

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 – OPENING KEYNOTE (8:00 A.M.)

BUILT TO LAST: LEADING WITH TRUST, RESPECT, & HUMAN CONNECTION IN GOVERNMENT WORK

Government meeting professionals are holding it all together: tight budgets, tighter timelines, and teams running on fumes. This keynote reconnects attendees to the why behind their work, showing how small, intentional acts of recognition and respect strengthen morale, communication, and performance. Drawing from decades of leadership experience and real-world examples from across industries, Lisa Ryan delivers an energizing message on staying engaged, optimistic, and effective, even when demands don't let up. Attendees will leave inspired and equipped to lead with confidence, gratitude, and grit.



Speaker: Lisa Ryan, CSP

Lisa Ryan, CSP is a workplace culture strategist and professional keynote speaker who helps leaders attract and keep great employees by creating cultures of respect, trust, and recognition. With years of firsthand insight from interviewing hundreds of industry executives, she delivers fast-paced, story-driven programs that turn connection into retention. A past president of the National Speakers Association Ohio Chapter and host of The Manufacturers Network Podcast, Lisa's programs inspire action and lasting loyalty.

Core Competency: Logistics **CEUs:** 1

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 (9:30 A.M.)

DMOS DECODED: LEVERAGING DESTINATION EXPERTS TO ELEVATE YOUR GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

This session dives into how DMOs serve as strategic partners to streamline planning, simplify sourcing, and enhance the attendee experience—all at no cost to the planner. Attendees will discover how to tap into destination expertise, grant-funded programs, and community connections to deliver seamless, compliant, and high-impact government meetings.



Speaker: Brittany H. Alger

Brittany Alger is the Director of Sales for Visit Williamsburg, where she leads efforts to connect meeting planners, groups, and organizations with unforgettable experiences across Greater Williamsburg. With a strong background in hospitality and destination marketing, Brittany is passionate about showcasing the region's charm while driving economic impact through strategic partnerships and creative collaboration.

Core Competency: Travel **CEUs:** 1

TRANSFORMING GOVERNMENT TRAVEL AND MEETINGS: FROM MANAGEMENT TO GOVERNMENT TRAVEL AND MEETINGS AS A SERVICE (TAAS)

From Travel Management to Travel as a Service (TaaS) shows how government agencies can modernize travel through digitization, automation, and AI-driven personalization. TaaS shifts focus from transactions to traveler experiences by connecting travelers, managers, and suppliers via the Service Exchange Platform (SXP). With secure, data-driven integration and real-time analytics, agencies gain transparency, efficiency, and sustainability. This transformation enhances duty of care, streamlines procurement, and strengthens mission outcome, making government travel smarter, more connected, and value-driven across meetings, events, and operations.



Speaker: Susan Lichtenstein

Susan Lichtenstein, Vice President of Sales for HQ, has a distinguished career in the travel and meeting industry, having held key executive roles on both the buyer and supplier sides. She founded the Travel and Meeting Society (TAMS) to enhance industry practices. Recognized as an innovator and disruptor, she specializes in business leadership, travel and expense procurement, strategic planning, and process optimization. Her accomplishments include being named one of Business Travel News's Top 25 Influential Executives, one of the Top 50 Women in Travel, Travel Manager of the Year, and induction into the Business Travel Hall of Fame.

Core Competency: Technology **CEUs:** 1

THE INCLUSIVE MEETING PLAYBOOK: AI TECHNIQUES THAT SAVE TIME AND EXPAND ACCESS

Government meetings must be understandable, accessible, and relevant to every attendee—without increasing the planner’s workload. This session teaches experienced AI users how to apply workflows to make meeting communication clearer, more inclusive, and easier to navigate. We’ll cover AI tools for plain-language rewrites, multilingual summaries, captioning support, ADA-aligned readability checks, and culturally informed content review. Attendees will learn repeatable workflows that improve clarity while reducing manual editing. You’ll leave with practical templates and an AI-powered inclusion checklist you can apply immediately to elevate the attendee experience in any meeting environment.

Speaker: Tamay Shannon



Tamay Shannon is a seasoned social media strategist and the founder of W2S Marketing, where she helps government, nonprofit, and corporate teams simplify digital communication and drive meaningful engagement. With over a decade of experience, she blends data-driven insight with accessible, real-world strategies that empower audiences to navigate today’s fast-changing digital landscape. Tamay is a best-selling author and a sought-after educator who has trained thousands of professionals on using social media and AI tools more effectively. Known for her clarity, practicality, and engaging teaching style, she equips attendees with actionable steps they can implement immediately.

Core Competency: Ethics **CEUs:** 1

THE DREAM DUO: BUILDING SUPPLIER-PLANNER RELATIONSHIPS THAT LAST

Join The Dream Duo—Chris and Nick—for a lively, laugh-filled session that dives into the ups and downs of supplier-planner partnerships. Through interactive skits featuring audience volunteers, they’ll bring to life the real frustrations, victories, and “did that really just happen?” moments from both perspectives. You’ll explore what makes a supplier or planner truly exceptional, hear real-world success stories, and walk away with a practical checklist for becoming a “dream partner.” Expect a down-to-earth, comical, and refreshingly honest look at how the industry is evolving—and how to stay ahead of the curve together.



Speaker: Nick Stratton & Chris McLaughlin

Chris and Nick bring a powerful blend of hospitality, leadership, and event expertise to every project they touch. Chris has over 35 years of experience in the hospitality industry and is a Senior Director of Global Sales for Choice Hotels International. Nick, Event Specialist with Kelley Cawthorne, combines more than a decade of conference and meeting management experience with a background in emergency services—bringing precision, calm, and creativity to every event. Together, they’re known for turning logistics into memorable experiences and challenges into opportunities for connection, growth, and a little fun along the way.



Core Competency: Finance & Contracts **CEUs:** 1

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 (11:00 A.M.)

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF NO-COST CONTRACTING FOR GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

Dive deep into the strategic use of No-Cost Contracts for your next government conference. We will move beyond the basics, exploring when this unique model is a truly viable option and how to maximize its effectiveness. This session will actively address both the benefits and the challenges, providing key insights into the critical contract terms, specific deliverables, and detailed requirements you must include in your Statement of Work (SOW). Come prepared to discuss! This session is designed to be interactive, featuring a robust Q&A segment and valuable sharing of lessons learned from the field.



Speaker: Sharla Warren

Sharla isn't just a Certified Meeting Professional; she's a conference warrior with over 28 years of experience tackling government meetings, logistics puzzles, and budget beasts. She's the COO and has been at eventPower since 2000 when the company had just 3 employees. She feels lucky to be part of the company's growth and success. Creating an environment that successfully allows attendees to learn, network, and share ideas is what motivates her. Sharla's professional values include hard work, engaging innovative partners, strong communication with clients and staff. Prior to eventPower, she worked in Association Management, and has a Master's from

American.

Core Competency: Facilities & Services **CEUs:** 1

UNIVERSAL DESIGN - DESIGN FOR EVERYONE: MAKING SPACES WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS

Inclusion is not an afterthought; it should be designed from the very beginning. In her keynote, "Design for All: The ONE Model for Belonging," speaker Erin Mark demonstrates how Universal Design goes beyond simple accommodations like ramps or captions. Drawing from her experience living with an invisible illness, Erin knows the impact of environments not designed for all, and how small changes can ensure belonging instead of exclusion. She introduces the ONE Model framework: Open access, Normalize inclusion, Everyone belongs. This model helps leaders move past mere compliance to intentionally design cultures and spaces where everyone is empowered to succeed and thrive.



Speaker: Erin Mark

Erin speaks to companies, conferences, and communities about what it really means to lead, live, and work with purpose, before a crisis forces it. Through story rich, science backed keynotes and workshops, she helps people navigate change with courage and clarity, rebuild confidence and identity during role shifts, reorgs, or personal transitions, lead with urgency, and not burnout, and turn pain into perspective, and perspective into action. Whether she's on stage, on screen, or in the room, she brings real tools, powerful mindset shifts, and contagious clarity to every audience she meets.

Core Competency: Personal & Professional Development **CEUs:** 1

THE INTELLIGENCE OF FUN: UNLOCKING CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION, AND TRANSFORMATION

In a world of constant pressure and change, the most successful professionals are those who embrace authenticity and playfulness. In this high-energy, interactive keynote, Craig Zablocki reveals how the intelligence of fun unlocks creativity, collaboration, and transformation. Through humor, vulnerability, and real-life insights, Craig challenges audiences to release fear and resistance, reconnect with their natural spontaneity, and rediscover joy in leadership and teamwork—leaving the room energized, inspired, and ready to lead with renewed purpose.



Speaker: Craig Zablocki

Craig Zablocki is a nationally recognized motivational speaker and humorist who has inspired over two million people worldwide. Blending humor, authenticity, and heart, Craig

helps individuals and organizations unlock creativity, collaboration, and transformation through the power of fun. With more than 25 years of experience, he has worked with leaders in business, education, and healthcare, encouraging audiences to break free from fear and resistance to embrace vulnerability and authentic connection.

Core Competency: Business Management **CEUs:** 1

OVERCOME INTERRUPTIONS: HOW TO SPEND TIME ON THE RIGHT THINGS

In the age of interruption, it's hard to get the right work done. I understand the cost of constant distractions. Years of poor time management caused me to burnout, before having my chest cut open and almost dying. It was then I discovered the simple framework that changed everything. In this interactive session, participants learn my proven 3P Framework of Prioritize, Plan, Protect, in order to accomplish more in less time. Through relatable stories and practical action items, attendees learn to overcome interruptions to be present in their lives and even more productive in their days with simple time management.



Speaker: Samantha Lane

As a reformed workaholic, Samantha understands the struggle of many overwhelmed workers. After a life-changing surgery shifted her perspective on time, she committed to being more present in her life and created a time management framework that made it possible. Even better, it made her more productive in her days. Now teaches this proven framework to teams all over the world while empowering individuals to take ownership of their time. She is a sought after speaker, trainer, and coach who refuses to waste anyone's time and promises to leave any person, place, or idea better

than she found it.

Core Competency: Travel **CEUs:** 1

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 (1:30 P.M.)

GOVERNMENT PLANNERS ROUNDTABLE

Federal, state, and municipal planners are at the forefront of a massive administrative shift. Between the 2026 Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) streamlining and new sustainability requirements, the "standard" meeting is being redefined. This roundtable provides a safe space for government employees to share how they are doing "more with less" while staying compliant with evolving executive orders.

Core Competency: Leadership **CEUs:** 1

CONTRACT PLANNERS ROUNDTABLE

For contract planners, 2026 is a year of navigating "The Revolutionary FAR Overhaul" and shifting agency priorities. This roundtable focuses on the unique position of third-party planners who must balance strict federal compliance with the volatile costs of the private hospitality market. We will discuss how to protect your business and your clients in an era of increased scrutiny and rapid policy shifts.

Core Competency: Leadership **CEUs:** 1

SUPPLIERS ROUNDTABLE

In an era defined by economic shifts, geopolitical complexity, and technological evolution, this session provides a dedicated forum to dissect the challenges and opportunities of the 2026–2028 travel cycle. Through four targeted discussion modules, attendees will move beyond surface-level logistics to explore the strategic ecosystem of modern government travel.

Core Competency: Leadership **CEUs:** 1

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 (3:00 P.M.)

PUBLIC TRANSIT FOR MEETING PROFESSIONALS: FORGET UBER. TAKE THE BUS!

As a Meeting Professional, you have a lot on your plate: F&B, A/V, risk management, and even attendee transportation. When it comes to planes, trains, and automobiles, don't leave out one of the most obvious options: public transit. In this workshop, explore the 'how' and 'when' of integrating transit into your transportation planning, meeting budget, and attendee experience. Whether you're facilitating the move of one attendee or a whole group of meeting-goers, public transit may be an affordable and efficient option, and something to consider from day-one of planning. Among the topics, discover the pros and cons of the different types of transit, how they could vary depending on location, and what the benefit could be to you or your attendees (such as ADA compliance). Wrap up with hands-on challenges provided by Williamsburg Area Transit Authority.



Speaker: Matt Scalia

Scalia is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and recently retired from the U.S. Army as a Colonel following a 27-year career. He received a Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. While in the military, Scalia served as the city manager of Fort Benning, Georgia, and recently as Deputy Senior Executive U.S. Army Installation Command of Fort Eustis. He is currently the Executive Director of WATA.

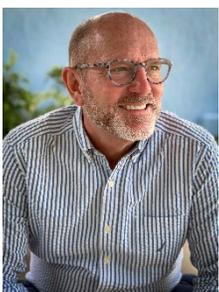
Core Competency: Travel **CEUs:** 2

VIEW OUR LEARNING LABS FOR OTHER OPTIONS ON WEDNESDAY AT 3:00 P.M.*

THURSDAY, JUNE 11 (10:00 A.M.)

THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP: SCIENCE-BASED TECHNIQUES FOR BETTER WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

In this fun, engaging, action-oriented session, Author and CNN contributor Jamie Turner will guide you through a step-by-step process to help you improve your leadership, persuasion, and communication skills. You'll learn how to manage difficult conversations, how to mentor others, and how to use The Connection Code to improve the effectiveness of your leadership. If you'd like to be more persuasive, improve your ability to connect with others, and learn how to lead with kindness and authority, this session is for you.



Speaker: Jamie Turner

Jamie Turner is an internationally recognized author, professor, and CNN contributor who partners with corporations to unlock employee potential. He delivers highly sought-after keynotes that utilize science-based techniques to immediately improve personal productivity, communication skills, and leadership skills. Having presented at nearly 200 conferences and corporate events in 30 countries across Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America, his work is proven to boost morale, unify teams, and enhance emotional intelligence across the globe.

Core Competency: Leadership **CEUs:** 1

SPEAK UP, STAND OUT! BUILD UNSHAKABLE CONFIDENCE TO LEAD WITH IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

Speak Up, Stand Out is more than a motivational message; it's a strategic investment in your people and culture that delivers long-lasting growth. This dynamic program, led by leadership expert Alex Dumas, transforms professionals into confident leaders who drive innovation, engagement, and performance.



Speaker: Alex Dumas

When confidence rises, so do communication, collaboration, and creativity, resulting in higher engagement and the retention of top talent. Through his keynotes, books, podcasts, and leadership programs, clients utilize confidence as their secret weapon to drive performance and lasting growth. For mission-driven companies seeking to unlock the untapped potential of their emerging leaders, Alex Dumas is the leading expert to help drive long-lasting organizational growth.

Core Competency: Personal & Professional Development **CEUs:** 1

THE PROACTIVE PLANNER: PLANNING FOR THE UNEXPECTED AT EVENTS

Attendees will learn how to apply principles of emergency management to their personal, home and professional life in order to be prepared for emergencies.



Speaker: Suzi Silverstein

Suzi Silverstein, MA, RD is the Assistant Director of the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Emergency Preparedness. She has worked for VDH over 29 years in training and education, emergency preparedness and response, risk communication, community nutrition, and distance learning. Suzi received a B.S. in Dietetics from Michigan State University and completed a dietetic internship at the Medical College of Virginia. She earned a Masters in Education & Human Resource Development from George Washington University. Outside of work she enjoys running and spending time with her husband Michael, daughters Morgan and Brooke, and dog Bella.

Core Competency: Logistics **CEUs:** 1

BEYOND THE BLOCK — MASTERING GOVERNMENT EXTENDED STAY & BPA RELATIONSHIPS

When it comes to housing government travelers, it is no longer just about the room block; it is about the relationship. This session unpacks the evolving world of government extended stays and Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) from the hotel perspective. Participants will learn how to navigate agency requirements, structure long-term rate agreements, and maintain compliance while providing service excellence. Drawing on real case studies from Joint Base Andrews and nearby federal agencies, Chezaray "Chez" Conley shares proven strategies to build partnerships that simplify lodging logistics, strengthen trust, and drive repeat government business.



Speaker: Chezaray Conley

Chezaray "Chez" Conley is Director of Sales at TownePlace Suites By Marriott/Joint Base Andrews (WASAF) in Clinton, MD. With over two decades of leadership in hospitality sales and a deep specialization in government- and military-affiliated business, Chez excels in building strategic partnerships, driving revenue, and delivering exceptional guest experiences for DoD and federal travelers. A proven communicator and advocate for elevated status and operational excellence, Chez is committed to empowering meeting planners with hospitality solutions that deliver value, mitigate risk, save time, and foster meaningful outcomes. Connect on LinkedIn @ChezarayConley.

Core Competency: Finance & Contracts **CEUs:** 1

THURSDAY, JUNE 11 (11:15 A.M.)

BUILDING RESILIENCE: STRATEGIES TO MANAGE STRESS AND AVOID BURNOUT

I'll share practical, easy-to-use tools designed to help professionals manage stress, sharpen focus, and create lasting resilience. These are not abstract ideas; they're real techniques that can be used anywhere: at your desk before a big call, in

an airport between flights, or even moments before walking into a high-stakes conversation. My approach is accessible, adaptable, and energizing. Using a mix of humor, relatable stories, and hands-on guidance, I'll show how integrating wellness isn't just about feeling good—it's about leading more effectively, sustaining energy over the long term, and building client relationships rooted in integrity and authenticity.



Speaker: Hilary Bass

With over 30 years in the high-pressure world of hospitality management, I know firsthand the cost of stress, overwork, and burnout—not just on individuals, but on entire organizations. That experience led me to found Align Self Care LLC, with a mission to help leaders and teams build sustainable success by weaving wellness practices into the fabric of daily lives..

Core Competency: Education & Programming **CEUs:** 1

UNSTOPPABLE: BUILDING ACCESSIBLE & INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT EVENTS THAT SHIFT CULTURE & SYSTEMS

This session explores how government meeting professionals can design events that are truly accessible, inclusive, and culturally responsive. Drawing from lived experience as a legally blind leader and years of systems-change work across government sectors, Kenisha shares practical strategies to ensure ADA alignment, elevate diverse voices, and create environments where all participants can fully engage. Attendees will learn how inclusive event design not only improves participant experience, but also inspires organizational culture shifts and strengthens public trust. This session equips planners to build events that are impactful, equitable, and unforgettable.



Speaker: Kenisha Coon

Kenisha Coon is a nationally recognized systems change and DEI leader, Senior Business Analyst, and Director of Community Engagement for the Eko Vision Foundation. With 15+ years of experience in government systems, strategic planning, accessibility, and organizational change, she brings expertise in inclusive meeting design, equitable stakeholder engagement, and cross-sector collaboration. As a legally blind professional, Kenisha integrates lived experience with evidence-based coaching and systems improvement to support government agencies nationwide.

She is also the founder of Kenisha Coon Consulting, a speaker, author, and advocate for equitable, human-centered public service.

Core Competency: Facilities & Services **CEUs:** 1

WEEDING OUT THE THORNS: PROTECTING YOUR TALENT ECOSYSTEM FROM TOXIC EMPLOYEES

When toxic employees emerge, with their negativity, disruptive behaviors, and counterproductive attitudes, they can poison the workplace environment, stifling innovation, and driving away valuable team members. This session equips professionals with the knowledge and strategies to identify, address, and mitigate the damaging effects of toxic behavior. By proactively managing toxic employees, you can create a workplace where every individual feels valued, supported, and empowered to contribute their best work. Led by Vanessa Zamy, Workplace Wellbeing Expert, this session provides practical and actionable solutions for leaders seeking to safeguard their talent ecosystem and cultivate a thriving and productive workplace.



Speaker: Vanessa Zamy

The Mission: Create a better work experience for all, reducing bad bosses one training at a time. Vanessa Zamy, known as The Business Defibrillator®, is a catalyst for leadership wellbeing. As Managing Principal of LiberationX Contracts, Vanessa and her team partner with your HR to increase employee engagement.

Vanessa Zamy brings her personal experiences of adversity and triumph and her wealth of experiences in Fortune 500 companies, public sector agencies, and small businesses to inform her worldwide presentations. Along with her degree in

Management Science & Engineering from Stanford University, Vanessa excels as a Global Keynote Speaker and Leadership Strategist.

Core Competency: Business Management **CEUs:** 1

THURSDAY, JUNE 11 (12:30 P.M.)

STATE OF THE GOVERNMENT MEETINGS INDUSTRY

The government meetings landscape is no longer just "recovering"—it is transforming. From the rapid integration of agentic AI and operational technology to the complex realities of fluctuating federal budgets, rising logistics costs, and evolving per diem challenges, the rules of the game are being rewritten in real-time. Join us for a high-level, candid conversation with three of the industry's most respected voices as they dissect the trends, trials, and triumphs defining 2026. This closing keynote panel will move beyond the surface to explore:

- **The Economy of Events:** Navigating the "new normal" of rising F&B and AV costs while maintaining government compliance and fiscal responsibility.
- **The AI Revolution:** How planners and suppliers are moving from "experimenting" with AI to making it a core operational tool for efficiency and personalization.
- **Policy & Advocacy:** A look at how current legislative shifts and travel regulations are impacting attendance and site selection.
- **The Human Connection:** Why intentionality and "purposeful" event design are the keys to engaging a multi-generational workforce in a digital-first world.

This session is designed to provide you with a strategic roadmap to take back to your home office, ensuring you remain resilient, informed, and ahead of the curve in an ever-shifting industry.

Panel: Greg Harkins, President, CWTSato Travel

Chris McLaughlin, Senior Director, Global Sales, Choice Hotels International

Additional Panelists Pending

Core Competency: Facilities & Services **CEUs:** 1

LEARNING LABS

ROOTED EVENTS: COLLABORATING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY & CVBS FOR MEANINGFUL IMPACT @ THE BRAY SCHOOL

(25 people max)

0.5 mile walk from hotel

The Williamsburg Bray School was one of the earliest institutions dedicated to Black education in North America. From 1760 to 1774, teacher Ann Wager likely taught hundreds of students between the ages of three and 10. Learn how the past helps us plan better events for the future.

Core Competency: SGMP Cares

ROOTED EVENTS: COLLABORATING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY & CVBS FOR MEANINGFUL IMPACT @ FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

(25 people max)

1.0 mile walk from hotel

The First Baptist Church of Williamsburg was organized in 1776, with a quest by a group of courageous slaves and free blacks who wanted to worship God in their own way. First led by Rev. Moses, a free black itinerant preacher, they built a brush arbor* at Green Spring Plantation, a few miles from town, to gather secretly in song and prayer. Understand how the local community shapes today's events.

Core Competency: SGMP Cares

SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE & LOCAL SUPPLIERS: BUILDING RESILIENT EVENT OPERATIONS WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS

(15 people max)

Shuttle to the [Sports Center](#) provided; walking tour of facility; closed-toed shoes required; hard hats provided, if needed

Discover how to identify reliable local vendors, integrate sustainability into your event operations, and build strong contingency and quality-assurance plans. This session highlights how to support regional suppliers while managing risk, maintaining quality, and boosting the local economy.

Core Competency: Facilities and Services

CURATING CONNECTIONS: PLANNING GOVERNMENT MEETINGS IN UNCONVENTIONAL SPACES

(25 people max)

1.0 mile walk from hotel

Join us at the stunning Muscarelle Museum of Art for a hands-on Learning Lab where we explore how to design and execute government meetings in nontraditional venues. In this session, you'll learn how to leverage the unique character, aesthetics, and spatial dynamics of an art museum to create a memorable event that serves both mission and logistics. We'll examine best practices for site selection, programming, contract negotiation, risk management, and attendee experience.

Core Competency: Logistics

HISTORIC JURISDICTION & MODERN PROTOCOL: MANAGING PERMITS, COMPLIANCE, & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS IN HERITAGE SETTINGS

(25 people max)

0.5 – 1.0 mile walk from the hotel

Learn how to successfully plan events in historically significant spaces. This session covers required local, state, and federal permits; best practices for coordinating with preservation boards, city officials, and community groups; and strategies for balancing logistics, accessibility, and safety with the protection of heritage sites.

Core Competency: Facilities & Services