



Panel Bios and Organization Background

Labor and Employment Relations Association 73rd Annual Meeting June 5-8, 2021, Virtual
Concurrent Session, Tuesday, June 8, 2:45-3:45 ET (11:45-12:45 PT), Breakout Stream 3
Essential Infrastructure: Leveraging Worker Voice and Employer Engagement in Pandemic Response

Panelists

Rebecca Hanson - SEIU UHW & Joint Employer Education Fund
Adine Forman, Executive Director, Hospitality Training Academy (HTA)
Luis Sandoval, Executive Director, Building Skills Partnership
Deborah Moy, MA, Balance.point Strategic Services, California Transit Works!

Respondent

Aida Cardenas, Deputy Director of Equity, Climate and Jobs,
California Workforce Development Board

Moderator

Pam Egan, Director, Labor Management Partnerships Program, UC Berkeley Labor Center

PANELISTS

Rebecca Hanson - SEIU UHW & Joint Employer Education Fund

Rebecca Hanson is the Executive Director of The Education Fund, a nonprofit partnership between SEIU UHW-West and Healthcare Industry Employers; on a mission to accelerate the careers of 100,000 SEIU Healthcare Workers. She serves as the Chairperson of the California Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship and is a member of the Workforce Equity Initiative Steering Committee of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

Rebecca's experience includes founding and leading the innovative nonprofit startup, Good Health for California, labor leadership as a Senior Organizer for pension strategies at SEIU, and research roles in Healthcare, Workforce and Economic Development with the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and both the University of Illinois and the University of Chicago. She

holds a B.A. in Economics from Smith College, an M.A. in Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois, and a Graduate Fellowship with the Institute for Government and Public Affairs.

[The Ed Fund and The Shirley Ware Education Center](#)

The SEIU UHW-West & Joint Employer Education Fund (the Education Fund), is a multi-employer benefit trust established in 2004 by SEIU-UHW, Kaiser Permanente and Dignity Health for the education and training of union represented employees. Since 2004, the Education Fund has grown to include 16 hospitals and health systems and 100,000 eligible union members. We are committed to equity and inclusion through expanding opportunities for career advancement to develop a diverse talent pipeline that reflects our communities' needs. Almost 70% of our learners are people of color and 80% are women. Our organizational structure, based on a formal partnership with major health care employers, allows us to connect learners to career advancement opportunities for in-demand, high quality jobs. Our graduates who move on to new roles earn on average 36% higher wages in family sustaining union jobs.

The [Shirley Ware Education Center \(SWEC\)](#) has been providing education and training to community members and health care workers since its formation in 1998 by SEIU-UHW West with initial funding from the City of Oakland. SWEC integrates its work with the SEIU-UHW West & Joint Employer Education Fund (the Education Fund). From its inception through to today, SWEC raises grants from public and private foundation sources to further this purpose.

The Shirley Ware Education Center (SWEC) is a high road training partnership (H RTP) that creates pathways for California residents from disadvantaged backgrounds to [access high quality jobs in the healthcare industry](#). SWEC focuses on providing innovative education and training solutions to workers interested in pursuing careers in healthcare. A nonprofit, SWEC functions as an intermediary, bringing workers and employers together to meet industry demand in the growing healthcare sector.

In Northern California, SWEC has a long history of developing innovative workforce development programming that promotes access to good quality jobs. Founded by Service Employees International Union United Healthcare Workers West (SEIU-UHW West), SWEC grew out of a need to create career pathways in healthcare for incumbent workers and to train new workers to enter the field. As a labor-market intermediary, SWEC recruits, trains, and creates pathways for incumbent workers to access higher-skill, higher-wage positions that will allow them to achieve their goals and support themselves and their families.

Through the California Workforce Development Board's (CWDB) H RTP initiative, SWEC is creating a training program with the goal of increasing career pathways for allied health workers, health professionals who are not doctors, nurses, or dentists but who work in related areas like direct patient care, disease prevention, rehabilitation, and health systems management. SWEC will identify career pathways for incumbent environmental services (EVS) and food service workers and provide access for

underrepresented populations to enter the healthcare industry. The training program will eventually lead to a registered apprenticeship for nonclinical incumbent workers to transition into clinical positions. The High Road to Healthcare Careers program supports employers, unions, and non-clinical support staff to meet the growing demand in allied health occupations due to population growth, an aging population, and federal healthcare reform.

With support from the CWDBs H RTP initiative, SWEC is making a significant contribution to the field of healthcare workforce development in California in four distinct ways: career pathways for EVS and food service workers, professionalization of entry-level jobs through green-skills credentials, ensuring workers success, and promoting leadership development opportunities.

Adine Forman, Executive Director, Hospitality Training Academy (HTA)

Adine Forman has over 25 years of managerial experience with Los Angeles based social service, workforce development and governmental organizations. She is the Executive Director of the Hospitality Training Academy (HTA), a non-profit institution and a labor-management partnership/Taft-Hartley fund that provides benefits to both employers and the UNITE HERE Local 11, serving Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties and the entire State of Arizona.

The HTA trains and upgrades the skills of UNITE HERE Local 11 hospitality and food service workers, who are predominantly women and people of color, and hail from all corners of the planet. The HTA works not only to upskill existing employees that are represented by the union, but also provides a variety of workforce development, registered apprenticeships, vocational ESL, financial and computer literacy, and training programs that are funded by foundations and government agencies to train low income, marginalized individuals for jobs in the hospitality and food service industry.

Prior to the HTA, Adine spent six years as the Director of Government Affairs & Special Projects at a large non-profit and One Stop, negotiating government contracts and working to secure government funding. Adine also worked for the California State Assembly and two Los Angeles County Departments as a Program Manager, overseeing \$40 million dollars in government grants, with a staff of 40. Adine is a lawyer, and has a J.D. from Loyola Law School, and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Arizona.

[The Hospitality Training Academy](#)

The Hospitality Training Academy (HTA) is a 501(c)(3) Taft-Hartley/labor-management partnership between UNITE HERE Local 11 and its contributing employers. UNITE HERE Local 11 represents 31,000 members and 160 hospitality and food service employers in Los Angeles and Orange counties and the State of Arizona.

Local 11 membership is incredibly diverse, comprising workers from many immigrant communities as well as high percentages of African American, Latino, and Asian American workers. The members are predominantly women and people of color, and hail from all corners of the planet. Local 11 members work for employers who range the spectrum from hotels, airport concession companies, large event/sports venues, private universities, theme parks, restaurants, food service companies, corporate cafeterias, convention centers and casinos.

Over its relatively short history, HTA has developed a sizable resume within the arena of workforce development, offering a broad variety of training and career services, coupled with wrap-around support provided by HTA and numerous community partners. HTA management and staff are recognized experts in the hospitality industry. This is exemplified by the organization's partnerships with the executive management of luxury hotels and large-scale food service enterprises, direct communication with labor representatives, extensive knowledge of the industry's hiring requirements and success in establishing and maintaining a pipeline of qualified candidates for the hospitality industry in Los Angeles and Orange Counties.

The HTA has federal/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), state, county, and local city funding to work with low-income jobseekers to assist with resumes, mock-interviewing, job/skill training, and then pipeline these clients into a union, hospitality job with good wages and benefits. Additionally, the HTA has government funding and Taft-Hartley dollars to train and "upskill" the current Local 11 workforce and provide ServSafe Food Certification and TiPs Safe Alcohol Service training on a regular basis. The Los Angeles County and City Workforce Development Boards (WDB) have designated the HTA to act as its "Hospitality Sector Intermediary" to analyze current trends in the hospitality industry, training needs, propose workforce solutions, and coordinate with the workforce development system and sector-based partnerships.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the hospitality and food service industry in Southern California and across the country. Hundreds of thousands of hospitality and food service professionals are out of work and major employers are closed for regular business. At the same time, many populations affected by the virus need access to high quality meals, including front-line workers, COVID-19 patients, at-risk seniors, and people experiencing homelessness (PEH).

Since April 2020, the HTA, UNITE HERE Local 11, and participating employers, have partnered on "Serving Our Community," a program to return hundreds of culinary professionals to safely create high quality meals for those affected by the public health crisis. The City and County of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) have contracted with the HTA to oversee the production of more than 68,000 meals per week for at-risk seniors as well as people experiencing homelessness (PEH) housed by Project Roomkey. In addition, the HTA has employed physically distanced online instruction to train hospitality professionals in state-of-the-art cleaning, disinfection, and sanitation.

“Serving Our Community” has made it possible for a number of key employers to stay open and for union members to return to kitchens. Looking forward, the HTA is poised to ensure that our culinary professionals are trained and ready to safely cook under the new realities of the public health crisis.

[The Hospitality Training Academy \(HTA\) is a high road training partnership \(H RTP\)](#) that develops innovative solutions to address the needs of employers and workers in the hospitality, food service, and leisure/tourism industries. HTA partners with industry leaders who have specialized knowledge, education, training, and workforce development expertise to shape strategies to recruit and upskill workers in the hospitality sector. HTA relies on its deep understanding of the changing nature of hospitality work to provide new and incumbent workers with the skills they need to adapt.

For over 13 years, HTA has been an expert in the Los Angeles hospitality industry. As a non-profit and the training arm for UNITE HERE Local 11, HTA establishes labor management partnerships that provide job training for workers in the union and for more than 160 affiliated employers. HTA partners with employers, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and other workforce development agencies to launch initiatives focused on serving low-income, underserved, and underrepresented populations in Los Angeles and Orange Counties and the State of Arizona.

Through the California Workforce Development Board’s (CWDB) H RTP, HTA is launching the High Road to Hospitality Program to expand their training infrastructure to assist low-income job seekers with training, employment readiness, and placement in union hospitality jobs, and to create pathways for incumbent workers to advance within the industry. As an intermediary, HTA analyzes current trends in the hospitality industry, identifies training needs, proposes workforce solutions, and coordinates with workforce development agencies and sector-based partnerships to meet the needs of hospitality sector employers. For employers, HTA is a direct link to highly skilled and trained hospitality workers.

With support from the CWDB’s H RTP initiative, HTA is expanding opportunities to enter the hospitality sector for underserved and underrepresented populations— people of color, immigrants, low-wage workers, the LGBTQ community, and residents with high barriers to employment, including a history of incarceration or homelessness—and improving economic opportunities for incumbent hospitality workers in Los Angeles in three significant ways: creating a web-based roll call system to address income insecurity, designing an English skills curriculum for new hospitality workers, and placing workers in family-sustaining jobs.

Luis Sandoval, Executive Director, Building Skills Partnership

Luis Sandoval currently serves as Executive Director of Building Skills Partnership (BSP) to advance workforce development and immigrant integration initiatives for property service workers. Prior to this

role, Luis served as BSP's Chief Development Officer for over a decade, during which he succeeded in growing the organization's budget and reach. Previous to BSP, he served as a consultant in the areas of nonprofit management, strategic planning, fundraising, and communications.

[Building Skills Partnership](#)

Building Skills Partnership improves the quality of life for low-wage property service workers and their families by increasing their skills, access to education, and opportunities for career and community advancement.

Building Skills Partnership (BSP) was founded with the vision of creating an equitable playing field for California's working families to succeed in their careers and educational endeavors. Born out of the Justice for Janitors movement that helped hundreds of immigrant janitors achieve a more just way of living and working, BSP partnered with responsible businesses and employers to pilot its first workplace training, focusing on Vocational English language acquisition. These efforts evolved to officially incorporating as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) in 2007. Since then, BSP has expanded to seven major cities across California and broadened its programming to address the unique barriers immigrant janitors and their children face in realizing the benefits of social, civic, and economic integration.

Today, BSP represents a unique partnership between over 90 janitorial employers, over 60 commercial building owners, the Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater Los Angeles (BOMA-GLA), the Service Employees International Union-United Service Workers West (SEIUUSWW), and the broader community. With collaboration and a holistic approach to programming, BSP continues to strive to create an equitable future for working families to build a better life.

The workers and families who participate in BSP programs report higher levels of confidence and progress towards reaching their short-term and long-term goals. Whether it is becoming a naturalized citizen, earning a promotion, or learning how to use a computer for the first time, BSP and its partners create lasting change in the lives of workers and their children.

[Building Skills Partnership \(BSP\) is a successful high road training partnership \(H RTP\)](#) that builds strong regional workforce development programs. As a statewide organization, it provides vocational training in English language and green skills, often blended with financial and digital literacy, citizenship, higher education, and other workforce development and immigrant integration needs. BSP's comprehensive worksite training model improves the quality of life for workers and their families through engagement in culturally relevant programming.

Through the California Workforce Development Board's (CWDB) H RTP initiative, BSP is expanding its workforce development approach through the Green Jobs, Good Jobs program. The project supports building owners, employers, and janitorial industry leaders working in partnership to define and improve skills, standards, training, professionalization, and career ladder opportunities for janitors with limited English proficiency. These property service workers play a critical role in minimizing the environmental footprint of commercial buildings where they work by addressing water, waste, and

energy inefficiencies. The Green Jobs, Good Jobs program provides janitors with access to professional development opportunities, healthier workplaces, and improved operations and maintenance staff dynamics, while strengthening employers' ability to comply with sustainable practices.

BSP's efforts to expand green skills will help advance the high road model in two critical ways: by building systems and partnerships to standardize green practices for high-performing commercial buildings in California and by demonstrating the value and impact of taking the high road approach in the janitorial services industry. BSP is supporting workforce practices that deliver services to workers who are predominantly women and immigrants with lower levels of education who often lack access to professional development opportunities, education, and training to advance their careers.

With support from the California Workforce Development Board's H RTP initiative, BSP is extending the scope and vision of the Green Jobs, Good Jobs program in three major ways: promoting a partnership model throughout CA, expanding the green janitor education program (GJEP), and creating opportunities for professional mobility for janitors.

Deborah Moy, MA, Balance.point Strategic Services, California Transit Works!

Deborah Moy, MA, a nationally recognized organizational change expert and accomplished trainer, founded Balance.point Strategic Services (BPSS) in 1994. In 2003, BPSS became a corporation and was joined by principal partner Daniel Johnson, SBN, creator of highly effective personal development systems. BPSS has a highly talented and motivated staff of consultants, trainers, and multimedia experts who work with individuals, small organizations, and companies that have complex work systems and diverse workforces.

[California Transit Works! Mission](#): We educate, advocate, and advise transit agencies and unions in building worker-centered training partnerships, as a key strategy in meeting industry demand for qualified workers to provide reliable and effective clean energy transit services for our communities.

Core principles: 1) Utilize processes that draw deeply upon the knowledge and skills of frontline people who are closest to the work, 2) Promote ongoing health and wellness strategies for workers in this high stress industry, as the foundation for professional public transit service, 3) Address key workplace and industry issues through positive, results-oriented, measurable actions that meet the interests and needs of transit partnership stakeholders.

[Joint Workforce Investment \(JWI\) is a high road training partnership \(H RTP\)](#) between Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 265 (ATU 265). The partnership grew out of a shared need to identify solutions to industry challenges in public transit. JWI convenes labor and management representatives to develop programs and solutions that address recruitment and retention issues, promote health and wellness, and to professionalize and upskill jobs,

with the goal of improving operations and the quality of public transit. Since 2016, JWI has launched apprenticeships that create career ladders and lattices for frontline public transit workers.

Leaders from JWI, the California Labor Federation's Workforce and Economic Development (WED) program, and Balance.point Strategic Services, a third-party consultant, came together to establish California Transit Works! (CTW). CTW is a statewide consortium of transit agencies, labor unions, and community colleges that promotes high road training partnerships to address critical public transit issues. The consortium's transit agencies and labor unions have over 10 years of experience creating and expanding labor-management partnerships. The consortium draws on the knowledge and skills of frontline workers, promotes health and wellness strategies for workers in a high-stress industry, and addresses workplace and industry issues related to skill development and technological change.

Through the CWDB's H RTP initiative, CTW's effort to expand the capacity of transportation industry partnerships will advance the high road model in two critical ways: one, by creating the first formal "high road partnership of partnerships" model in California; and two, by extending access to online resources to develop and improve high road partnerships in public transit. Ultimately, CTW is strengthening the workforce development system by facilitating the expansion of high road partnerships, providing technical assistance to new transit labor-management partnerships, and helping regional industry leaders identify and address shared skill and modernization challenges. The consortium also supports the development of worker training and health and wellness strategies by piloting and refining practices tailored to each partnership's needs.

CTW is determining its scope of work and vision as a formal partnership consortium in three major ways: creating a consortium of transit partnerships across CA, documenting successful workforce development practices, and developing online resources for high road transit partnerships

RESPONDENT

Aida Cardenas, Deputy Director of Equity, Climate and Jobs, California Workforce Development Board

Aida was appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom on August 15, 2019. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Aida is the daughter of Mexican immigrant service workers. Prior to joining the CWDB, Aida was instrumental in the creation of Building Skills Partnership (BSP), a statewide non-profit with the mission of improving the quality of life of property service workers and their families. She led BSP's efforts in the development of the CWDB's model High Road Training Partnership between SEIU-United Service Workers West, the Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater Los Angeles (BOMA-GLA), and the United States Green Building Council of Los Angeles (USGBC-LA) to form the Green Janitor Education Program (GJEP). Now, Aida is leveraging this expertise to expand the Equity,

Climate and Jobs vision and develop a suite of initiatives related to the High Road model in California. Aida has over 20 years of experience coordinating and directing educational, leadership, and organizing initiatives with janitors and other low-wage service workers.

Established by Executive Order in response to the mandate of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (Public Law 105-220), the Board assists the Governor in setting and guiding policy in the area of workforce development.

[The High Road Training Partnerships \(H RTP\) initiative](#) is a \$10M demonstration project designed to model partnership strategies for the state. Ranging from transportation to health care to hospitality, the H RTP model embodies the sector approach championed by the Board — industry partnerships that deliver equity, sustainability, and job quality. Along with these program investments, the Board is producing a body of policy and principle to guide related undertakings across the workforce system. Indeed, the initiative was designed as a campaign — to advance a field of practice that simultaneously addresses urgent questions of income inequality, economic competitiveness, and climate change through regional skills strategies designed to support economically and environmentally resilient communities across the state. The industry-based, worker-focused training partnerships build skills for California’s “high road” employers — firms that compete based on quality of product and service achieved through innovation and investment in human capital and can thus generate family-supporting jobs where workers have agency and voice.

The [California Workforce Development Board \(CWDB\)](#) is responsible for assisting the Governor in performing the duties and responsibilities required by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. All members of the Board are appointed by the Governor and represent the many facets of workforce development – business, labor, public education, higher education, economic development, youth activities, employment and training, as well as the Legislature. The Board meets on a regular basis and the public is encouraged to attend the meetings. Decisions are reached through a collaborative process.

MODERATOR

Pam Egan, Director, Labor Management Partnerships Program, UC Berkeley Labor Center

Pam is an experienced practitioner in the field of Labor-Management Training Partnerships with 27 years of working inside labor-focused workforce development organizations. She spent many years working with UNITE-HERE hospitality workers at their innovative and nationally recognized Culinary Academy of Las Vegas, supporting worker-centered strategies leading to significant wage and income improvements and authentic career paths for a largely immigrant, female, Latinx workforce. At the Labor Center, she helps shape strategy and tools to develop, deepen, and expand high road, labor

management industry training partnerships, and supports the public workforce system to develop new partnerships, build the capacity in unions to implement labor management partnerships, and grow a new generation of practitioner/leaders who carry out this work.

The [Labor Center's High-Road Training Partnerships Project](#) supports the California Workforce Development Board's H RTP Initiative in modeling and expanding workforce training partnerships that are worker-centered, industry-led and aligned with key policy goals of equity, job-quality, and sustainability. The Labor Center conducts analysis and provides technical assistance to sustain and grow the reach of these high-road partnerships. We develop resources and training to build an infrastructure based on the collective expertise of practitioners so that workers, employers, and communities can build high-road partnerships in more industries and across sectors and regions.

The [UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education \(Labor Center\)](#) is a public service and outreach program of the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment. Founded in 1964, the Labor Center conducts research and education on issues related to labor and employment. The Labor Center's curricula and leadership trainings serve to educate a diverse new generation of labor leaders. The [Labor](#) Center carries out research on topics such as job quality and workforce development issues, and we work with unions, government, and employers to develop innovative policy perspectives and programs. We also provide an important source of research and information on unions and the changing workforce for students, scholars, policymakers, and the public.