

Making Government Programs Work for Families

Speaker Biographies



Olivia Golden is executive director of the Center for Law and Social Policy. An expert in child and family programs at the federal, state, and local levels, she has a track record of delivering results for low-income children and families in the nonprofit sector and at all levels of government. At the US Department of Health and Human Services from 1993 to 2001, Golden was a key player in expanding and improving Head Start and creating Early Head Start. At the Urban Institute from 2008 to 2013, Golden led major initiatives on poverty and the safety net, families' economic security, and children's well-being. She leads the major multistate Work Support Strategies initiative, which provides six states the opportunity to design, test, and implement reforms to improve low-income working families' access to health reform, nutrition assistance, and child care subsidies. Under her leadership from 2001 to 2004, the DC Children and Family Services Agency emerged from federal court receivership and markedly improved the lives of children in the District. In 2007, Golden managed all of New York's government agencies as director of state operations. She was also director of programs and policy at the Children's Defense Fund, a lecturer in public policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, and budget director of Massachusetts's Executive Office of Human Services. Golden earned her bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees from Harvard University.



Robert Greenstein is founder and president of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a policy institute in Washington, DC, that works on federal and state budget and tax policy and on programs and policies affecting people with low or modest incomes. In 1996, Greenstein was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship for making "the center a model for a nonpartisan research and policy organization." In 2008, he received the Heinz Award for Public Policy for his work to "improve the economic outlook of many of America's poorer citizens," and the John W. Gardner Leadership Award, for "help[ing] the nation address fiscal responsibility, reduce poverty, and expand opportunity." Before founding the center, he was administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service at US Department of Agriculture and helped design the Food Stamp Act of 1977, regarded as the Carter administration's largest antipoverty achievement. In 1994, Greenstein was appointed by President Clinton to serve on the Bipartisan Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform, and he headed the federal budget policy component of the transition team for President Obama. He is a graduate of Harvard College.



Heather Hahn is a senior fellow in the Center for Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute. Throughout her career, Hahn has conducted nonpartisan research on issues related to the well-being of children and families, including cash assistance, nutrition assistance, and other supports for low-income families as well as education, labor, and other policy issues. Hahn has extensive experience designing and conducting case studies related to the implementation of supports for low-income families. At Urban, she has also collaborated on several reports examining federal spending and tax expenditures on children; she is coleader of the evaluation of the Work Support Strategies initiative. Hahn has authored many reports and presented her research at numerous briefings, meetings, and academic conferences. She received an MPP from Duke University and a PhD in political science from Stanford University.



Cemeré James recently joined the National Black Child Development Institute as vice president of policy. Before that, James was deputy director of the Work Support Strategies project and senior policy analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy, where she focused on strategies to increase access to public work support programs. Before that, James was lead operations specialist at the Illinois Department of Human Services and was an inaugural fellow in the Illinois Early Childhood Fellows Program, where she was an advocate for access to quality early childhood education and supported their strategic planning initiatives. James holds a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from Florida A&M University, a master's degree in public policy from the University of Chicago, and a master's degree in industrial engineering and management science from Northwestern University.



Helen Neuborne was director of the Quality Employment unit at the Ford Foundation from 2008 to 2015. The unit made grants in three programmatic areas to improve economic opportunity for low-wage families: The first supported effective strategies for workforce development to improve access to quality training and jobs for low-wage and disadvantaged workers, especially immigrants. The second sought to improve the quality of jobs held by low-wage workers by ensuring paid sick days and paid leave, expanding unemployment insurance, and raising the minimum wage. The third expanded availability of and access to work supports such as SNAP, child care, and health care to promote greater job stability. She joined the Ford Foundation in 1994 as the women's rights program officer. Before joining Ford, Neuborne was executive director of Legal Momentum, formerly the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, and also held a number of policy positions with the New York City mayor's office under Ed Koch.



Christian L. Soura is director of the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. From 2011 to 2014, Soura was deputy chief of staff for budget and policy for Governor Nikki R. Haley. He was the lead author of the state's annual executive budget and developed many of the administration's key proposals, including the K-12 Education Reform Initiative. Earlier, Soura was the secretary of administration for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, where he held several appointments in the legislative and executive branches from 2001 to 2011. Soura has held leadership positions in professional associations, including the National Association of Medicaid Directors, National Association of State Chief Administrators, and the American Society for Public Administration. Since 2012, he has served on South Carolina's Commission on National and Community Service. Soura holds master's degrees from

the University of Illinois, where he earned a teaching award, and Pennsylvania State University (Phi Beta Kappa), where he was a director of the Renaissance Fund and completed a graduate certificate in public budgeting and financial management.



Sarah Rosen Wartell became president of the Urban Institute in 2012 and is the third president since Urban was founded in 1968. During her tenure, Urban has articulated its strategy to "elevate the debate" by bringing more of its research insights to federal, state, and local government and practice; becoming a leader in research communications and data visualization; and undertaking an ambitious program of business systems and technology modernization. Previously, Wartell was deputy assistant to the president for economic policy and deputy director of the National Economic Council. At the US Department of Housing and Urban Development from 1993 to 1998, she advised the federal housing commissioner on housing finance,

mortgage markets, and consumer protection. Later, she was a consultant to the bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission. After government service, Wartell was the founding chief operating officer and then executive vice president of the Center for American Progress. Her work focused on the economy and housing markets, and she directed the Mortgage Finance Working Group and "Doing What Works" government performance program. Before her tenure in government, she practiced law with the Washington, DC, firm Arnold & Porter. Wartell currently serves on the boards of the Low Income Investment Fund, Center for Law and Social Policy, and Center for Urban Science and Progress at New York University. She is also a Penn Institute for Urban Research Scholar. Her areas of expertise include community development, consumer finance, asset building, and housing finance. Wartell has an AB degree with honors in urban affairs from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. She has a JD degree from Yale Law School.