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## EXPERIENCE

### **February 2021 – Present. CEO / VP of External Affairs. Research Improving People’s Lives (RIPL)**

- \* RIPL is a national tech-for-social-impact 501c3 that empowers government leaders to leverage contemporary technology to solve public problems.
- \* Lead the national expansion of the DOORS product
  - Leverages administrative data to deploy AI/ML that generates new career, job and training opportunities to the un- and under-employed at a post-COVID scale
  - Expanding from one state to implementation in 20 states
- \* Administer transition from a boutique policy lab at Brown University to a national organization able to sustain prominence in the field – budgeting, planning, performance management, HR processes etc.
- \* Develop and manage funder relationships to support RIPL’s mission

### **January 2015 – February 2021. Director. Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT)**

- \* Appointed by Governor Gina Raimondo to this cabinet position, confirmed twice by the Rhode Island Senate. Resigned when Governor Raimondo was confirmed as U.S. Secretary of Commerce.
- \* Conceived, launched and implemented Real Jobs RI, which as of February 2021 had:
  - Placed or upskilled 12,363 people in 1,946 companies by means of 43 sector-partnerships
  - Empowered sector partnerships to develop 861 new, demand-driven programs
  - Innovated administratively to solve a host of procurement, legal and compliance challenges that have traditionally stymied demand-driven workforce efforts
  - Solved, at scale, the hiring challenge of General Dynamics/Electric Boat (GD/EB) for the manufacture of the Navy’s Columbia Class nuclear submarine
    - \* Worked with U.S. Senator Jack Reed, the U.S. Dept. of Defense and GD/EB to obtain a first-of-its-kind workforce development appropriation for national defense projects and their supply chains
- \* Developed and executed Governor Raimondo’s Back to Work RI initiative, a Real Jobs RI-powered workforce development response to the economic aftermath of COVID-19
  - \$45 million budget from CARES Act
  - Relocates 7,000 Rhode Islander’s displaced from the labor market by the pandemic through relentlessly demand-driven workforce solutions
  - Invests strategically in generous, just-in-time supports to ensure participant success
  - Deploys first-in-nation technological innovation
    - \* “Discovery Bot” with Research Improving People’s Lives (A Brown University incubated non-profit); an AI/ML application that mines government and private sector data to empower its user to switch careers in their regional labor market
    - \* Google Cloud’s Virtual Career Center: fully online, cloud-based video conferencing and scheduling platform to manage participant consultation with job coaches, support services, recruiters and employers.
- \* Personally led the Unemployment Insurance (UI) response to COVID-19
  - Rapidly deployed Amazon Web Services cloud-based technology to serve the crush of COVID applicants for UI benefits
  - Initiated and built the “Pizza Tracker”, a complete rethinking of RI’s UI system, predicated on cloud-based computing, that radically improves customer service while combating the “imposter fraud” that plagued UI programs nationwide
- \* Other notable examples of leadership

- Founded Skills for Rhode Island's Future, a talent-sourcing workforce intermediary, which was the first national expansion of parent-organization Skills for Chicagoland's Future
- Implemented "DLTStat", modeled on Maryland's "StateStat" program in partnership with Johns Hopkins GovEx program.

**January 2012 – January 2015. Deputy Secretary. Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR)**

- \* Conceived, launched and implemented EARN Maryland, the state's sector strategies workforce/economic development initiative
- \* Interim Secretary (May 2012 – October 2012)
  - Directly responsible to Governor Martin O'Malley for all aspects of DLLR with its \$320 million budget, over 2,000 employees and seven divisions
- \* Direct oversight of DLLR's administrative units: human resources, budget, information technology, general services and fair practices
- \* Drove change by inclusive, collaborative engagement:
  - A "hard reset" of the agency's implementation of the Workplace Fraud Act of 2009 in response to legislative scrutiny of the program (2012)
  - Led overhaul of the Division of Workforce Development's financial infrastructure, having had to replace leadership (2012-2013)
  - Reform of key DLLR's Human Resources processes: recruitment, time-keeping policies and disciplinary procedures (2013-2014)
- \* Other notable examples of leadership
  - Led response to Baltimore's Sparrow's Point (aka Bethlehem Steel) steel plant closure (2012)
  - Built the first-in-the-nation cross-agency Workforce Development Dashboard (2012)
  - Founded JARC-Baltimore, a best-in-class manufacturing training center in Baltimore's Park Heights community.
  - Responsible for labor relations with DLLR's unions, and external relations with organized labor

**August 2009 – January 2012. Assistant to the President for Government and Community Relations, Salisbury University**

- \* Senior advisor to President Janet Dudley-Eshbach as part of her six person executive staff
- \* Led collaborative efforts on numerous University priorities:
  - Two Signature Capital Projects:
    - \* \$128 million library (broke ground in 2014)
    - \* \$65 million mixed-use dorm/retail project, "Seagull Square"
  - Created federal procurement and logistics "2+2" program at Aberdeen Proving Ground
  - Conceived, drafted and passed enabling amendment for tuition adjustment worth \$2 million/year
- \* Chair of the "Town/Gown Council"
  - Led university's downtown economic redevelopment efforts
  - Represented University before Salisbury's City Government on all land use issues

**April 2007 – August 2009. Special Assistant to the Secretary, DLLR**

- \* Accountable to Secretary Tom Perez as part of the Office of the Secretary's executive team
- \* Led priority initiatives for DLLR and the O'Malley Administration:
  - Implemented Maryland's first-in-the-nation Living Wage Law
  - Political strategy and execution for bringing Adult Education to DLLR
  - Passed the Maryland Workplace Fraud Act of 2009
  - Guided high priority procurements before the Board of Public Works
- \* Created departmental legislative tracking system
- \* Managed relations with Labor Unions both within and outside of DLLR

**February 2004 – April 2007. Political Organizer, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees**

- \* Passed significant legislation for state employees

- 20 year retirement for Correctional Maintenance and Supply Officers
- Overturned efforts to defund Maryland's enforcement of labor law
- Protected numerous agency budgets from unwarranted cuts
- \* Built engaged state-wide grassroots lobbying efforts with numerous constituencies of state employees

**May 2001 – May 2009. City Council, Easton, Maryland (did not seek re-election after two terms)**

- \* Managed all communications – interviews, provision of background information, many opinion editorials
- \* Notable accomplishments include:
  - Negotiated consensus between developers and community groups for two controversial development projects: Easton Village and Easton Marketplace
  - Developed and passed architectural standards for new commercial development
  - Led revitalization efforts in Easton's historic downtown:
    - \* Streamlined approval for innovative development proposals consistent with smart-growth principles
    - \* Freed Easton from antiquated “blue laws” that hampered economic development and tourism
    - \* Expanded Easton historic district to preserve town's brand and history
    - \* With colleagues forced the Talbot County Council to place a statue of Talbot County's own Frederick Douglas on the County Courthouse lawn in Easton.

**July 2001 – February 2004. Higher Education Organizer, American Federation of Teachers**

- \* Implemented and designed field strategy for higher education organizing campaigns
- \* Developed and executed lobbying efforts on behalf of full-time faculty

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**2015 – 2021. Instructor at the Honors Program (political philosophy and ethics), University of Rhode Island**

**1999-2001 and 2010, Lecturer in Philosophy and the Honors Program at Salisbury University in Salisbury, Maryland**

**1998 Instructor of Philosophy at Towson University in Towson, Maryland**

EDUCATION

**1993-1999 PhD Candidate (ABD) in Philosophy at the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York, New York (Husserlian Phenomenology, Heidegger, Wittgenstein)**

**1991 MA Liberal Education from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland and Santa Fe, New Mexico**

**1989 BA History from Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois**

INVITED PRESENTATIONS/PUBLICATIONS (selected)

Featured on “Talent Talks” pod-cast; “Rebounding from the Pandemic and Envisioning a Better Normal.”  
 May 19, 2021. <https://mahernet.com/TalentTalks/episode/rebounding-from-the-pandemic-and-envisioning-a-better-normal>

Co-author of “Delivering Unemployment Assistance in Times of Crisis: Scalable Cloud Solutions Can Keep Essential Government Programs Running and Supporting Those in Need” in *Digital Government: Research and Practice*: Vol. 2, Issue 1; Nov. 2020. <https://dl.acm.org/toc/dgov/2020/2/1>

Featured guest speaker for the AWS Public Sector Summit Online 2020 keynote. June 30, 2020.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7kdFhuJL3s> at 20:30.

**“How Rhode Island Rapidly Scaled to Handle Unemployment Claims” featured speaker for *Governing Magazine’s* E-Republic webinar series. May 7, 2020. [https://www.governing.com/events/webinars/How-Rhode-Island-Rapidly-Scaled-to-Handle-Unemployment-Claims-127726.html?appCore=https://cms.erepublic.com/common/forms/ajax\\_form/127726](https://www.governing.com/events/webinars/How-Rhode-Island-Rapidly-Scaled-to-Handle-Unemployment-Claims-127726.html?appCore=https://cms.erepublic.com/common/forms/ajax_form/127726)**

**Panelist for the Brookings Institution’s “Building the Workforce of the future: Resilient People and Places”. May 21, 2019 in Washington, D.C. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYICCNGIE88&t=2483s> at 38:27.**

**“Supporting Career Readiness Systems” with General Dynamics/Electric Boat President Jeffery Geiger at “America Working Forward”, a conference held by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. October 16, 2017 in Washington, D.C. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAMMMWFPNaw> at 4:32.**

**“Skills for Chicagoland’s Future and the Next Chapter for Skills for America’s Future” a discussion with Marie Lynch of Skills for Chicagoland’s Future moderated by Ellen Alberding, President, Joyce Foundation. At the Aspen Institute’s “Celebrating Skills for America's Future”, May 17, 2016 in Washington, D.C. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/events/celebrating-skills-for-americas-future/> at 46:10.**

**“Operationalizing EARN Maryland” (presentation with Elisabeth Sachs) for The Greater Newark Workforce Funders Collaborative and the New Jersey Department of Labor. September 23, 2014 in Newark, New Jersey**

**“Preparing Workers for Today and Tomorrow’s Jobs” (panelist and Q&A) at “Opportunities of Working Families in Tight Budget Times: A Leadership Forum for State Lawmakers” held by the National Conference of State Legislatures. June 22, 2014 in Denver, Colorado**

**Testified hundreds of times before the various committees of the Maryland and Rhode Island General Assemblies on just as many pieces of legislation and appeared numerous times in all common modes of media. 2001-Present**

**"Heidegger's Reflective Philosophy," paper given at a meeting of The Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP). October 1998 in Denver, Colorado**

**"Metaphysical Rhetoric in Heidegger's *Being and Time*," paper given in 1997 at DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois**

**"Heidegger and Authenticity American Style," paper given in 1996 at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio**