

37TH

# ECONOMIC OUTLOOK CONFERENCE

20  
26

FEBRUARY 3  
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM  
Central Bank Center



# Agenda

**8:00 AM**

## **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

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**8:30 AM**

## **Welcome and Introductions**

**Dr. Scott Kelley** – Executive Associate Dean, Gatton College of Business and Economics, University of Kentucky

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**8:40 AM**

## **Introductions**

**Dr. Michael Clark** – Director of the Center of Business and Economic Research, Gatton College of Business and Economics, University of Kentucky

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**8:50 AM**

## **"A View from the Federal Reserve"**

**Julianne Dunn** – Regional Executive, Cincinnati Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland

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**9:30 AM**

## **"Kentucky's Economic Outlook 2026"**

**Dr. Michael Clark** – Director of the Center of Business and Economic Research, Gatton College of Business and Economics, University of Kentucky

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**10:00 AM**

## **Break**

**10:10 AM**

## **"How are Consumer's Finances Changing?"**

**Katie Scott** – Senior Economist, Center for Business and Economic Research, Gatton College of Business and Economics, University of Kentucky

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**10:35 AM**

## **"Disasters and Emergencies: Assessing Community Needs and Coordinating Kentucky's Response"**

**Eric Gibson** – Division Director, Kentucky Emergency Management

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**11:10 AM**

## **"Fires, Floods, and Hurricanes: Policy Options for the New Normal"**

**Dr. Margaret Walls** – Resources for the Future

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**11:35 AM**

## **Q&A Speaker Panel**

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**12:00 PM**

## **Adjourn**

# Speakers



Dr. Michael  
**Clark**

Mike Clark is the Director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Kentucky's Gatton College of Business and Economics. Prior to coming to UK, Dr. Clark was the Chief Economist for the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission. His research focuses on labor, health, and economic development policies. He has conducted research for various Kentucky state agencies including the Department of Public Health, the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, and the Department of Income Support. He also forecasts revenues for the city of Lexington, Kentucky and Kentucky's unemployment insurance program. He earned a B.A. in Management and an M.S. and Ph.D. in economics from the University of Kentucky.



Julianne  
**Dunn**

Julianne Dunn is the regional executive the Cincinnati Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. She is responsible for managing relationships with regional stakeholders, monitoring the region's economic environment, and contributing to the Bank's monetary policy mission. She also manages four of the Bank's Business Advisory Councils. Ms. Dunn joined the Bank as a research analyst in June 2017 and has since held positions of increasing responsibility.

A native of central Michigan and lifelong Big Ten football fan, Ms. Dunn holds a BA in International studies from the Ohio State University and an MA in economics and international relations from Syracuse University.

# Speakers



Eric  
**Gibson**

In April of 2024, Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear appointed Eric Gibson as the Director of the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management. In this role, Director Gibson is responsible for the preparation for, response to, recovery from, and mitigation of disaster events in Kentucky.

Eric Gibson is the State Emergency Management Director, overseeing Kentucky's emergency response and management efforts. Gibson began his career as a trooper with the Kentucky State Police, working his way up to hold several command positions. Since then, he's worked with the Department of Fish and Wildlife as Colonel of the Law Enforcement Division and the Department of Agriculture, where he established their Emergency Management Section. With nearly 30 years of service to the Commonwealth, Director Gibson continues to lead with a focus on service, resilience, and a deep commitment to the safety of all Kentuckians.



Katie  
**Scott**

Katie Scott is a senior economist at the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at the Gatton College of Business and Economics at the University of Kentucky. In her role, she conducts applied economic research for Kentucky policymakers, focusing on subjects such as the state's labor market, workforce development programs, and the impact of key sectors such as education, healthcare, and energy.

Before joining CBER, Katie served as a staff economist with the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission, where she evaluated the fiscal impact of proposed legislation. Katie also served on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Data Users Advisory Committee, providing feedback on BLS data programs. She holds a master's degree in applied economics from Miami University and undergraduate degrees in economics and geoscience from Denison University.



Dr. Margaret  
**Walls**

Margaret Walls is an economist and Senior Fellow at Resources for the Future (RFF), an independent, nonprofit research organization in Washington, DC, where she is Director of the Climate Risks and Resilience Program and a co-host of Resources Radio the RFF weekly podcast.

Dr. Walls's research focuses on the impacts of extreme weather, floods, hurricanes, and wildfires on people and communities and the design of programs and policies to improve adaptation and resilience. She has published widely in peer-reviewed journals and is the author of over 40 book chapters and published reports. She is an editor of the *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy*, a member of the Technical Advisory Committee for the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan, and a former board member of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists. Dr. Walls has a Bachelor of Science from the University of Kentucky and a PhD in economics from the University of California-Santa Barbara.