






[Build the Bench Fellowship]

 **Build the Bench**, established in 2015, is a leadership program that convenes senior staff from key U.S. worker centers and community organizing networks engaged in racial, gender, economic, climate and immigration justice work to identify opportunities to share and build a strong community of practice and learning that deepens our capacity to carry out our roles and collaborate. This program is directed by the Center for Innovation in Worker Organization (CIWO) at Rutgers University's School of Management and Labor Relations.

 **Convenes leaders** – sometimes called Managing Directors, Chiefs of Staff or Deputy Directors – with a focus on **implementing the vision** of their organizations through effective strategies and healthy structures. **Our goals:**

- **Get smarter with others faster to win bigger:** Create a trusting community that provides a well of knowledge, experience, and practices
- **Build and deepen relationships:** Create and strengthen relationships of mutual trust and respect that support individual growth, organizational strength, and the movement ecosystem
- **Collective Innovation:** Utilize collective brainpower and organizational resources to innovate solutions to shared organizational and movement challenges

 **Fellows** co-create and help implement Build the Bench program with CIWO Staff, Build the Bench Advisory Committee, Build the Bench Senior Fellow, consultants and participants



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Eligibility:

- Have prior/current experience in Build the Bench* programming (retreats, webinars or other events) *Unions Pilot must have experience with CIWO programming
- Currently work or serve as Managing Director, Chief of Staff, Associate Director or equivalent role as we strive to have our programming be informed by people doing the work in their respective organizations
- Have the support of Executive Director and/or Principal Officer at their respective organization in fellowship, with the understanding that BTB program benefits individual leadership development and organizational health and sustainability
- Share the belief that those most impacted by systems of oppression have the strongest insights on strategic approaches and the pathways forward for the racial, gender, economic, climate and immigration justice movements



Support Received:

- \$5,000 annual stipend
- Support from Build the Bench Senior Fellow, Director and consultants
- Opportunity to connect with fellows from across CIWO programming and offer peer support to one another
- Skill development in organizing and supporting a community of practice of leaders across national and regional social justice organizations



Commitment:

- Retreat*: Attend the annual in-person BTB retreat (Feb/Mar 2025) See example of [2024 Build the Bench Retreat here](#) *Optional for Unions Pilot Fellow
 - OPTIONAL: Two Virtual 1.5 day Fellowship retreats (Early 2025) with CIWO Innovation and Scholar Research Fellows
 - OPTIONAL: One in person 2 day CIWO Fellowship retreat (Summer 2025 - likely on the East Coast).
- Build the Bench Participant Engagement:
 - Work with CIWO staff, fellows, consultants and interns to build our community of shared learning and support for senior managers of activist organizations
 - Help plan for/co-facilitate 2-4 virtual events a year for participants on topics responsive to our community of practice
 - Participate on the BTB Advisory Committee Meetings (virtually, 2x/year)
 - 1:1's with participants in between virtual gatherings
 - Monthly check ins with BTB fellows, CIWO staff and consultants (generally scheduled on Fridays)