

Challenges and Opportunities: How Tight Labor Markets Create Mobility Ladders for Workers and Low-Income Families

Speaker Biographies

Indi Dutta-Gupta is the president and executive director for Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). Prior to joining CLASP, Indivar “Indi” Dutta-Gupta was the co-executive director of the Georgetown Center on Poverty & Inequality (GCPI), where he led work to develop and advance policy recommendations that alleviate poverty and inequality, advance racial and gender equity, and expand economic inclusion for all people in the United States. While at GCPI, he grew the organization’s staff from 1 to 19 and its budget from around \$240,000 to \$2.75 million. Indi serves as a board member for two nonpartisan groups, Indivisible Civics and the National Academy of Social Insurance, and as an advisor for the Aspen Institute’s Benefits 21 Initiative. Previously, he was a member of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Healthy Children and Families Research Advisory Group, the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Poverty Reduction (Canada), the Research Task Force for the Gates Foundation’s Post-Secondary Value Commission, and the Poverty, Employment, and Economic Self-Sufficiency Network (United States). Prior to joining GCPI, Indi led strategic initiatives for major philanthropies, children’s groups, and workers’ organizations as project director at Freedman Consulting, LLC. Before that role, he was senior policy advisor at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, focusing on budget and tax policies and cross-cutting low-income issues.

Elisabeth Jacobs is a senior fellow in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, 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. Jacobs is a nationally recognized expert on family income and earnings instability, low-wage employment and job quality, and intergenerational mobility and opportunity, as well as a wide range of related policies including social insurance, labor market regulations, and safety net policies. She is a go-to source for media and policymakers looking for clear, concise, and relevant explanations of how research can inform policy debates and agenda setting. Jacobs is an elected member of the National Academy for Social Insurance and a founding member of the American Enterprise Institute–Brookings Paid Family Leave Working Group. Jacobs holds a BA from Yale University, where she served on the board of trustees for the Dwight Hall Center for Public Service and Social Justice, and a PhD from Harvard University, where she was a fellow in the Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality and Social Policy.

Myra Jones-Taylor leads the Urban Institute’s policy impact strategy as the organization’s first chief policy impact officer. She works with researchers and policy experts across Urban to help maximize the impact of their findings and evidence-based recommendations while also helping tell the story of how their work changes lives and strengthens communities.

Before this role, Jones-Taylor was the chief policy officer at Zero to Three, where she led the development and implementation of the organization's policy agenda, priorities, and strategies while also serving as the principal spokesperson on all policy matters. She previously served as Connecticut's founding commissioner of early childhood, leading the cabinet-level state agency that serves all children from birth to age 5 and is responsible for early care and education, home visiting, and early intervention and child care licensing in the state. During her time as commissioner, the state agency was awarded \$50 million in new, competitive federal grants and expanded access to high-quality preschool to 25 percent more three- and four-year-olds.

Quentin L. Messer Jr. is the Chief Executive Officer at Michigan Economic Development Corporation. As MEDC CEO and President and Chair of the Michigan Strategic Fund, Quentin is charged with implementing and executing MEDC's core mission of business development and attraction, community development, providing access to capital and enhancing Michigan's image and brand with a focus on building a strong and equitable economy for all Michiganders. His responsibilities include managing the administration of all programs, funds, personnel, contracts, and other administrative functions of MEDC. Quentin is a member of Governor Gretchen E. Whitmer's cabinet and serves on the boards of the American Center for Mobility, Michigan Israel Business Accelerator, International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and Oklahoma University's Economic Development Institute (OU EDI) and is a member of the Michigan Council on Climate Solutions. Immediately prior to joining MEDC, Quentin was President & CEO at the New Orleans Business Alliance which, under his leadership, became one of fewer than 80 accredited economic development organizations worldwide (AEDO). Quentin also previously served as the Assistant Secretary for Louisiana Economic Development, (LED) Louisiana's department of economic development.

Kerri Nelson is Director of Policy and Partnership Research at the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). She directs and leads strategic workplace and workforce research that provides executives, HR leaders, and policy makers with data-driven insights and evidence-based solutions for driving effective workplaces and improving the employee experience. She has led key research initiatives on workforce development, skills-based hiring, workplace equity, and workplace culture and has expertise in organizational effectiveness, survey design, survey research, and advanced data analytics. She received her doctorate in Industrial & Organizational Psychology from the University of Connecticut. Her work has been featured in top news outlets, on podcasts and webinars, and on the Hill.

Katherine Newman joined the University of California in January 2023 as systemwide Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chancellor's Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Public Policy at UC Berkeley. She received her Ph.D. in Anthropology at UC Berkeley and her B.A. in Philosophy and Sociology from UC San Diego. Provost Newman has held leadership and academic appointments at Princeton, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, UMass Amherst, Columbia University, and the School of Law at UC Berkeley. Provost Newman is the author of fifteen books on topics ranging from technical education and apprenticeship to the sociological study of the working poor in America's urban centers; on middle class economic insecurity under the brunt of recession; and on aspects of inequality, social policy and family life in Japan, Western Europe, South Africa and

India. Her forthcoming book, *Moving the Needle: What Tight Labor Markets Do for the Poor* (co-authored with Dr. Elisabeth Jacobs), is being released by UC Press in April 2023.

Sarah Rosen Wartell is President of the Urban Institute. In 2012, Sarah Rosen Wartell became the third president of the Urban Institute since its founding in 1968. A nonprofit research organization of more than 550 staff, Urban provides data and evidence to help advance equity and upward mobility and to improve the well-being of families and communities. Under Wartell's leadership, Urban has increased its delivery of research insights to federal, state, and local government decisionmakers, as well as community advocates, corporations, and philanthropists; has become a leader in research communications and data visualization; and has modernized its business systems and technology. Before joining Urban, Wartell was the founding chief operating officer and then executive vice president of the Center for American Progress, where her work focused on the economy and housing markets. She also served as deputy assistant to the president for economic policy and deputy director of the National Economic Council. At the US Department of Housing and Urban Development from 1993 to 1998, Wartell advised the federal housing commissioner on housing finance, mortgage markets, and consumer protection. She was later a consultant to the bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission. Before her government service, Wartell practiced law with the Washington, DC, firm Arnold & Porter.

Jason Tomlinson is currently the National Program Manager for the Advancing Black Strategist Initiative in the research department of Jobs with Justice Education Fund. Jason also coordinates the Labor Research and Action Network (LRAN), which brings together scholars and practitioners to build workplace and economic power for working people. Jason holds a master's degree in Software Engineering from Stratford University, and a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Arlington. He first joined the Jobs With Justice network in 2017 in Dallas, Texas with Texas New Era Center/ NT Jobs With Justice. While there Jason directed the programmatic arm of Texas New Era Center as the Director of Programs and served as the convener of a coalition of community organizations which includes Texas Organizing Project, Workers Defense Project, Planned Parenthood, Alliance/ American Federation of Teachers Union, Faith in Texas, and the Dallas AFL-CIO. Together, Communities United for a Greater Dallas has highlighted the corporate abuses of the Dallas County Appraisal District appeals process, Dallas corporations taking massive tax abatements with no responsibility to the community, and the housing crisis and policies of Dallas County. He also spearheaded Texas New Era Center's flagship program, Project Phoenix, which helps first time, non-violent criminal offenders get union jobs to break the cycle of poverty. During Jason's tenure at Texas New Era Center/ JWJ he's conducted grant management of over \$200,000 in Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funds, including distributions, expense tracking, consultant contracts, and reporting.