

Employer Power and Employee Skills: Understanding Workforce Training Programs in the Context of Labor Market Power

Speaker Biographies

Amanda Cage is the president and chief executive officer of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, a national network of 30 partner organizations that advances a skilled workforce, promotes good jobs, and invests in equitable outcomes. Cage joined the National Fund in March 2020, bringing more than 20 years of federal workforce system, grantmaking, and organized labor experience to the organization. Throughout her career, Cage has focused on ensuring economic inclusion and stability for workers and their families. She started her career as a labor organizer and was a Trade Union Program fellow at Harvard Law School. Cage is an Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program 2017–18 job quality fellow and a 2019 Leadership Greater Chicago fellow.

Lenore Friedlaender is assistant to the president of 32BJ SEIU, the largest union of property service workers in the United States. Friedlaender leads the member representation work for Hudson Valley and Long Island, was the second woman elected as a vice president of 32BJ since it was founded in the 1930s, and was the first woman elected assistant to the president. She also works closely with Build Up NYC, a collaboration between 32BJ and the New York City Building Trades, which began as a project to promote good jobs and responsible development and is dedicated to organizing buildings “from shovel to broom.” She built 32BJ’s member engagement program, which is based on a lifelong mission of helping working people understand their rights and become leaders in the fight for workplace and social justice. She has also served as director of organizing at 32BJ SEIU and developed training curricula for stewards, member organizers, and union staff.

Elisabeth Jacobs is acting executive director of WorkRise, a research-to-action initiative focused on jobs, workers, and mobility, hosted by the Urban Institute. With WorkRise’s Leadership Board and its philanthropic and institutional partners, Jacobs leads and directs strategic planning efforts, development of the initiative’s research priorities and agenda, grantmaking and other key research investment activities, institutional partnerships, fundraising, and stakeholder cultivation and engagement. A nationally recognized expert on family income and earnings instability, Jacobs is also a senior fellow in Urban’s Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population, focusing on issues related to family economic security and economic mobility. Her previous roles include founding senior director at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, fellow at the Brookings Institution, and senior policy adviser positions with the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the US Joint Economic Committee. She received her doctoral degree from Harvard University, where she was a fellow in the multidisciplinary program in inequality and social policy.

Suresh Naidu is a professor of economics and international affairs at Columbia University as well as a fellow at the Roosevelt Institute, external faculty at the Santa Fe Institute, and a research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research. Naidu's primary research area is historical labor markets and political economy. He previously served as a Harvard Academy junior scholar at Harvard University and as an instructor in economics and political economy at the University of California, Berkeley. He holds a bachelor's degree in pure math from the University of Waterloo, a master's degree in economics from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and a doctoral degree in economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

Howard Rothschild is the president of the Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations Inc. (RAB). With RAB for more than 30 years, Rothschild has represented the real estate industry in labor negotiations and participated in thousands of arbitrations, in addition to representing employers in matters before state and federal courts. He has also represented employers before numerous federal, state, and local administrative agencies regarding various employment and labor issues, including unfair labor practice cases and discrimination claims. Rothschild also serves as an officer and/or trustee on the SEIU local 32BJ funds, Local 94, and International Union of Operating Engineers funds and committees. In 2010, the International Foundation designated Rothschild master trustee. He is admitted to practice law in the state of New York, the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and the Supreme Court of the United States, and he is a member of the New York State Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and the Real Estate Board of New York. Rothschild is a graduate of the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University.

Aaron Sojourner is a labor economist and associate professor at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management. His research focuses on the effects of labor market institutions on economic productivity and politics; policies to promote efficient and equitable development of human capital, with a focus on early childhood and K-12 education systems; and behavioral economic approaches to consumer financial decisions. He has been published widely in academic journals, including the *Journal of Public Economics*, *Industrial Relations*, and *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, for which he serves on the international editorial board. Sojourner is a member of the Minnesota State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, has served on the Council of Economic Advisers under Presidents Obama and Trump, and served on former Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges's Cradle-to-K Cabinet, advising the city on reducing racial disparities through policies affecting children's first three years. He is a research fellow at IZA, the leading European labor economics research institute, and a visiting scholar at the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank. Sojourner has a bachelor's degree in history from Yale University, a master's degree in public policy analysis from the University of Chicago, and a doctoral degree in economics from Northwestern University.