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WorkRise: A Research-to-Action Network



WorkRise

**Todd Greene, WorkRise Executive Director and Urban
Institute Fellow**

WorkRise is a research-to-action network, hosted by the Urban Institute

Our Mission:

- Accelerate economic mobility for low- and middle-wage workers
- Strengthen long-term economic security and stability
- Dismantle structural inequalities and advance racial and gender equity in the US labor market

Why economic mobility matters

- Economic security is a basic starting place; the ability to move up the economic ladder through work experience is also part of the “American Dream”
- Smaller share of workers experiencing upward mobility and wage growth than 40+ years ago
- COVID-19 recession has devastated low-wage labor market. Workers need new opportunities and pathways.
- Research focus has been on *inter*-generational mobility (ability of children to do better than their parents) but *intra*-generational mobility (ability to move up the economic ladder during one’s own lifetime) is less understood

Why economic mobility matters

- Workers without college degrees have fewer opportunities to advance and increase their earnings (more jobs require degrees)
- Education and training improve earnings, but returns are uneven across race and gender
- Other factors influencing mobility and opportunity: local labor market conditions; place/neighborhoods; bargaining power; family assets and wealth; supports such as childcare, transportation, and paid leave.

WorkRise in the context of the Urban Institute

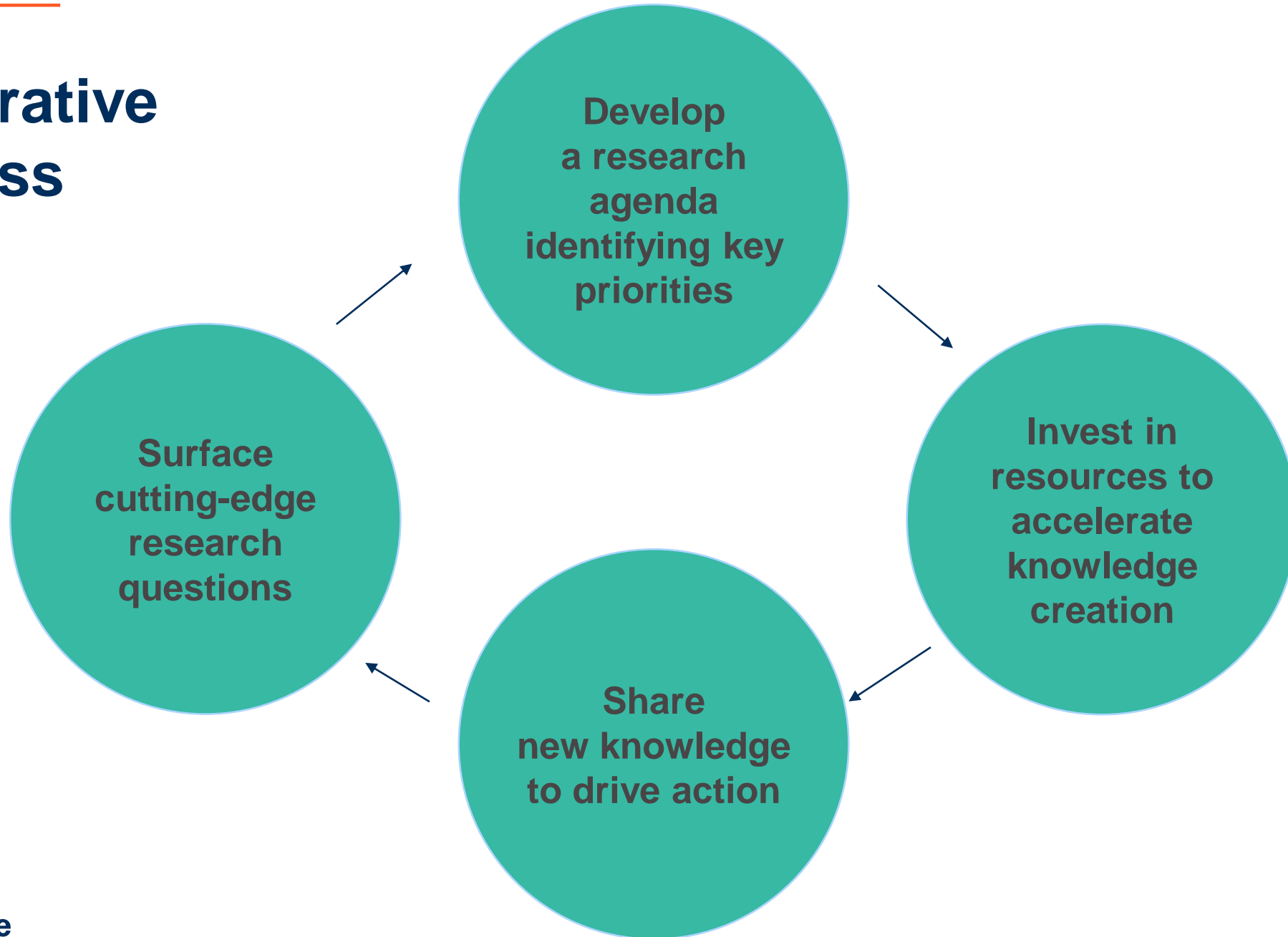
WorkRise makes its home at the Urban Institute, which has been a trusted source of evidence and insights for more than 50 years.

- Urban's mission is to open minds, shape decisions, and offer solutions through economic and social policy research and to inform the consequential choices affecting the well-being of people and places across the United States.
- WorkRise grew out of multiple initiatives at Urban: Mobility from Poverty Partnership (2018) and Next50 (2019).
- Complements ongoing Urban research on economic mobility, workforce development and training, safety net and poverty, and labor market policy and trends.
- Leverages Urban's expertise and sophistication in communications, data science, and external relations to elevate and amplify new knowledge.

What makes WorkRise unique?

- Convenes the full range of labor market stakeholders who are often siloed and in need of a shared platform for collaboration (private/public sectors; management/labor; researchers/policymakers/practitioners)
- Coalesces perspectives to surface important and complex cross-disciplinary labor market challenges, leveraging multiple streams of evidence
- Generates new questions for learning/research based on continuous feedback from stakeholder networks
- Presents evidence-based recommendations and solutions to drive change
- Offer recommendations based on a consensus or consolidated viewpoints

An Iterative Process



Stakeholder Communities:

- Employers and employer networks
- Small businesses
- Worker advocates (unions & other labor organizers)
- Practitioners from workforce development, human resources, postsecondary ed, economic development, and human services
- Policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels
- Researchers, research networks, universities, think tanks
- Philanthropy

Stakeholder Networks

- Leadership Board: 20-member board with visionary leaders representing diverse stakeholder communities; diverse in experiences and background, political orientation, sector, discipline, age, gender, and geography
- Institutional Partners: organizations representing wide-range of views on labor market mobility and equity
- Funders Advisory Committee: (Gates Foundation, Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, and other funders representing diverse interests/perspectives)

Leadership Board

David Autor

Ford Professor of Economics, MIT

Amanda Cage

President & CEO, National Fund for Workforce Solutions

Oren Cass

Executive Director, American Compass

Ramiro Cavazos

President & CEO, US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Carolyn Cawley

President, US Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Bill Dirksen

Former Vice President, Labor Affairs, Ford Motor Company

Professor of Economics, U Mass-Amherst

Darrick Hamilton

Henry Cohen Professor of Economics & Urban Policy, The New School

Blair Milo

Secretary of Career Connections & Talent, State of Indiana

Eduardo Padrón

President Emeritus, Miami Dade College

David Rolf

President Emeritus, SEIU 775

Nicole Sherard-Freeman

Group Executive, Jobs, Economy, and Detroit at Work, City of Detroit

Palak Shah

Founding Director, NDWA Labs; Social Innovations Director, National Domestic Workers Alliance

EVP, Policy, Business Roundtable

Sandra Susan Smith

Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Professor of Criminal Justice, Harvard University

William Spriggs

Chief Economist, AFL-CIO

Michael R. Strain

Director of Economic Policy Studies; Arthur F. Burns Scholar in Political Economy, AEI

Tanya Wallace-Gobern

Executive Director, National Black Worker Center Project

Tracy Wareing Evans

President & CEO, American Public Human Services Association

David Zammiello

Executive Director, Project QUEST

Institutional Partners – Examples

- Aspen Institute
- Burning Glass Technologies
- Business Roundtable
- Markle Foundation's Rework America Alliance
- Opportunity@Work
- PolicyLink
- R Street Institute
- Reimagine Main Street, an initiative of Public Private Strategies
- Roosevelt Institute
- TIME'S UP Foundation

Our Funders

Founding Funders

BILL & MELINDA
GATES *foundation*



Center
for Inclusive
Growth

Additional Funders

Walmart org

Cognizant
U.S. Foundation

 The **James Irvine** Foundation



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

“Research-to-Action” & Core Activities

- Identifying knowledge gaps that are most actionable—those most likely to result in durable change for low-wage workers
- Developing a research agenda reflecting priorities of diverse stakeholder communities
- Competitive grantmaking, commissioned research, publications, events, communications products and channels
- Developing evidence on pilots and demonstrations aimed at accelerating worker economic mobility
- Building platforms for collaboration and creating networks for sharing and dissemination

WorkRise Research Pillars: Four Channels Shaping Mobility Outcomes

- **Macroeconomic context and policies**

Sample topics: economic policy, political economy, trade, technology/automation, labor supply/demand

- **Employer practices and worker power and voice**

Sample topics: wages, benefits, working conditions, discrimination, collective bargaining

- **Skills, search, and matching**

Sample topics: education & training, credentialing, search frictions

- **360° perspective on workers**

Sample topics: health & well-being, family care responsibilities, transportation, housing



Skills, Search, and Matching – Illustrative Research Questions

- Within the market for post-secondary training programs, what works for whom, and why? How do outcomes vary with cost and quality?
- What are the longer-term mobility outcomes from sectoral training programs focused on helping students train in in-demand occupations?
- How does occupational segregation (especially by race and gender) shape the impact of training programs? Do different types of training programs have varying effects, and for whom?
- How do we ensure that the match between workers' skills and employers' needs are efficient?
- What is the role of employer-provided training in improving the longer-term mobility outcomes for workers, especially low-wage workers and workers of color?

2020 Research Investments: 9 projects; \$2.1M in finding

- Cash and Near-Cash Safety Net Programs and Labor Market Outcomes
- Impacts of Extending Child Care Subsidies for Parents in Education & Training
- How Does Federal/State Wage and Employment Policy Shape Racial Disparities in Earnings and Economic Mobility?
- How Does Short-Term Compensation Shape Labor Market Outcomes?
- A Randomized Controlled Trial of the Pursuit Fellowship (Pilot)
- How Does Task Assignment Increase Workers' Earnings Mobility?
- Creating Paths for STARs: Increasing Mobility Opportunities for Workers without BA Degrees
- Schedule Control at IKEA: How Does Worker Schedule Control Impact Employee Economic Security & Mobility? (Pilot)
- Using Matched-Pair Testing to Uncover Unlawful Employment Practices in Temporary Staffing

Get Involved:

Attend our events:

- Past event/Feb. 17: The Role of Race, Labor Markets, and Education in Building an Equitable Recovery
- Spring/Summer: Career Transitions for Displaced Workers
- Fall: Annual Conference

Apply for funding:

- May/June: Next Request for Proposals

Other inquiries:

- Write to workrisepartnerships@urban.org

Stay in Touch

Website + newsletter sign-up:
workrisenetwork.org

Social media

Twitter: @WorkRiseNetwork

LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/workrise-network/>

Email:

Todd Greene, executive director

todd.greene@urban.org

Archana Pyati, senior communications manager

archana.Pyati@urban.org

Thank you & Discussion

- Ideas for how NCRN and WorkRise can stay connected
- Top-of-mind open research questions for NCRN members