimagining of the L.A. River as a multi-benefit urban infrastructure. As a Presidential Appointee, Barranco led public engagement for the Obama White House on environment, conservation, climate, and energy issues. She also served as Deputy Chief of Staff at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, working on Detroit revitalization, Promise Zones, and climate-smart post-disaster rebuilding. Barranco managed and advised political campaigns across the country, including as National Western Regional Director for the Obama 2012 re-election campaign. Additionally, she has experience in communications and environmental policy work at the U.S. Congress, state, and municipal levels.

Angela received a bachelor's degree in Environmental Biology from Columbia College, Columbia University, with a focus on conservation. She is bilingual and fluent in Spanish.



REBEKAH CHRISTENSEN, ORA SYSTEMS, INC.

The common denominator that unifies my career is my penchant to unleash and accelerate the human potential in each and every one of us. As founder and CEO of ORA Systems and Chair of the California Innovation Playbook for Government Change Agents (Cal-IPGCA: 2012-19), I employ this strategy. Cal-IPGCA, (formerly the Navigating Leadership Program), is under the Executive Sponsorship of the Government Operations Agency, the Franchise Tax Board (FTB), the Department of General Services (DGS), the Asian Pacific State Employees Association, (APSEA), and ORA Systems.

Across my career, I have designed systems that include life cycle approaches to areas such as site cleanup and tech transfer for the Department of Energy and Defense (DOE-DoD), guidance for the cultural integration of traditional Oriental medicine through the World Health Organization's International Classification of Traditional Medicine (ICTM) project, the design and enactment of amending language to Mello-Roos to manage funding risk in multi-million dollar site cleanup, and the design of a cooperative solution, with UCSB and CalPoly, that led to integrating competing economies to collaboratively promote tourism on the central coast of California.

Whether self-employed, working within corporate America or non-profit leadership, or as a government employee, I believe that success is the juncture when where who you are and what you do becomes one. From that moment forward, I believe that work isn't merely a job—it's a calling to serve!



MD HAQUE, DWR

My name is MD Haque. I am a father of a curious 8 year old boy and husband of a lovely wife. I love biking, hiking and white water rafting. I am passionate about making positive difference in collective good. I am a Hawkeye fan (Go hawks!).

I consider myself a humble servant of the citizens of California. The word innovation inspires me a lot. I am proud to be part of the wonderful California Department of Water Resources (DWR) team for last 12 years. I am a licensed civil engineer who loves working with movement of water from our mountains to reservoirs, to rivers to pumps or to ocean.

I am a graduate of Cal-IPGCA cohort 2017. I am lucky to be part of the group of seven change agents who founded Cal-IPGCA association. I am proud to be a member of the Cal-IPGCA association moonshot and look forward to continue the journey of innovation and leadership.



HENRY JONES, CalPERS

Henry Jones is serving his fourth term on the CalPERS Board of Administration and his second one-year term as president. Prior to being elected president, he served three years as vice president of the board.

He retired in 1998 from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)—the second largest in the nation. As chief financial officer, he oversaw LAUSD's \$7 billion annual budget. He also headed their Annuity Reserve Fund Board overseeing the pension fund for 7,000 schoolteachers and administrators.

Henry currently serves as a personnel commissioner for the Los Angeles Community College District. He is a member of the governing board of the Robert Toigo Foundation, a nonprofit organization that encourages minorities and women to pursue careers in finance. He also serves on the board of the Pacific Pension & Investment Institute, an educational organization that assists pension funds, corporations, financial institutions, and endowments worldwide with their fiduciary responsibilities, particularly in Asia and the Pacific region.

Previously, Henry represented CalPERS on the Advisory Council of California All, a nonprofit organization focused on closing the achievement gap from preschool to professional careers in law, financial services, and technology. He has served on the board of directors for Community Partners, a nonprofit organization that works with social entrepreneurs, grant makers, and civic leaders to design solutions, foster, launch, and sustain initiatives for change.



MICHAEL KEEVER, DOT

Mike KEEVER was appointed as Caltrans' Acting Chief Deputy Director, effective May 1, 2021. This position oversees all Caltrans' operations, comprising nearly 22,000 employees, a \$15.5 billion budget, the massive SB 1 infrastructure program, major efficiency efforts, and leadership development.

Mike most recently served as Chief Engineer and Deputy Director for Caltrans' Project Delivery, overseeing a program of nearly 9,000 employees and an annual budget of approximately \$2.0 billion. In this role he has been responsible for all aspects of Caltrans' transportation projects statewide, from environmental approval, design, right-of-way certification and clearance, and surveys; to structures, geotechnical investigations, materials testing, contract bids and awards, project management, and construction.

With more than thirty years at Caltrans, Mike has served in many different positions, including as Division Chief of Project Management and Division Chief of Engineering Services. In addition, Mike has been actively engaged on infrastructure policy and research, working with AASHTO, TRB, NCHRP, and research universities around the country. Mike also brings his extensive experience in collaboration and communication with internal and external stakeholders and partners, including the California Transportation Commission, the Federal Highway Administration, PECG, ACEC, Self-Help Counties Coalition, and the construction industry.

Mike graduated from the University of Southern California with a Bachelor of Science in Structure Design and is a licensed Civil Engineer.



KATHIE KISHABA, DWR

Katherine S. Kishaba was appointed deputy director of Business Operations on March 2, 2011. Her primary responsibilities include managing fiscal, information technology, procurement, human resources, facilities, and safety programs. Business Operations consists of approximately 400 employees department-wide.

Prior to assuming her current role, Kishaba served as our budget officer beginning in 2003 and was responsible for the development and administration of a multibillion dollar budget. Previously, Kishaba also oversaw all administrative activities of the Bay-Delta Office and worked in the administrative sections of former Division of Land and Right of Way and Office of Water Education (now the Public Affairs Office). She participated in the implementation and upgrade of SAP, our enterprise financial system, and more recently managed the design and roll-out of the Enterprise Budget Planning system in 2009.

Kishaba holds both a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of California, Davis Graduate School of Management, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in social science from the University of California, Berkeley.



STEPHENSON LOVESON, CALPERS

Stephenson Loveson serves as Chief of the CalPERS Data Center, one of the largest, most complex data centers in the state. His responsibilities include managing policies, standards, processes and modernizing the CalPERS Data Center infrastructure by advancing cloud technologies and automation frameworks. Stephenson has extensive experience in technology strategic planning, improving, and implementing large scale, cross-functional, and complex IT solutions, project management, policy, governance and change management. Stephenson believes in utilizing technology to advance business outcomes and serve the people of California.

Stephenson is a graduate of the Information Technology Leadership Academy, a program focused on developing leadership skills among State IT professionals. Stephenson has a Master of Business Administration degree specializing in Information Technology Management and Finance as well as a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering.



KARLA NEMETH, DIRECTOR, DWR

Karla Nemeth was appointed Director of the California Department of Water Resources by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. on January 10, 2018, and was reappointed by Governor Gavin Newsom on June 28, 2019.

DWR operates and maintains the California State Water Project, manages floodwaters, monitors dam safety, conducts habitat restoration, and provides technical assistance and funding for projects for local water needs. Nemeth oversees the Department and its mission to manage and protect California's water resources, working with other agencies in order to benefit the State's people and to protect, restore and enhance the natural and human environments.

Nemeth worked at the California Natural Resources Agency as Governor Brown's deputy secretary and senior advisor for water policy since 2014. She was Bay Delta Conservation Plan project manager from 2009 to 2014.

Nemeth was environmental and public affairs director for the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District from 2005 to 2009. She was community affairs manager at Jones and Stokes from 2003 to 2005. She has a Master's degree in public administration from the University of Washington.



GENE "LASAGNA" ROMAGNA, DMV

Gene currently serves as an AGPA (analyst) with the CA Dept. of Motor Vehicles, working on special projects in their Executive Division at the Sacramento HQ. He is a graduate of the 2019 Cal-IPGCA Cohort and serves as the current Communications Director for its Board. Prior to coming to the DMV, Gene worked for major US companies such as IBM and AT&T in various technical and marketing capacities both in the United States and Europe, before moving from his home state of NJ to FL, where he became a serial entrepreneur starting several businesses and acting as a turn-round CEO back in Orlando, FL. He is a published business author and firm believer in collaboration and innovation at every level. As he says, he prefers "chaos rather than cobwebs" and values kindness to everyone.



JOHN SANBORN, CalHR

A dynamic, accomplished Chief Learning Officer highly regarded for orchestrating superior programs for the reform and development of employee and organizational excellence.

Known as an expert at synthesizing personnel, management and operations decisions to meet requirements and align goals with values and visions. Proud US Navy veteran and an extremely creative leader with outstanding work ethic. Out-of-the-box, strategic thinker who constantly promotes excellence, builds superb talent development solutions and motivates employees toward top-level performance.



MICHELLE SCHMITT, MASTER FACILITATOR, CAL-IPGCA PROGRAM

Michelle Schmitt has 29 years of experience in California State Government service specializing in organizational capacity building, leadership development, succession planning, workforce management and successful new program development & implementation collaborating across diverse stakeholder groups. She is the Master Facilitator for the Cohort Moonshot Training Teams under the Cal-IPGCA Program. Michelle's key attributes and skills include:

- Experienced advisor, consultant, coach and partner to Executive Leadership with understanding of how to navigate sensitive political landscapes
- Skilled facilitator of collaborative meetings that forge positive relationships and outcomes for possibilities and results
- Leader of agency-wide and department-wide teams and initiatives without benefit of formal reporting relationships to achieve positive outcomes
- Dynamic learning facilitator and designer creating and leading complex learning programs for managers and executives
- Creative Program developer and manager bringing large scale change initiatives to successful fruition
- Organizational Performance consultant who gains trust quickly to identify and resolve internal obstacles to achieving missions



KATHLEEN WEBB, CHIEF DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES (DMV) - Cal-IPGCA EXECUTIVE SPONSOR

In July 2019, Kathleen Webb was appointed Chief Deputy Director of the Department of Motor Vehicles. Ms. Webb served as the Acting Director of DMV.

Previously, she was Director of Performance Improvement, Eureka Institute, a part of the Government Operations Agency Innovation and Accountability portfolio. Prior to joining the Government Operations Agency in January 2015, Ms. Webb's public service experience included Chief Risk and Compliance Officer for CalPERS from 2012 to 2014, Director of Policy and Risk Management for Correctional Health Care Services from 2010 to 2012, Deputy Director at the Department of General Services from 2008 to 2009 and Director for the Governor's Office of the Insurance Advisor from 2006 to 2008.

Ms. Webb also held multiple positions with State Farm Insurance from 1986 to 2006, including agency, claims management and legislative affairs. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Women's Studies from UC Berkeley and a Charter Property & Casualty Underwriter (CPCU) professional designation.



JOE XAVIER, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION (DOR)

Director Joe Xavier was a small business owner for over 14 years before he began his career in public administration in 1998. For almost 30 years, Joe has been actively involved in community and advocacy organizations, including the Association of California State Employees with Disabilities and the Asian Pacific State Employees Association.

He has served as a gubernatorial appointee at the Department of Rehabilitation since 2008. Director Xavier's current career highlights include service as project director for a \$50 million cross-organizational project aimed at reducing reliance on public benefits among families of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients ages 14 to 16 as well as a multi-state \$866 million proposal to provide food services to United States Marine Corp bases in California and Arizona.

In addition to managing these high-profile projects, Director Xavier led the successful transition of the Traumatic Brain Injury program into the Department of Rehabilitation and initiated the realignment funding for the Older Individuals Who are Blind program. Through the University of Southern California's School of Public Policy, Director Xavier is a fellow of the Sierra Health Foundation Leadership Institute and a graduate of San Diego State University's National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute. He has also completed the California Health and Human Services Agency Leadership Academy program.