

HOPE
CAN'T WAIT.



BUILDING HOME
Through Church and Community



2026 Bridge of Hope Conference

WED-FRI, SEPT. 30 - OCT. 2, 2026 AT THE WELCOMING PLACE, AKRON, PA.

Conference Location & Cost

The Welcoming Place, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501

*Please note that The Welcoming Place is a retreat facility geared to inspiring rest, faith and action. Rooms do not include TVs, but wireless access is available.

The conference is offered as a benefit to all staff and board members in the Bridge of Hope network of locations, with a generous portion of the cost subsidized by our sponsors.

We offer both double and single occupancy rooms at The Welcoming Place. **Please note that double-occupancy rooms come at a \$75 discount.** Due to limited availability, rooms will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. If we reach full capacity or if you prefer to stay at a hotel, we have listed nearby accommodations below. These options will be at your own expense.

To make conference attendance more equitable for those traveling from a distance (and since we do not alternate conference location), we are offering a discount for locations that are over 350 miles from the conference venue.

Registration Deadline



Please register online by **August 21, 2026** at:

<https://tinyurl.com/Bridge-of-Hope-Conference>

Please note: This deadline is earlier than previous years.

New: Registrations received after the deadline will incur a \$75 late fee.

New: No changes or refunds will be issued after August 27, 2026.

Conference Options and Costs for Those Traveling under 350 Miles

Cost	Includes	Room Occupancy	Days	Lodging	Amenities
\$215	Full in-person conference	Single Occupancy	Wed & Thur Night	on-site	Includes all meals
\$140		Double Occupancy			
\$270		Single Occupancy	Tues, Wed & Thur Night		
\$195		Double Occupancy			

Conference Options and Costs for Those Traveling over 350 Miles

Cost	Includes	Room Occupancy	Days	Lodging	Amenities
\$155	Full in-person conference	Single Occupancy	Wed & Thur Night	on-site	Includes all meals
\$80		Double Occupancy			
\$180		Single Occupancy	Tues, Wed & Thur Night		
\$105		Double Occupancy			

Non-Lodging Options and Costs

- \$155** Full conference – includes lunch and dinner
- \$70** Wednesday afternoon – includes dinner
- \$80** Thursday full day – includes lunch and dinner
- \$70** Friday morning – includes lunch

These nearby options are available if you prefer a traditional hotel experience or if The Welcoming Place is at capacity.

Hampton Inn & Suites Ephrata – Mountain Springs

380 E Main St, Ephrata, PA 17522 • (717) 733-0661

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/ephpahx-hampton-suites-ephrata-mountain-springs>

Home2 Suites by Hilton Ephrata

21 Quarry Ridge Dr, Ephrata, PA 17522 • (717) 721-3300

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/thvepht-home2-suites-ephrata>

BOARD CHALLENGE

If three or more of your board members attend two full days of the conference, your entire board can attend for FREE!

Please note: to qualify, registered individuals must attend or the costs for their lodging and meals will be billed to your location afterward.

Keynote Speakers

Ben Cattell Noll



JOINT SESSION #1:

Real Talk on the Challenges We're Facing

Rising rents, stagnant wages, and a shortage of affordable housing have reversed years of progress, increasing housing instability and homelessness. In response, some communities are shifting away from proven approaches toward punitive measures that further stigmatize those experiencing homelessness. This session offers a clear-eyed, honest look at the realities we face, and what it will take to move forward.

JOINT SESSION #2:

Doubling Down on What Works: We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting For!

Amid growing challenges, it's easy to feel discouraged, but the solutions may already be within reach. This session highlights what's proven to end homelessness, where it aligns with our work, and how we can adapt and scale these strategies to increase impact. We'll also explore how to better share ideas and advocate with partners and decision-makers to remove barriers and help more families reconnect with home.

Ben Cattell Noll has spent his career serving in a variety of roles in the work of ending homelessness, including permanent supportive housing case management and rapid re-housing program management in Washington, DC, national advocacy and technical assistance, and currently as the Training and Education Director at the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. Ben also proudly served

on the Bridge of Hope National board from 2016-2025. Ben loves working with communities and service providers to implement person-centered best practices and create thriving systems that help everyone establish the safety and dignity of a home. He lives in Lancaster, PA with his wife and two children.

Rasool Berry



JOINT SESSION #3:

From Burden to Blueprint: The Nehemiah Path to Restoration

Nehemiah didn't just weep – he built. This message traces the journey from holy burden to strategic action showing how prayer, discernment, leadership and community partnership can transform the broken situations we seek to address into places of restoration. Together, we'll consider how God invites us to move from inspiration to intentional rebuilding in the work of ending family homelessness.

***SPECIAL JOINT SESSION – WORKSHOP #2:**

The Builder's Blueprint: Asset Mapping and Action in Practice

Nehemiah assessed the walls before he rebuilt them. In this workshop, we'll explore practical tools for identifying strengths within communities, leveraging existing resources, and designing strategies that lead to real, measurable impact.

Rasool Berry is the Teaching & Family Pastor at The Bridge Church in Brooklyn, NY, and Director of Partnerships & Content Development at Our Daily Bread Ministries. A storyteller at the intersection of faith, culture and justice, he helps audiences see how the gospel speaks to

real-life challenges like community, restoration and hope. He is the co-host of the *Faith Under Construction* podcast and a producer of the documentaries *The Return* and *Juneteenth: Faith & Freedom*.

Edith Yoder,
Ed.M.



JOINT SESSION #4:

Hope Can't Wait

Hope can't wait because in the last national count, family homelessness increased by 39%. Why is the Church – and Neighboring Volunteers – the core distinctive of the Bridge of Hope program? Let's talk!

Edith Yoder, Ed.M. is the Chief Executive Officer of Bridge of Hope National and holds a master's degree in Adult and Organizational Development from Temple University and a bachelor's degree in accounting from Eastern Mennonite University. She has been instrumental in transforming Bridge of Hope from a local Pennsylvania ministry into a national movement dedicated to ending

family homelessness. Her long tenure at Bridge of Hope is marked by a commitment to providing neighborhoods of support for families facing homelessness and a passion to significantly increase Bridge of Hope's impact, providing hope to countless single mothers and children across the United States.

Workshops

Bridge of Hope Strategies & Program Implementation

Ben Cattell
Noll &
Bridge of Hope
Network Panel



Network Strategies to Remove Housing Roadblocks

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 – WORKSHOP #1 – 3:40 P.M. – 4:30 P.M. ET

In this panel conversation facilitated by Ben Cattell Noll, we will hear directly from leaders across the Bridge of Hope network who are actively navigating housing solutions in real time. They will share practical strategies, lessons learned, and creative approaches that are helping families move into safe and sustainable housing.

The Bridge of Hope Network Panel:

Edith Yoder, National CEO
Caleb Simmers, Lancaster Executive Director
Wendy Hoke Witmer, National Chief Impact Officer and Chester County Team Leader
Heidi Hoover, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Executive Director
Carolyn Nutter, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Program Director

Rasool Berry



Special Joint Workshop

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 – WORKSHOP #2 – 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. ET

See Joint Sessions for details

Upper-Level Assembly Room

No separate Fundraising/Board/Leadership session. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Mark Boorse



“Answering the Call” – Engaging Local Churches as Partners

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 – WORKSHOP #3 – 1:30 P.M. – 2:45 P.M. ET

This discussion-oriented workshop will look at creative ways to engage local churches as partners with Bridge of Hope. Discussion will focus on messaging and storytelling, assessing local needs and asset inventorying, as well as community organizing and collaboration.

Mark Boorse is the Director of Community Development at Access Services, a Human Services non-profit where he has worked for 40 plus years. In that role, he has worked closely with the Faith Community to lead community driven solutions to

address the twin crises of housing and homelessness. He and his wife Brenda attend Salford Mennonite Church in Harleysville PA, where he has also recently joined the staff as Lead Pastor.

Kristi Kubicki



Direct Service Call

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 – WORKSHOP #4 – 3:15 P.M. – 4:30 P.M. ET

Case Management Staff! Join Kristi and other network case managers IN PERSON to ask questions, offer feedback, share program ideas, and provide valuable support to each other.

Kristi Kubicki joined Bridge of Hope National in November 2016 after 4.5 years of implementing Bridge of Hope as a Neighborhood Resource Specialist for a past Bridge of Hope Program Site in Indiana. As part of the national staff, Kristi has co-authored the Strangers to Neighbors® curriculum and has supported Bridge of Hope

locations as the Director of Program Support. Kristi has a master's degree in social work from Arizona State University, is married with four children and she worships at Church of Our Lady of Loretto in Notre Dame, IN.

Amanda
Burns



Building Employment Pathways: Workforce Strategies, Community Resources, and Mindsets for Success

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2 – WORKSHOP #5 – 9:40 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. ET

Employment pathways are built when workforce strategies, community resources, and mindsets work together. We will explore how employers, workforce partners, and community-based organizations can create clearer pathways to employment by aligning training, support services, and career advancement opportunities. We will examine the practical approaches and success-oriented mindsets that help individuals navigate barriers, build confidence, and move toward sustainable employment and economic mobility.

Amanda Burns is the Chief Strategy Officer for the Community Action Partnership of Lancaster County, where she leads strategic growth and innovation to advance an equitable community. Previously, as Vice President of Education, she expanded early learning services by 10%, co-founded First 10 of Lancaster County, and launched the county's first pre-K STEM classroom at Millersville University to support two-generation family success. She holds a Masters in Education Leadership from California University of Pennsylvania, a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction from American College of Education, and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Millersville University. Amanda currently serves on the board of the United Way of Lancaster County and is married with three children.

Anna Ramos is the Executive Director of the Workforce Development Board of Lancaster County. There she leads the County's workforce initiatives to support job seekers and businesses with the support they need for economic growth and mobility. She is passionate about her community where she raised her family and serves on several local boards.

Anna Ramos



Fundraising/Board/Leadership

Jonathan Matias



Fundraising for Housing Capacity

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 – WORKSHOP #1 – 3:40 P.M. – 4:30 P.M. ET

How might your mission impact grow if your access to affordable housing increases? This practical discussion covers how to make the case for more housing capacity, carry out a fundraising campaign for housing options, prepare to access more housing options, and collaborate with partners to seek affordable housing together.

Jonathan Matias, a Guatemalan-American, is an ordained minister and National Director of Development and Campaign Manager for Bridge of Hope National. He holds a M. Div. degree from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary and

is completing a Certificate in Fund Raising Management from The Lilly Family Fund Raising School. He and his wife Christy try to keep up with their two athletic sons.

Special All Attendee Workshop

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 – WORKSHOP #2 – 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. ET

See Joint Sessions for details

Upper-Level Assembly Room

No separate Fundraising/Board/Leadership session. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Ro Washington



Building Together: Governing for Impact

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 – WORKSHOP #3 – 1:30 P.M. – 2:45 P.M. ET

Join us for a session designed to help nonprofit board members better understand the board's role, strengthen their impact, and explore the vital partnership between Executive Directors and Board Chairs. Through an equity lens, we'll examine how shared leadership between these two roles shapes governance and how getting it right can be transformative for an organization. Whether you're new to the board role or a seasoned member, you'll leave with fresh perspective and practical tools to lead with greater clarity and purpose alongside your Executive Director. This session will explore what your nonprofit board's role must be, what your board's goals could be, and what it means for board members to be effective.

Ro Washington is the Director of Partnership and Operations at The Nonprofit Center, where she builds strategic alliances that drive meaningful community impact. With certificates in DEI Leadership and Nonprofit Leadership, she brings expertise in social impact, culture building, and community engagement to her work partnering with organizations to create positive change. Her career spans volunteer program development at organizations including Dow, the Multiple

Sclerosis Association of America, and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where she has consistently fostered inclusive cultures and connected communities to vital resources. Beyond her professional role, Ro serves as a camp counselor with Ronald McDonald Camp and board member with Camp Rainbow and Integrate for Good, exemplifying her deep commitment to service and collaboration.

Amanda Hickle



Grant Writing That Works: Practical Strategies for Finding, Winning, and Managing Funding

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 – WORKSHOP #4 – 3:15 P.M. – 4:30 P.M. ET

Grant writing can make a lot more sense with the right approach. This workshop breaks the grants process down into clear, actionable steps - from finding the right opportunities to crafting compelling proposals and managing awards with confidence. Through practical strategies, participants will learn how to spot the grants worth pursuing, use cost-benefit analysis to make smarter decisions, and build approaches tailored to their organization's unique context and community. You'll leave with a stronger case for support as well as tools you can put to work right away to pursue grants more effectively.

Amanda Hickle serves as the Director of Advancement for Landis Communities in Lititz, PA. There, she develops and oversees all aspects of fundraising. Amanda is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE). With 23 years of

development experience in nonprofit organizations, Amanda is skilled at cultivating relationships to grow charitable support. She considers these relationships and the generous people she stewards among her greatest professional joys.

Edith Yoder



Katie Engle



Nikki Shingle



The Essential Partnership of the Board and Executive Director

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2 – WORKSHOP #5 – 9:40 A.M. – 11:00 A.M. ET

Edith Yoder, CEO, along with **Katie Engle, Bridge of Hope National current board chair** and **Nikki Shingle, incoming board chair**, will share strategies for creating the essential partnership of the board and Executive Director. This workshop focuses on practical learning around clear roles and responsibilities, mutual trust, healthy communication, and mission alignment. Participants will also learn how to identify and prevent common partnership challenges between the board and E.D.

Please note that this workshop is open only to Board members and Executive Directors.

Edith Yoder, Bridge of Hope National CEO

Katie Engle is a graduate of Boston College with a degree in Psychology and Hispanic Studies. She currently works as a Client Executive at Lockton Companies, a commercial insurance brokerage firm in Boston, working with a variety of large commercial and Not for Profit clients. As a mom juggling many different life demands, Katie strongly believes in the power of neighboring and the beautiful ways God works through it. Katie attends a Congregational church in the Boston suburbs where she lives with her husband, Charlie, and their two-year-old daughter.

Nikki Shingle is a consultant at North Group Consultants. For more than two decades, Nikki has served purpose-driven professional organizations as a leader and service provider. She previously led a team of financial consultants at Everence, which served non-profit organizations, businesses and churches in Central Pennsylvania. Additionally, she contributed to the growth of the organization's services and the charitable foundation. Nikki has a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Messiah University, a Master of Arts in Organizational Development and Leadership from Shippensburg University and earned a CAP (R) Certified Advisor in Philanthropy credential from The American College of Financial Services. Nikki is grateful to partner with the Bridge of Hope community to help single mothers and their families because we all need to be reminded that we are not alone and are worthy of love.

Bridge of Hope 2026 Conference-At-A-Glance

All Sessions and Workshops
are held in the Meeting Place

Joint Sessions are held in the Upper-Level Assembly Room. All are encouraged to attend.

Workshops are divided into two tracks and are the attendees' choice.

**Note: Workshop #2 is a special Joint Session Workshop for all to attend.*

		Bridge of Hope Strategies & Program Implementation Upper Level Assembly Room	Fundraising/ Board/Leadership Lower Level Assembly Room
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30			
11:00 a.m.		Registration	
12:00 p.m.		Role-Based Welcome Lunch	
1:00 p.m.		Welcome	
1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	Joint Session 1	Real Talk on the Challenges We're Facing Ben Cattell Noll	
BREAK			
2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Joint Session 2	Doubling Down on What Works: We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting For! Ben Cattell Noll	
BREAK			
3:40 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Workshop 1	Navigating Systems for Housing Ben Cattell Noll and Network Panel	Fundraising for Housing Capacity Jonathan Matías
5:00 p.m.		Dinner in Dining Hall	
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.		Special Activity TBA	
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1			
8:00 a.m.		Breakfast in Dining Hall	
9:00 a.m.		Worship and Welcome	
9:40 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.	Joint Session 3	From Burden to Blueprint: The Nehemiah Path to Restoration Rasool Berry	
BREAK			
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Special Joint Workshop 2	The Builder's Blueprint: Asset Mapping and Action in Practice Rasool Berry	
NOON		Lunch in Dining Hall	
1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Workshop 3	"Answering the Call" Engaging Local Churches as Partners Mark Boorse	Building Together: Governing for Impact Ro Washington
BREAK			
3:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Workshop 4	In-Person Direct Service Call Kristi Kubicki	Grant Writing That Works: Practical Strategies for Finding, Winning, and Managing Funding Amanda Hickle

**All Sessions and Workshops
are held in the Meeting Place**

**Bridge of Hope Strategies &
Program Implementation**
Upper Level Assembly Room

**Fundraising/
Board/Leadership**
Lower Level Assembly Room

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 (CONTINUED)

5:00 p.m.		Dinner in Dining Hall
7:00 p.m.		Bridge of Hope Network Awards Ceremony

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

8:00 a.m.		Breakfast in Dining Hall	
9:00 a.m.		Worship and Welcome	
9:40 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Workshop 5	Building Employment Pathways: Workforce Strategies, Community Resources, and Mindsets for Success Amanda Burns Anna Ramos	The Essential Partnership of the Board and Executive Director Edith Yoder Katie Engle Nikki Shingle
BREAK			
11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Joint Session 4	Hope Can't Wait Edith Yoder	
11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.		Closing Ebenezer followed by bagged <i>Lunch to Go</i> or Stay and Network!	

Save the Date



for the
**Bridge of Hope
2027 Conference**

Wednesday, October 20 – Friday, October 22

Note: 2027 dates reflect a one-time shift from the usual conference timing.

Don't forget to share your photos on social media!



#bridgeofhopeconference

Grateful Thanks

TO OUR 2026 CONFERENCE SPONSORS

The generosity of the following individuals and businesses makes our conference possible

PRESENTING SPONSORS

Friend of Bridge of Hope

Glenn H. Weaver



JOINT SESSION

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, York

WORKSHOP



Ruth and Emerson Lesher

Edith Yoder & Garth Scott

Jodie and Jim Smiley

LUNCH & SNACK SPONSORS

Peter Greer

Joanie Yoder



CHURCHES RESPOND. HOMELESSNESS ENDS. HOPE BEGINS.

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