

# State of the States: Pandemic-Driven Budgeting Innovations

## Speaker Biographies

**Donnie Charleston** is director of state and local fiscal policy engagement at the Urban Institute. His work focuses on translating research for decisionmakers and translating the needs and priorities of state policymakers for Urban's researchers, especially for Urban's State and Local Finance Initiative. This program helps state and local policymakers improve their budget processes to meet the challenges of today's economy. He also works with other Urban initiatives as the organization seeks to innovate its engagement approaches. Charleston has extensive experience in state and local government. He previously worked in the North Carolina legislature and with local government agencies, including the North Carolina Association of Counties. On the research front, he was the assistant director for a university research institute and an economic policy manager at the North Carolina State University Institute for Emerging Issues. He has extensive policy and research expertise in government and service systems reform initiatives. Charleston holds bachelor's degrees in sociology and psychology and a master's degree in sociology. His doctoral work at North Carolina State University focused on economic sociology and industrial and organizational sociology.

**Donna Ginther** is the dean's professor of economics and director of the Institute for Policy and Social Research at the University of Kansas, as well as a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research. Before joining the University of Kansas faculty, Ginther was a research economist and associate policy adviser in the regional group of the Research Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta from 2000 to 2002. She also taught at Washington University from 1997 to 2000 and at Southern Methodist University from 1995 to 1997. Ginther received her bachelor's degree in economics in 1987, master's degree in economics in 1991, and doctoral degree in economics in 1995, all from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Tracy Gordon** is a senior fellow with the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, where she researches and writes about fiscal challenges facing state and local governments, including budget trade-offs, intergovernmental relations, and long-term sustainability. Before joining Urban, Gordon was a senior economist with the White House Council of Economic Advisers. She was also a fellow at the Brookings Institution, assistant professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy, and fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California. Gordon was a member of the District of Columbia Infrastructure Task Force and the District of Columbia Tax Revision Commission, and she serves on the board of trustees for the American Tax Policy Institute and the National Tax Association. 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* and on C-SPAN, Fox Business News, and NPR. Her recent publications include *Assessing Fiscal Capacities of States: A Representative Revenue System-Representative Expenditure System Approach* (with Richard Auxier and John Iselin); "The Federal Stimulus Programs and Their Effects" (with Gary Burtless) in *The Great Recession*; "State and Local Fiscal Institutions in Recession and Recovery" in the *Oxford Handbook on State and Local Government Finance*; and "Addressing Local Fiscal Disparities" in the *Oxford Handbook of Urban Economics and Planning*. Gordon holds a doctoral degree in public policy with a concurrent master's degree in economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Anne R. Kaiser** is in her fifth term as a member of the House of Delegates, representing the 14th District in Montgomery County, Maryland. Kaiser is chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, after having served as majority leader. As chairman, Kaiser helps set the direction for K-12 education policy and is instrumental in advancing voter protections and easing the tax burden on working families. Kaiser earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago, as well as two master's degrees from the University of Michigan.

**Shelby Kerns** is executive director at National Association of State Budget Officers. Previously, Kerns served as deputy director at the Idaho Department of Labor, having previously worked in the Idaho Division of Financial Management (the state's budget office) from 2009 to 2019. In her prior position as budget bureau chief, she led staff in developing, presenting, and advocating for the governor's executive budget. As a past member of the National Association of State Budget Officers, she served on the association's executive committee for two years. Earlier in her career, she was executive director of the Idaho Rural Partnership, program director at the Idaho Association of Realtors, and assistant executive director of the Idaho Wool Growers Association. Kerns received a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Idaho and a master's degree in business administration from Northwest Nazarene University. Kerns was a guardian ad litem for children in foster care from 2000 to 2020; a Family Advocates board member from 2016 to 2019; the 2015 Tribute to Women and Industry Award recipient; and an *Idaho Business Review* Women of the Year recipient in 2009.