

A New Safety Net for Working Families: Green Jobs and Low-Wage Workers

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Kate Atkins, the director of the Garden State Alliance for a New Economy (GANE), has been doing community-based economic justice work for the past 15 years. She was a community organizer with Philadelphia's Kensington Joint Action Council and New Jersey ACORN. She also worked as a community and clergy organizer for the Service Employees International Union.

J. Mijin Cha is the director of campaign research at Urban Agenda. Prior to joining Urban Agenda, Cha was a senior policy specialist working with state legislators and local advocacy groups to promote smart growth, clean energy, and green economy legislation at the state level. She has also worked on environmental and environmental-justice projects in India, Nepal, and the United Kingdom.

Karin Martinson (moderator) is a senior research associate at the Urban Institute. She specializes in issues affecting low-income families, including workforce development, job retention and advancement, education and training, and services for hard-to-employ welfare recipients. As a senior policy analyst at the Department of Health and Human Services, she was involved in the development of 1996's welfare reform law.

Jason Walsh is the national policy director at Green for All. He was previously the state policy director for the Workforce Alliance, where he worked on federal and state workforce development legislation, including the Green Jobs Act. Walsh has also been the director of the Affirmative Options Coalition, a Minnesota antipoverty coalition, as well as a union organizer with SEIU and UNITE and a policy fellow for the late U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone.

Byron Zuidema is the regional administrator in Chicago for the Employment and Training Administration, assisting national, state, and local leaders in developing workforce solutions that meet the needs of employers, workers, and communities. He has served as the president of the Minnesota Software Association, assistant commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, executive director of Heartland Community Action, and chair of the National Governors Association Workforce Liaisons.