



*A Union of Professionals*

AFT Public Employees

Oct. 8-10, 2021  
New York City

2021 Professional Issues Conference

# Together We Thrive

Strengthening Our Communities  
through Public Service





Randi Weingarten

PRESIDENT

Fedrick C. Ingram

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Evelyn DeJesus

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

### **OUR MISSION**

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

### **AFT PUBLIC EMPLOYEES PROGRAM AND POLICY COUNCIL**

**Chair:** JILL COHENOUR, President, Federation of Public Health and Human Services, Local 4573

**Vice Chair:** GARY FEIST, President, North Dakota Public Employees Association, Local 4660

VERONICA AGUIRRE, Executive Vice President, Illinois Federation of Public Employees, Local 4408

MARY FRANCES BEST, Past President, Massachusetts Library Staff Association, Local 4928

JOSEPH DASILVA, Vice President, Rhode Island State Department of Education, Local 2012

SHARON V. DESILVA, Vice President, New York State Public Employees Federation, Local 4053

JOHN DISETTE, President, Administrative and Residual Employees Union, Local 4200

MATT EMIGHOLZ, President, Illinois Federation of Public Employees, Local 4408

HILLARY GLASGOW, Executive Director, Colorado Workers for Innovations and Solutions (WINS), Local 1876

SARAH LAFRENZ, President, Kansas Organization of State Employees, Local 300

SUE PARTON, President, Federation of Indian Service Employees, Local 4524

ANTOINETTE RYAN-JOHNSON, President, City Union of Baltimore, Local 800

JERRY SMITH, President, Maryland Professional Employees Council, Local 6197

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# AFT Code of Conduct

## Statement of Values

The AFT Executive Council has adopted the AFT Code of Conduct ([www.aft.org/CodeofConduct](http://www.aft.org/CodeofConduct)) which prohibits discriminatory, harassing, or otherwise unacceptable behavior in the workplace and at any AFT activity, event or meeting, even if the conduct has not risen to a violation of law. There will be zero tolerance for harassment of any form including but not limited to the use of racial epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, jokes or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to sex, race, age, disability or other protected categories. This behavior will be called out. The AFT takes these complaints seriously and may, at its discretion, take action that it deems appropriate upon assessing the situation. Possible responses may include a warning to or expulsion of the alleged offender from the AFT activity, event, or meeting.

The AFT is a democratic organization that values open and vigorous discussion of the issues facing the AFT, our members, working people and the labor movement. The Code of Conduct is not intended to restrict free and open debate, but rather is intended to ensure a positive and respectful environment that is free of discrimination and harassment, regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, ancestry, pregnancy or any other characteristic protected by law. We ask all meeting participant to conduct themselves consistent with the values of equity and equality.

The AFT encourages you to report any offending conduct as soon as possible; there will be no retaliation or adverse action taken against an individual who makes a complaint. Reports may be made to Gria Hernandez-Curtis, human resources director; Jessica Smith, chief of staff; David Strom, general counsel; the designated manager for the meeting; or any other supervisor or manager.

<b>Gria Hernandez-Curtis</b> Director of Human Resources	ghernandez@aft.org Office 202-434-4699 Mobile 667-229-7171
<b>Jessica Smith</b> Chief of Staff	jsmith@aft.org Office 202-879-4530 Mobile 202-255-1784
<b>David Strom</b> General Counsel	dstrom@aft.org Office 202-393-7472 Mobile 202-262-2438
<b>Meeting name:</b> <b>Meeting date:</b> <b>Code of Conduct manager:</b> <b>Email address:</b> <b>Mobile phone:</b>	AFT Public Employees Professional Issues Conference Oct 8-10, 2021 Christianne Runge-Chacko crunge@aft.org 240-672-7170

# COVID-19 Safety Protocols for AFT Meetings

Name of Meeting:	AFT Public Employees Professional Issues Conference
Meeting Dates:	Oct. 8-10, 2021
AFT Meeting Host:	Chris Runge-Chacko (240-672-7170 mobile)
AFT COVID-19 Protocol Contact:	Kitty Owens (301-332-5543 mobile)

The American Federation of Teachers has a responsibility to provide a safe work/meeting environment that is free of known hazards. To this end, the AFT has established extensive protocols in this age of COVID-19 for a safe, in-person meeting environment, which includes vaccination, testing for our headquarters building and for our meeting spaces, masking and distancing. We intentionally utilize sites that have good ventilation and cleaning protocols. We believe our collective responsibility to each other's well-being, safety and health is best served by ensuring that everyone who attends AFT meetings is fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

## Below are our COVID-19 safety protocols for admittance to the AFT Public Employees Conference:

### Prior to your arrival at the meeting:

- ✓ Bring proof of vaccination with you to the conference. The city of New York requires all attendees and guests age 12 and up to show it along with photo ID in order to enter the conference meeting space, as well as the hotel bars, restaurant and fitness center. A photo or photocopy of your CDC vaccine card will be accepted.
- ✓ NOTE: A negative COVID-19 test is not an acceptable substitute for vaccination proof and no exceptions may be made. Visit the official NYC Health website (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccines-keytonyc.page>) for more information regarding the New York City vaccine requirements.
- ✓ Within 3 hours of your arrival, you must complete the self-assessment (<https://go.aft.org/AFTEvents-DailyAssessment>). This assessment must be done each day of the meeting and results will indicate if you are able to participate.

### Upon your arrival to the meeting:

- ✓ On the first day of your meeting, please allow 15 minutes upon arrival to complete a self-administered rapid antigen test.
- ✓ You will be required to show a negative test result.

### During the meeting:

- ✓ Masks must be worn at all times unless actively eating or drinking.
- ✓ Maintain physical distancing whenever possible.
- ✓ If at any time you begin to feel sick, please alert your meeting's AFT COVID-19 protocol contact immediately and leave the meeting.

### After the meeting:

- ✓ If you develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of the conclusion of your meeting, we ask that you notify your meeting's COVID-19 protocol contact so they can alert other meeting attendees. For your privacy, your name will not be released without your permission.



*A Union of Professionals*

AFT Public Employees

2021 Professional Issues Conference

**Together We Thrive**

**Strengthening Our Communities  
through Public Service**

#FreedomToThrive

@AFT\_PE | @AFTunion

# AFT Public Employees

## 2021 Professional Issues Conference

Together We Thrive:  
Strengthening Our Communities through Public Service  
Oct. 8-10

New York Hilton Midtown  
1335 6th Ave.  
New York, NY 10019

# AGENDA

## THURSDAY, OCT. 7

4 p.m. – 7 p.m.  
**Registration**

Room: West Promenade (3rd floor)

## FRIDAY, OCT. 8

7:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
**Registration**

Room: West Promenade (3rd floor)

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  
**Preconference Workshops**

### **Virtual Organizing: Another Tool in the Toolbox**

Presenters: Jennifer Porcari, Senior Associate Director,  
AFT Public Employees  
Amy Hickey, Senior Associate, AFT Public Employees

#### **Room: Clinton**

In March 2020, when the global pandemic began, union activity moved to a virtual platform by necessity. Activists, leaders, and staff created new ways of maintaining connections to build power and engage with members. Google Maps, Zoom, Jam board and other tools suddenly became front and center for our work. What will the future look like to support organizing? Bring your laptop to this engaging session where we will share techniques and build new organizing skills for the years ahead.

#FreedomToThrive  
@AFT\_PE @AFTunion

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through a Public Sector Lens**

Presenter: Jonathan Rodrigues, Senior Associate, AFT Human Rights and Community Relations  
Moderator: Jerry Smith, President, Maryland Professional Employees Council

**Room: Gibson**

Government employees have a unique mission of serving the American people and moving policy enacted by our elected leaders. Our nation is home to people of varying cultural, ethnic, religious, economic and educational backgrounds and identities. Our government workforce should be representative of this diversity as well.

This workshop will examine the historical role of a diverse and inclusive public sector with a focus on how union leaders and activists can advocate for equity, inclusion and diversity through professional development, negotiations and coalition work. Additionally, we will examine our work to create a union that models this within our own leadership structures.

## **Hidden Trauma: What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do**

Presenters: Chuck Wilson, Assistant Director, AFT Health Issues  
Vipin Thekk, Senior Director, Ashoka  
Moderator: Sharon DeSilva, Vice President, New York State Public Employees Federation

**Room: Madison**

Have you ever opened the refrigerator to get something to eat, but it's empty? Looked into your wallet to pay for gas, but you're broke? What about having a flat tire on your way to a job interview? These are all experiences that can trigger a distressing or disturbing emotional response. In other words, it's hidden trauma. Trauma alters our thinking, behavior, and actions. It can cause us to yell at a stranger, make a poor decision that costs us our job, or, even worse, ruin significant relationships.

This workshop will help you learn ways to unpack situations so that you can figure out what to do when you don't know what to do. You can get back in the driver's seat. This session will provide real-

life, practical tools to address the hidden or private circumstances that create trauma or a crisis in your life. You will also have opportunities to ask questions and to share your story.

## **11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Lunch on Your Own**

## **1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Welcome—Opening Session**

**Room: Grand Ballroom (3rd floor)**

Jill Cohenour, Chair, AFT Public Employees Program and Policy Council; President, Federation of Public Health and Human Services, Montana  
Christianne Runge-Chacko, Director, AFT Public Employees  
Wayne Spence, AFT Vice President; President, New York State Public Employees Federation

**Keynote:** Randi Weingarten, AFT President

**Panel:** The Pandemic and Recovery  
Moderator: Jill Cohenour, Chair, AFT Public Employees Program and Policy Council; President, Federation of Public Health and Human Services, Montana  
Panelists: Randi Weingarten, AFT President  
Wayne Spence, AFT Vice President; President, New York State Public Employees Federation  
Jan Hochadel, AFT Vice President; President, AFT Connecticut

## **3 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Break**

## **3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Workshops, Session I**

### **Strand: Organizing Internal Organizing Strategies: New Employee Orientation and Social Events to Build the Union**

*(Repeats in Session III)*

Presenter: Jack Yoon, AFT National Representative  
Moderator: Hilary Glasgow, Executive Director, Colorado WINS

**Room: Gibson**



After an initial organizing win, how do you continue to connect with employees, sign up new employees as members, build power and keep strong connections between members? No matter how large or small your union is, there are ways to keep the focus and connections strong. New employee orientations and regular opportunities for member networking are key. This workshop will present best practices for new employee orientations and ongoing social events to support our union power.

### **Strand: Special Topics** **Public Employees and Student Debt Relief**

Presenter: Chris Goff, Assistant Director, AFT Higher Education

Moderator: John Disette, President, Administrative and Residual Employees Union

#### **Room: Clinton**

Are you or someone you know struggling to repay your student debt? Come learn about free programs that are available to federal student loan borrowers that may reduce your monthly payments and lead to loan forgiveness, as well as what the AFT is doing to fix how we pay for higher education so that we can end the student debt crisis.

### **Strand: Social and Climate Justice** **Social Justice and the Union**

*(Repeats in Session III)*

Presenter: Jonathan Rodrigues, Senior Associate, AFT Human Rights and Community Relations

Moderator: Antoinette Ryan-Johnson, President, City Union of Baltimore

#### **Room: Madison**

As our country faces the triple crises of a pandemic, racial reckoning and exacerbated income inequality, our locals across the country have stepped up to join the fight for social justice. Join a panel of AFT local leaders as they discuss practical steps to approach social justice in our internal and external organizing. Resources and toolkits will be shared to jump-start our work in 2021 and beyond!

### **Strand: Health and Safety** **Preparing for Future Pandemics: Using Lessons from the Current Crisis to Improve Future Responses**

*(Repeats in Session III)*

Presenters: Geraldine Stella, Director of Health & Safety, New York State Public Employees Federation, Darlene Williams, Vice President, New York State Public Employees Federation

Moderator: Sarah LaFrenz, President, AFT Kansas; President, Kansas Organization of State Employees

#### **Room: Morgan**

COVID-19 has caused millions of confirmed cases, claimed the lives of more than 600,000 Americans, and even brought prosperous nations and well-run healthcare systems to their knees. Few countries have been spared. The tension between maintaining social freedoms and engaging in efforts of collective defense against the virus has led to politicization (e.g., mask wearing, social distancing and vaccine refusal).

We need to learn from the lessons of this current crisis by restoring trust in our public health institutions (with data and science as the most critical elements of decision making); fortifying early alert frameworks (including workplace screening, temperature checks and broader social acceptance of wearing masks); developing real-time threat information sharing, contact tracing and community prevalence data; and strengthening the role of OSHA and the CDC. This workshop will discuss the roles and responsibilities of public employees and our unions in developing this action plan.

### **5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.** **Reception**

**Room: Grand Ballroom West  
(3rd floor)**



# SATURDAY, OCT. 9

7:30 a.m.

## Registration

Room: West Promenade (3rd floor)

8:30 a.m. – 9 a.m.

## Continental Breakfast

Room: Grand Ballroom (3rd floor)

9 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Steve Porter, PSI North America Sub-Regional Secretary  
Video from Rosa Pavanelli, General Secretary, Public Services International

Greetings: Marjolaine Perreault, General Secretary, Centrale des syndicats du Québec

Introduction of Keynote Speaker:  
Antoinette Ryan-Johnson, President, City Union of Baltimore

**Keynote:** Fedrick Ingram, AFT Secretary-Treasurer

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

## Break

10:30 a.m. – noon

## Workshops, Session II

### Strand: Organizing

#### Digital Organizing: In the Digital Age, Data Is Democracy

*(Repeats in Session IV)*

Presenters: Jennifer Porcari, Senior Associate Director, AFT Public Employees  
Amy Hickey, Senior Associate, AFT Public Employees  
Moderator: Jill Cohenour, President, Federation of Public Health and Human Services, Montana

#### Room: Gibson

Not only are we using more digital platforms to connect with one another for work, socializing and organizing, but the public sector also increasingly relies on

artificial intelligence (AI) to automate processes that once relied on our human brain. Much of our online life is governed by algorithms, but how much do we really know about how AI and algorithms operate in the public domain? How do we protect our members' private information as well as the personal information of the people we serve? This workshop will introduce public sector union activists to the basics of digital rights organizing. We'll discuss what we can do to protect data through contract language and policy change, as well as learn the correct questions to ask when our jobs are threatened with automation and artificial intelligence.

### Strand: Special Topics

#### Public Safety Roundtable: Moving Forward with Communities

Moderator: Christianne Runge-Chacko, Director, AFT Public Employees

#### Room: Clinton

In the wake of the pandemic, protests, and increased divisiveness of racial, social and cultural constructs, join a roundtable discussion on how we can support our public safety members. This session will allow members working in public safety to come together and discuss strategies to understand the realities of public safety in today's charged environment, including combating negative perceptions of public safety and understanding the impact of civil unrest, systemic racism, political tensions and building trust in the communities where we live and serve.

### Strand: Social and Climate Justice

#### Building a Green Economy: Where We Fit

*(Repeats in Session IV)*

Presenter: David Boundy, Assistant to the AFT President for Special Projects  
Moderator: Mary Frances Best, Past President, Mass Library Staff Association

#### Room: Madison

Public employees ensure that the priorities and mandates of our communities are executed and upheld. As our society moves toward new and innovative approaches to climate change, how can public employees engage in and nurture a focus on clean energy and a green economy, and

advocate for stewardship within our union family. Come learn and discuss how your union can motivate and activate members around a sustainable future!

### **Strand: Health and Safety** **Negotiating Health and Safety Protections**

*(Repeats in Session IV)*

Presenter: Kyle Arnone, Deputy Director, AFT Research and Strategic Initiatives

Moderator: Sarah LaFrenz, President, AFT Kansas; President, Kansas Organization of State Employees

#### **Room: Morgan**

The pandemic tripped the “check engine” light of our bargaining agreements and relations with management. Longstanding health and safety issues suddenly became matters of life and death. In some cases, frayed labor-management relationships made it difficult to reach agreement quickly in response to a rapidly evolving health crisis. However, many AFT affiliates rose to the occasion, diagnosing problems and retooling. This workshop will cover bargaining lessons we learned during the pandemic, from when you have a right to enter negotiations with management over health and safety issues to rethinking how you design your dispute resolution procedures to resolve high-stakes health and safety issues.

### **Noon – 1:15 p.m.**

#### **Luncheon**

**Room: Grand Ballroom (3rd floor)**

Introduction: Randi DiAntonio, Vice President, New York State Public Employees Federation

**Keynote:** Rep. Paul D. Tonko (NY-20)

### **1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.**

#### **Workshops, Session III**

#### **Strand: Organizing**

#### **Internal Organizing Strategies: New Employee Orientation and Social Events to Build the Union**

Presenter: Jack Yoon, AFT National Representative

Moderator: Gary Feist, President, North Dakota Public Employees Association

#### **Room: Gibson**

After an initial organizing win, how do you continue to connect with employees, sign up new employees as members, build power and keep strong connections between members? No matter how large or small your union is, there are ways to keep the focus and connections strong. New employee orientations and regular opportunities for member networking are key. This workshop will present best practices for new employee orientations and ongoing social events to support our union power.

#### **Strand: Special Topics**

#### **COVID-19 Relief Money: How to Keep It for the Public Good**

Presenter: Jeremy Mohler, Communications Director, In the Public Interest

Moderator: Sharon DeSilva, Vice President, New York State Public Employees Federation

#### **Room: Clinton**

State and local governments will get \$350 billion in federal COVID-19 relief over the next year. How do we make sure that money is invested for the common good rather than ending up in the hands of corporations and the ultra-wealthy? This workshop will offer tactics and cultivate discussion for protecting public employees and the communities that support them from outsourcing, “public-private partnerships” and other forms of harmful privatization.



## **Strand: Social and Climate Justice** **Social Justice and the Union**

Presenter: Jonathan Rodrigues, Senior Associate,  
AFT Human Rights and Community Relations  
Moderator: Hilary Glasgow, Executive Director,  
Colorado WINS

### **Room: Madison**

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New York State Public Employees Federation,  
Darlene Williams, Vice President, New York State  
Public Employees Federation  
Moderator: Matt Emigholz, President, Illinois Federation  
of Public Employees

### **Room: Morgan**

COVID-19 has caused millions of confirmed cases, claimed the lives of more than 600,000 Americans, and even brought prosperous nations and well-run healthcare systems to their knees. Few countries have been spared. The tension between maintaining social freedoms and engaging in efforts of collective defense against the virus has led to politicization (e.g., mask wearing, social distancing and vaccine refusal).

We need to learn from the lessons of this current crisis by restoring trust in our public health institutions (with data and science the most critical elements of decision making); fortifying early alert frameworks (including workplace screening, temperature checks and broader social acceptance of wearing masks); developing real-

time threat information sharing, contact tracing and community prevalence data; and strengthening the role of OSHA and the CDC. This workshop will discuss the roles and responsibilities of public employees and our unions in developing this action plan.

### **2:45 p.m. – 3 p.m.** **Break**

### **3 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.** **Workshops, Session IV**

## **Strand: Organizing** **Digital Organizing: In the Digital Age, Data Is Democracy**

Presenter: Amy Hickey, Senior Associate,  
AFT Public Employees  
Jennifer Porcari, Senior Associate Director,  
AFT Public Employees  
Moderator: Antoinette Ryan-Johnson, President,  
City Union of Baltimore

### **Room: Gibson**

Not only are we using more digital platforms to connect with one another for work, socializing and organizing, but the public sector also increasingly relies on artificial intelligence (AI) to automate processes that once relied on our human brain. Much of our online life is governed by algorithms, but how much do we really know about how AI and algorithms operate in the public domain? How do we protect our members' private information as well as the personal information of the people we serve? This workshop will introduce public sector union activists to the basics of digital rights organizing. We'll discuss what we can do to protect data through contract language and policy change, as well as learn the correct questions to ask when our jobs are threatened with automation and artificial intelligence.



**Strand: Special Topics**  
**Fighting Back on Social Media**

Presenter: Danielle Mathias, Senior Associate, AFT Communications  
Moderator: Jill Cohenour, President, Federation of Public Health and Human Services, Montana

**Room: Clinton**

As public employees, you have the unique experience of being on the frontlines every day facing the consequences of policy and politics. Now more than ever, those on the ground and elected officials in the Capitol are using social media to inform, educate, discuss and fight back against bad actors. Social media has the potential to change dialogues, change minds and change hearts, if you use it in the right ways.

This session will explain the different tools at our disposal as organizers, how they can be used as organizing tools, and what the best practices are for digital campaigning. Please bring a laptop or tablet for working through questions and examples.

**Strand: Social and Climate Justice**  
**Building a Green Economy: Where We Fit**

Presenter: David Boundy, Assistant to the AFT President for Special Projects  
Moderator: Gary Feist, President, North Dakota Public Employees Association

**Room: Madison**

Public employees ensure that the priorities and mandates of our communities are executed and upheld. As our society moves toward new and innovative approaches to climate change, how can public employees engage in and nurture a focus on clean energy and a green economy, and advocate for stewardship within our union family. Come learn and discuss how your union can motivate and activate members around a sustainable future!

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**4:30 p.m.**  
**Evening on Your Own**



# SUNDAY, OCT. 10

9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

## Hot Breakfast

Room: Grand Ballroom (3rd floor)

### Roundtable Discussion: Fund Our Future

Presenter: Randi DiAntonio, Vice President, New York State Public Employees Federation

To support public services, many AFT affiliates have adopted the tagline #FundOurFuture. Conference participants will learn about the New York State Public Employees Federation's Fund Our Future campaign.

### Telling Your Story:

#### Story Circles – Jennifer Porcari, Sr. Associate Director, AFT Public Employees

One tool used to encourage dialogue and sharing is a story circle. This involves a small group of people who share stories in response to a particular topic in a structured way that encourages full and authentic participation in both listening to and telling personal stories. Conference participants will engage in facilitated story circles around our tables.

## Closing Remarks

Evelyn DeJesus, AFT Executive Vice President

## Good and Welfare

Christianne Runge-Chacko, Director, AFT Public Employees



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# OFFICER BIOS



**RANDI WEINGARTEN** is the president of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, a union of 1.7 million teachers; paraprofessionals and school-related personnel; higher education faculty and staff; nurses and other healthcare professionals; local, state and federal government employees; and early childhood educators. The AFT is dedicated to the belief that every person in America deserves the freedom to thrive, fueled by opportunity, justice, and a voice in our democracy.

Prior to her election as AFT president in 2008, Weingarten served for 12 years as president of the United Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 2, representing approximately 200,000 educators in the New York City public school system, as well as home child care providers and other workers in health, law and education. Weingarten taught history at Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood from 1991 to 1997, and helped her students win several state and national awards debating constitutional issues.

Weingarten was included in the *Washingtonian* magazine's 2021 list of Washington's Most Influential People, and in 2013, the *New York Observer* named Weingarten one of the most influential New Yorkers of the past 25 years.

Weingarten holds degrees from Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the Cardozo School of Law. She worked as a lawyer for the Wall Street firm of Strock & Strock & Lavan from 1983 to 1986. She is an active member of the Democratic National Committee and numerous professional, civic, religious, and philanthropic organizations. Born in 1957 and raised in Rockland County, N.Y., Weingarten now resides in the Inwood neighborhood of New York City.



**FEDRICK C. INGRAM** is the Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of Teachers. He is the immediate past president of the 140,000-member Florida Education Association (FEA). Ingram is an educator, leader and motivational activist. Grounded by his experiences growing up in inner-city Miami, he has worked tirelessly to fight for worker rights, equity and justice. One of his top priorities at the AFT is addressing the urgent need for more educators of color and to support HBCUs, which prepare the majority of America's Black teachers.

Ingram was the 2006 Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year and one of five finalists for the Florida Teacher of the Year. He holds a bachelor's degree from Bethune-Cookman University, a master's degree in educational leadership from Barry University, and an honorary doctorate of humane letters awarded by Florida Memorial University. He is the author of *Cadence of Life: 8 Traits for Winning In & Out of the Classroom*. He is an accomplished musician, conductor, and sought-after motivational speaker. He is married to Yvetta Ingram, and they have three children, all of whom have attended public schools.



**EVELYN DEJESUS** is the executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. She was elected to the position in July 2019. DeJesus traveled an unexpected road from an engaged parent to educator and trade unionist. Her activism began when one of her daughters became ill during a school construction project. DeJesus publicly exposed the toxic environment. She began her career in education working as a state-certified parent educator and then as an assistant director for the Even Start Program for pregnant teens, all while pursuing a bachelor's degree. She went on to become an early childhood teacher and reading specialist at PS 126. She earned a B.A. in psychology, an M.S.Ed. in education and public administration from Baruch College, an M.S.Ed. in reading and curriculum development from Fordham University and an additional 30 credits in reading from New York University.

Distinguished among educators in her district, DeJesus was selected for inclusion in the Aspiring Leaders Institute for prospective principals. In 2018, she was appointed to the board of directors for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. In 2021, she became the Secretary-Treasurer of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. Her spirituality extends into every aspect of her life, and she credits her faith for her achievements. She is also a chaplain under the New York State Chaplain Task Force. She is the proud wife of Louie and the mother of two beautiful daughters, Tiffany, and Kristina. She has been blessed with five grandchildren.

## SPEAKER BIO

**CONGRESSMAN PAUL D. TONKO** is a seven-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives, representing New York's 20th Congressional District in the Capital Region, including the cities of Albany, Schenectady, Troy, Saratoga Springs, and his hometown of Amsterdam. Throughout his career, he has been a champion for the working class, advancing policies that create jobs, provide economic opportunity, and ensure senior citizens can retire with dignity. Tonko is a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce where he has chaired the Environment & Climate Change Subcommittee since 2013. He is also a member of the Natural Resources and Science, Space & Technology Committees. In addition to his committee duties, Tonko is a member of the Congressional Labor Caucus and co-chairs the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition. He is a champion of mental health issues in the Congress and

serves as a member of the Congressional Mental Health Caucus and a vice-chair of the Addiction, Treatment & Recovery Caucus. Prior to serving in the House, Tonko was the president and CEO of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. Before that, he served in the New York State Assembly for 25 years, 15 of which he was chair of the Committee on Energy. At the age of 26, he was the youngest person in the history of Montgomery County to be elected to the county's Board of Supervisors, which he chaired until 1981. Tonko graduated from Clarkson University with a degree in mechanical and industrial engineering and is a former engineer for the New York State Public Service Commission. He is a lifelong resident of Amsterdam, New York. Prior to his election Rep. Tonko was a member of the Public Employee Federation.

## PRESENTER BIOS

**KYLE ARNONE** directs the AFT's Center for Collective Bargaining. He and his team provide financial analysis of school districts, hospitals, universities and state and local governments, and provide strategic insights in support of AFT state and local affiliates across the country. Prior to this role, he was the national research coordinator for the Kaiser Permanente labor-management partnership, where he provided research and negotiations in support of a national agreement that covered 130,000 healthcare workers, one of the largest private-sector labor agreements in the world. He serves as a member of the Board of Scientific Counselors of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, a board member of the Association for Education Finance and Policy and a board member of his local preschool.

**DAVID BOUNDY** is a senior advisor in the office of the president at the AFT, leading the AFT's environmental justice activity. For 30 years he has led political and legislative campaigns for working families, a cleaner environment and safer communities. David directed the AFL-CIO's political and legislative campaign efforts. He created and advised For Our Future, the largest field Super PAC in the country. He managed and advised national campaigns to lower carbon emissions for the environmental community and for former Vice President Al Gore. As political director of the Democratic National Committee,

he co-managed the 2007-08 primary process, oversaw the "50-state strategy" and helped assemble the national voter file used to elect President Obama to the White House. David advises progressive advocacy groups and national unions, which have included MoveOn, the Clean Air Defense Campaign, Repower America, Clean Energy Works, the Human Rights Campaign, America Coming Together, SEIU and the Sierra Club. He is a Massachusetts native and a graduate of Boston College.

**CHRIS GOFF** is an assistant director in the AFT's Higher Education division and has been with the AFT since 2007. He helped start the AFT's work on student debt back in 2011 and has been coordinating our Student Debt Clinic program since 2016.

**AMY HICKEY** joined the AFT's Public Employees division in 2021 as a senior associate following seven years of organizing healthcare, higher education and charter/private school workers with AFT projects and affiliates. Before she began working with the AFT, Amy organized fast food workers in Seattle to help raise the minimum wage. She lives in Washington, D.C., with her cat Lilith, but someday she'll move back to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to raise minnows and bees.

**DANIELLE MATHIAS** is a senior digital specialist in the AFT's Communications Department. She covers the Southern and Southwest Mountain regions while also handling healthcare and

human rights issues. Danielle is also the digital lead for the AFT's peer-to-peer text messaging program, Hustle. Before coming to the AFT, Danielle was on the social media team at the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C. She is the owner of two personality-filled cats and is a suffering Philadelphia sports fan.

**JEREMY MOHLER** is a writer, meditation teacher and communications director of In the Public Interest, a national nonprofit organization that advocates for a government that works for all of us, not just the wealthy few.

**JENNIFER PORCARI** is a senior associate director with the AFT's Public Employees division and has worked for the AFT since 1997. In her current role, she organizes, mobilizes, trains and assists with the more than 125 government employee locals in the AFT. Prior to joining the staff of the AFT, Jennifer worked for a Connecticut SEIU local of state and municipal workers. She and her husband, Chuck, live outside of Washington, D.C., with their two daughters, Conna and Sara and their dog Titan.

**JONATHAN RODRIGUES** is a senior associate organizer in the AFT's Human Rights Department, working to support labor and community coalitions throughout the Northeast region. His work specializes in supporting training, tactics and implementation of organizing for education and worker justice campaigns, from issues addressing racial justice in schools, funding and fighting back privatization. Prior to joining the AFT in 2019, he worked as an organizer for the Boston Teachers Union in its community organizing efforts, helping strengthen coalitions like the Boston Education Justice Alliance and the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance. He lives in Boston with his wife and dog, Nutella.

**CHRISTIANNE RUNGE-CHACKO** is the director of the AFT Public Employees division. She has been with the AFT for 17 years—two years in the Union Leadership Institute, eight years as the deputy director of the Political Department, and the last seven years in her current role. Prior to coming to the AFT, Chris worked for 10 years as the executive director of the North Dakota Public Employees Association, AFT Local 4660, now North Dakota United. Chris holds degrees in Spanish and social work and has a Juris Doctorate degree. She worked for four years as a special assistant attorney general with the North Dakota Office of State Tax Commissioner before beginning her union career. Chris lives in Washington, D.C., and is a newlywed having married her love, Tom Chacko, in 2020.

**GERALDINE STELLA** is the director of Health & Safety for the New York State Public Employees Federation and has been with PEF since 1992. She is responsible for the coordination and oversight of the direct outreach to members and New York

state agencies on a variety of health and safety issues, including research and development of effective national and statewide safety and health laws, standards, policies and programs; hazard identification, prevention and remediation; and technical assistance on occupational safety and health topics. Geraldine trains workers on a variety of occupational hazards, assists injured workers with complicated workers' compensation issues, and works with PEF leaders to mentor new health and safety activists. Geraldine earned a B.S. in psychology with a focus on industrial/organizational programs. A union advocate for many years, she has additional experience in labor-management relationships, grievance handling and contract negotiations.

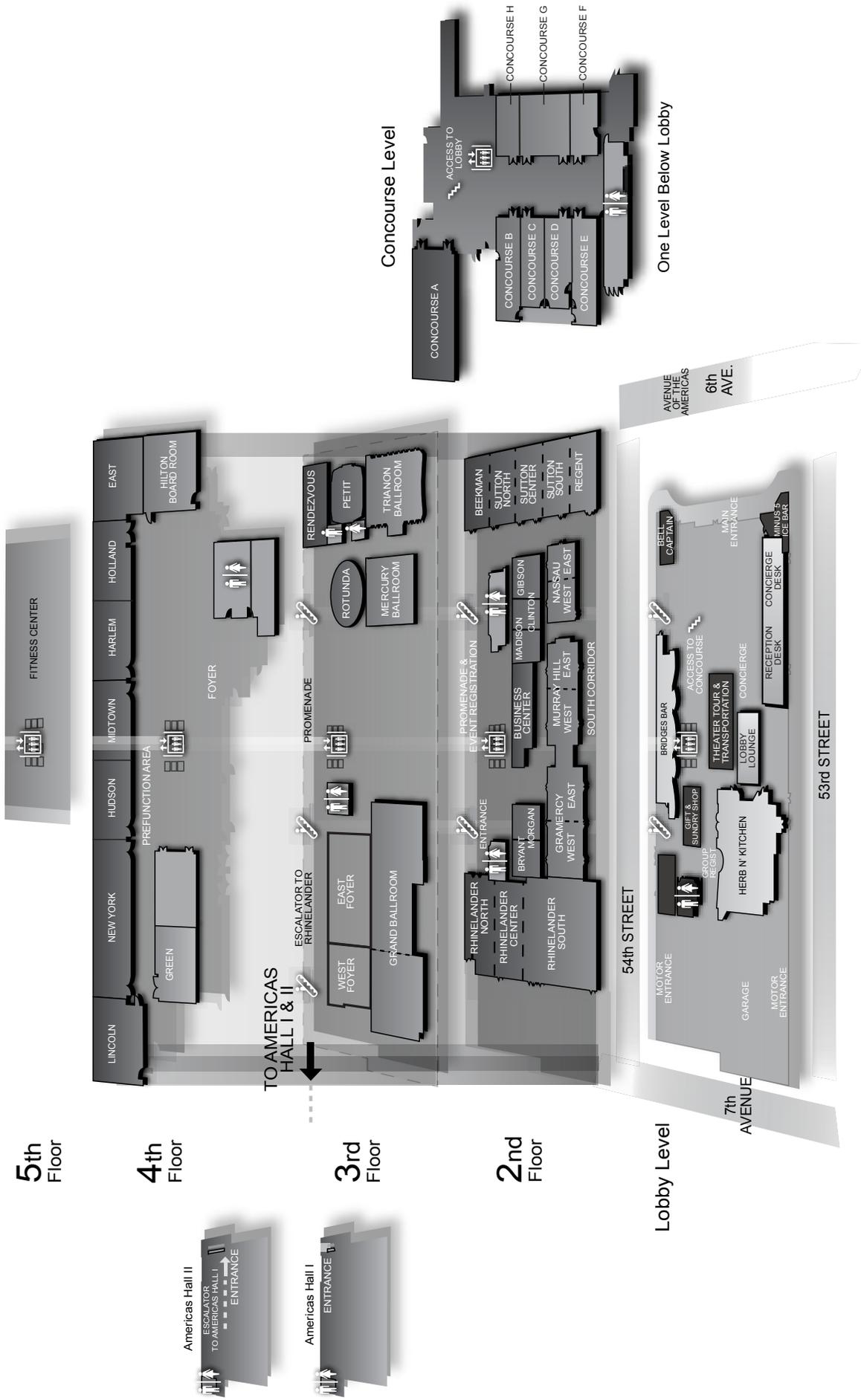
**VIPIN THEKK** is an experienced facilitator, coach, design consultant, public speaker and serial entrepreneur. He is a senior director at Ashoka, where he founded the Changemaker Communities initiative, which weaves together influential institutions to support the next generation of changemakers. In addition, he designed and built the Changemaker School Districts model, where stakeholders in a school district co-create ideas to integrate empathy, agency and well-being into the district's systems and culture. Vipin also co-founded the Wellbeing Project, which focuses on catalyzing a culture of inner well-being for all changemakers. He specializes in designing experiences to support individuals and organizations to navigate complexity and change, including leading cohorts at the Esalen Institute in California and the Global Fund for Children. Vipin is currently leading the Changemaker Families initiative globally, to enable parents to support their children to become powerful changemakers. Vipin is an assistant faculty member of Generating Transformational Change at the Pacific Integral Institute, a unique nine-month program to develop human consciousness and leadership. He has a master's in social work and is an Integral Life Coach, a Kundalini Yoga teacher and a seasoned facilitator, having led transformation-based work for groups and institutions in Asia, Europe and the United States.

**DARLENE WILLIAMS** is a vice president of the New York State Public Employees Federation and co-chair of the Statewide Health and Safety Committee. She is also a co-chair of the OMH Multi-Union Health and Safety Committee. She is a certified occupational therapist with the New York State Office of Mental Health. She worked for more than 30 years at Bronx Psychiatric Center and was Division 213's council leader. Currently, Darlene works for the New York State Psychiatric Institute in Manhattan and is Division 254's council leader. Darlene is also a master trainer for the AFT and has traveled around the country to provide health and safety workshops. She is a longtime activist and strong advocate for workplace violence prevention and other workplace safety issues.

**LEVEN “CHUCK” WILSON** is an assistant director in the AFT Health Issues department and a seasoned professional with experience in the areas of diversity, inclusion, community engagement, social justice, crisis management, service delivery and business development. He combines his background as a social worker to address inequities, inequality, and injustice. A recipient of numerous awards and recognitions, Chuck is also a change agent who founded the Renew Group to provide programs and services that address the unmet needs of the community. Chuck has authored two books, *The Truth About the Facts* and *Be U: Meet Pierre the Penguin*. Born in Washington, D.C., and raised in North Carolina, Chuck relocated to Hawaii for more than 20 years. He earned his bachelor’s degree in sociology and master’s degree in social work and completed postgraduate studies at Oxford Graduate School. Chuck served in a faculty position as lecturer and principal investigator at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Recent career highlights include serving as the executive assistant to the president of Pasco-Hernando State College, where he managed the president’s Leadership Institute, cultivated community partnerships, initiated a diversity program and became a partner of the AFT’s teacher diversity program.

**JACK YOON** is an AFT national representative with experience in various organizing fields, including small and large locals and internal and external campaigns. He had his start at Rutgers University working with the staff and faculty union on internal organizing, often organizing workers with diverse job titles and working with member activists and building a strong union culture on campus. He has worked on various campaigns, from K-12 and higher education to healthcare, both in the public and private sector. He enjoys long walks on the picket line and candlelight meetings with workers to build power.

# FUNCTION SPACE



Concourse Level

One Level Below Lobby

5th Floor

4th Floor

3rd Floor

2nd Floor

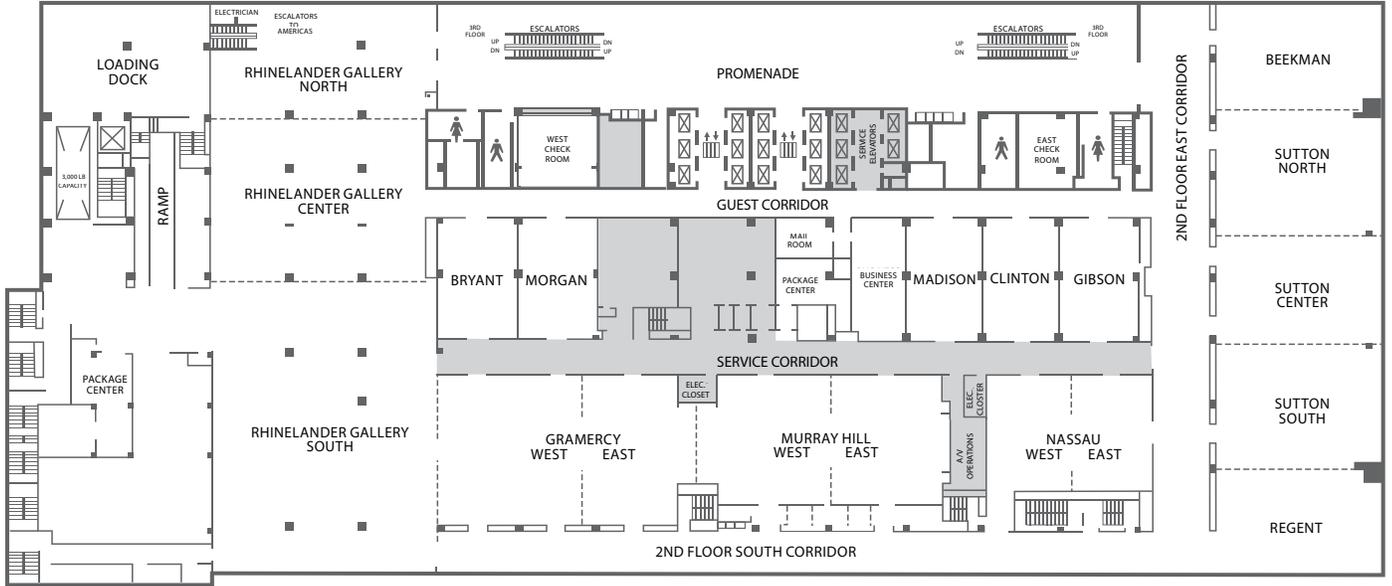
Lobby Level

Americas Hall II

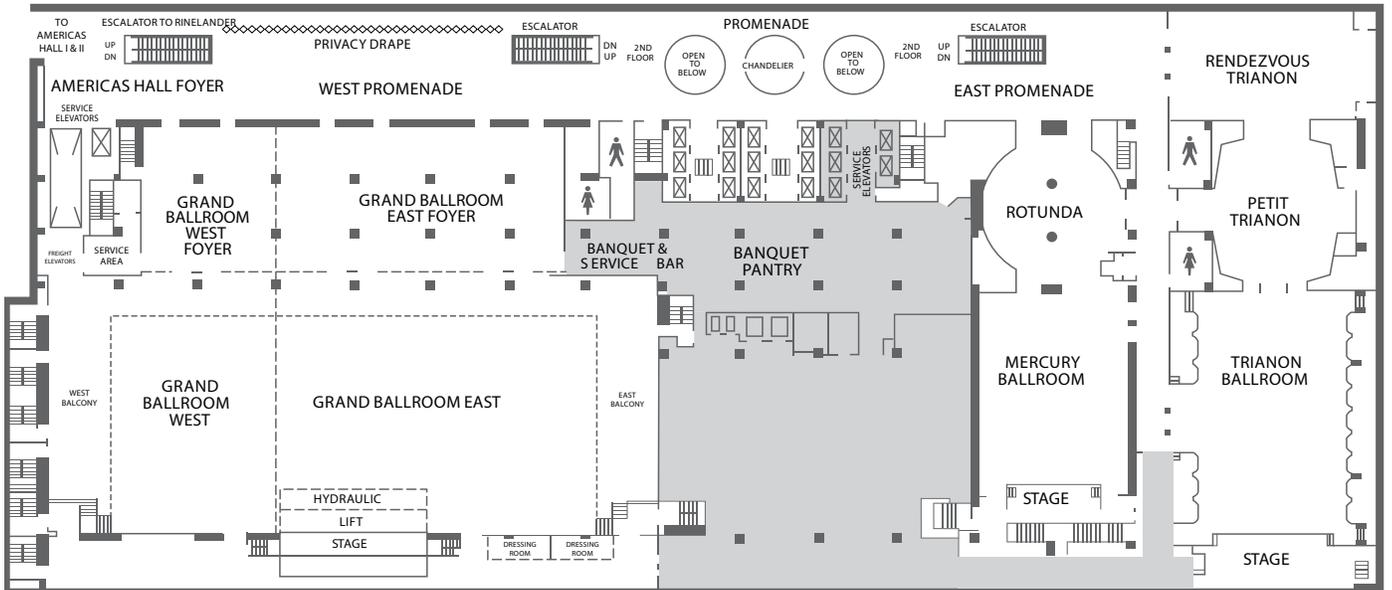
Americas Hall I



## SECOND FLOOR



## THIRD FLOOR









# WORKSHOPS AT A GLANCE

<b>SESSION I</b>	<b>FRIDAY, OCT. 8 3:15 P.M. – 4:45 P.M.</b>	<b>PRESENTERS</b>
Internal Organizing Strategies: New Employee Orientation and Social Events to Build the Union <i>Room: Gibson</i>	<i>(Repeats in Session III)</i>	Jack Yoon
Public Employees and Student Debt Relief <i>Room: Clinton</i>		Chris Goff
Social Justice and the Union <i>Room: Madison</i>	<i>(Repeats in Session III)</i>	Jonathan Rodrigues
Preparing for Future Pandemics: Using Lessons from the Current Crisis to Improve Future Responses <i>Room: Morgan</i>	<i>(Repeats in Session III)</i>	Geraldine Stella Darlene Williams
<b>SESSION II</b>	<b>SATURDAY, OCT. 9 10:30 A.M. – NOON</b>	<b>PRESENTERS</b>
Digital Organizing: In the Digital Age, Data Is Democracy <i>Room: Gibson</i>		Jennifer Porcari Amy Hickey
Public Safety Roundtable: Moving Forward with Communities <i>Room: Clinton</i>		Christianne Runge-Chacko
Building a Green Economy: Where We Fit <i>Room: Madison</i>	<i>(Repeats in Session IV)</i>	David Boundy
Negotiating Health and Safety Protections <i>Room: Morgan</i>	<i>(Repeats in Session IV)</i>	Kyle Arnone
<b>SESSION III</b>	<b>SATURDAY, OCT. 9 1:15 P.M. – 2:45 P.M.</b>	<b>PRESENTERS</b>
Internal Organizing Strategies: New Employee Orientation and Social Events to Build the Union <i>Room: Gibson</i>		Jack Yoon
COVID-19 Relief Money: How to Keep It for the Public Good <i>Room: Clinton</i>		Jeremy Mohler
Social Justice and the Union <i>Room: Madison</i>		Jonathan Rodrigues
Preparing for Future Pandemics: Using Lessons from the Current Crisis to Improve Future Responses <i>Room: Morgan</i>		Geraldine Stella Darlene Williams
<b>SESSION IV</b>	<b>SATURDAY, OCT. 9 3 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.</b>	<b>PRESENTERS</b>
Digital Organizing: In the Digital Age, Data Is Democracy <i>Room: Gibson</i>		Jennifer Porcari Amy Hickey
Fighting Back on Social Media <i>Room: Clinton</i>		Danielle Mathias
Building a Green Economy: Where We Fit <i>Room: Madison</i>		David Boundy
Negotiating Health and Safety Protections <i>Room: Morgan</i>		Kyle Arnone

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

ALL ROOMS ARE ON THE 2ND & 3RD FLOORS OF THE HOTEL UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

FRIDAY, OCT. 8		
7:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.	<b>Registration</b>	<i>West Promenade (3rd floor)</i>
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<b>Preconference Workshops</b>	
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Lunch on Your Own	
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.	<b>Welcome</b> —Opening Session Keynote: Randi Weingarten, AFT President	<i>Room: Grand Ballroom (3rd floor)</i>
3 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Break	
3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.	<b>Workshops, Session I</b>	
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	<b>Reception</b>	<i>Room: Grand Ballroom West (3rd floor)</i>
SATURDAY, OCT. 9		
7:30 a.m.	<b>Registration</b>	<i>West Promenade (3rd floor)</i>
8:30 a.m. – 9 a.m.	<b>Continental Breakfast</b>	<i>Room: Grand Ballroom (3rd floor)</i>
9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Keynote: Fedrick Ingram, AFT Secretary-Treasurer	
10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Break	
10:30 a.m. – noon	<b>Workshops, Session II</b>	
Noon – 1:15 p.m.	<b>Luncheon</b> Keynote Speaker: Rep. Paul D. Tonko (NY-20)	<i>Room: Grand Ballroom (3rd floor)</i>
1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	<b>Workshops, Session III</b>	
2:45 p.m. – 3 p.m.	Break	
3 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	<b>Workshops, Session IV</b>	
4:30 p.m.	Evening on Your Own	
SUNDAY, OCT. 10		
9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<b>Hot Breakfast</b> Closing Remarks: Evelyn DeJesus, AFT Executive Vice President	<i>Room: Grand Ballroom (3rd floor)</i>



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