

Live Webinar

State and Local Pension Reform: Can We Cut Costs and Improve Retirement Security?

Speaker Biographies

Jean-Pierre Aubry is the assistant director of state and local research at the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College (CRR). He has coauthored several CRR Issues in Brief on state and local pension plans. He also coauthored “Public Pension Funding in Practice” (*Journal of Pension Economics and Finance*, 2011) with Alicia H. Munnell and Laura Quinby. Aubry gained practical experience in public-pension reform when he served as the lead staff person to the Special Commission to Study the Massachusetts Contributory Retirement System. His research interests include documenting the source of current state and local pension underfunding and estimating the long-term impact of recently implemented plan changes on future pension finances. Aubry received his BA in economics and psychology from the University of Pennsylvania.

William Gale is the Arjay and Frances Miller Chair in federal economic policy in the economic studies program at the Brookings Institution. His research focuses on tax policy, fiscal policy, pensions, and saving behavior. He is codirector of the Tax Policy Center, a joint venture of the Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute. He is also director of Retirement Security Project. From 2006 to 2009, he served as vice president of Brookings and director of the economic studies program. Before joining Brookings in 1992, he was an assistant professor in the department of economics at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a senior economist for the Council of Economic Advisers under President George H.W. Bush. He is the coeditor of several books, including *Automatic: Changing the Way America Saves* (Brookings, 2009), *Aging Gracefully: Ideas to Improve Retirement Security in America* (Century Foundation, 2006), *The Evolving Pension System: Trends, Effects, and Proposals for Reform* (Brookings, 2005), *Private Pensions and Public Policy* (Brookings, 2004), *Rethinking Estate and Gift Taxation* (Brookings, 2001), and *Economic Effects of Fundamental Tax Reform* (Brookings, 1996). Gale attended Duke University and the London School of Economics and received his PhD from Stanford University in 1987.

Tracy Gordon is a senior fellow with the Tax Policy Center, where she researches and writes about fiscal challenges facing state and local governments, including budget tradeoffs, intergovernmental relations, and long term sustainability. Before joining the Urban Institute, Gordon served as a senior economist with the White House Council of Economic Advisers. She was also a member of the District of Columbia Tax Revision Commission, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, an assistant professor at the Maryland School of Public Policy, and a fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California. Gordon has written extensively on state and local government finances, including taxes, budgeting, intergovernmental relations, municipal debt, and pensions. She has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*, as well as on CSPAN, Fox Business News, and NPR. Some recent publications include “The Federal Stimulus Programs and Their Effects” (with Gary Burtless), in *The Great Recession*, edited by David B. Grusky, Bruce Western, and Christopher Wimer (Russell Sage Foundation); “State and Local Fiscal Institutions in Recession and Recovery,” in *The Oxford Handbook on State and Local Government Finance*, edited by Robert Ebel and John Petersen (Oxford University Press); and “Addressing Local Fiscal Disparities,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Urban Economics and Planning*, edited by Nancy Brooks, Kieran Donaghy, and Gerrit Knaap (Oxford University Press). Gordon holds a PhD in public policy with a concurrent MA in economics from the University of California, Berkeley.



Richard W. Johnson is a senior fellow in the Income and Benefits Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where he directs the Program on Retirement Policy. He writes and speaks frequently about income and health security at older ages. Johnson's current research focuses on older Americans' employment and retirement decisions, long-term services and supports for older adults with disabilities, and state and local pensions. He recently directed a team of researchers evaluating public pension plans in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and is examining how reforms might affect public-sector employees. Other recent studies have examined job loss at older ages, occupational change after age 50, employment prospects for African Americans and Hispanics age 50 and older, and the impact of the 2007–09 recession and its aftermath on older workers and future retirement incomes. Johnson's long-term services and supports research focuses on financing options and uses DYNASIM, the Urban Institute's dynamic microsimulation model, to project demand for services under current and alternative policies. He earned his AB from Princeton University and his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, both in economics.