

LABOR RESEARCH & ACTION NETWORK

The 2017 Labor Research and Action Network (LRAN) national conference will be held **Thursday, June 8th and Friday, June 9th at Howard University in Washington DC**, hosted by the Department of Political Science. Scholars, labor practitioners, and activists from across the country will convene to share news ideas and lessons learned, and connect around research and campaign work. We hope this conference is an opportunity to develop an offensive strategy in the changed political climate, at a moment of backlash against advancements we've been making over 50 years.

LRAN invites those interested to submit ideas that fit within at least one of the following tracks. We encourage proposals that illustrate the role of research in illuminating these issues and informing campaigns. We also encourage a range of speakers, including those directly impacted by the issues raised in the tracks. A wide range of formats is accepted, including panels, workshops, trainings, film showings and strategy sessions.

Submissions are due by Friday March 17th. Proposals are being collected through this form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_8JNrji3dfnWNN8HKCtypt6n9glNIQm4bcSq49XMVw4/edit?usp=sharing

1. Global Challenges, Global Solutions: Working people throughout the world are facing similar challenges as right-wing political movements roll back progressive gains and increasingly target immigrants. Meanwhile, global corporations' low-road strategies remain unchecked and workers and their organizations face increased attack. What campaigns outside of the United States are having the most success at building power for working people? What global labor movement campaigns are finding the most traction and why? Are global union's movements and immigrants' rights groups forging new alliances in the face of today's backlash against both movements? Are there fresh connections between today's local and global worker movements? We especially invite academics and union researchers based outside of the United States to submit a proposal.

2. Future of workers in the precarious economy: Though the "on demand" and "gig" economies get the lion's share of attention in the new economy, working people face precarity on the job on multiple fronts: increased part-time work, on-demand scheduling, poverty-level wages and decreased job security mark even "traditional" economy jobs. Meanwhile, automation threatens to shift the work paradigm even further. How can workers effectively organize to protect good living standards and basic labor rights within today's precarious work? Is the gig economy really new, and how widespread is it? Do women and people of color face particular challenges with precarity? Is a universal basic income feasible or desirable? What organizing and strategies are being employed to secure rights? What are the unique challenges posed by the dynamic between political/policy work and organizing?

3. Racial Justice and Economic Justice: This track focuses on the intersection of racial and economic justice. We seek to explore and elevate new strategies for building a proactive, multi-cultural and multi-racial movement for social and economic justice, even in an era of increased political backlash. What is the relationship between the meteoric rise of the Movement for Black Lives and the work of unions and workers' organizations? Is the "white working class" taking a conservative turn, and is the story more complicated than media reports suggest? How can unions and worker centers encourage racial unity within their ranks? What are the connections (or disconnections) between the workers' justice movement and movements around immigrant rights, racial justice, mass incarceration, the racial wealth disparity and racial profiling? What does the history of black and immigrant organizing and class resistance in the U.S. tell us about today's struggles? What is the role of black and immigrant women in these movements? What are the most cutting edge strategies for building a racially inclusive and forward looking labor movement?

4. Staying on the Offense: Coalitions and Connections At a moment when labor faces enormous attacks -- including the increase of right-to-work legislation, rollbacks on public sector unions, and new policy obstacles at the federal and state levels -- how can an interconnected workers' movement effectively go on the offensive for justice? Should unions concentrate on building strength in pockets where workers' movements are already strong? Or is this a moment when labor should broaden its horizons and, if so, how? Are workers' organizations and unions deepening ties with movements for racial justice, immigrants' rights, women's rights and the faith community? What are some key examples of campaigns and coalitions that are having an impact? How are we uniting the progressive movement?

2016 LRAM Conference Planning Committee:

Ben Woods (Jobs with Justice), Marc Bayard (IPS), Lisa Kresge (UC-Davis), Lane Windham (Georgetown), Adam Kader (ARISE), Cassandra Ogren (Teamsters), Julie Farb Blain (AFL-CIO), Amy Callner (AFT), Sheena Foster (LRAM)