

Data Infrastructure Issues for Evidence-Based Policy and Practice

Speaker Biographies

Claire McKay Bowen (she/her) is a principal research associate in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population and leads the Statistical Methods Group at the Urban Institute. Her research focuses on developing and assessing the quality of differentially private data synthesis methods and science communication. In 2021, the Committee of Presidents of Statistical Societies identified her as an emerging leader in statistics for her technical contributions and leadership to statistics and the field of data privacy and confidentiality. She is also a member of the Census Scientific Advisory Committee and the Differential Privacy Working Group, an advisory board member of the Future of Privacy Forums, and an adjunct professor at Stonehill College. Bowen holds a Honors BS in mathematics and physics from Idaho State University and an MS and PhD in statistics from the University of Notre Dame. After completing her PhD, she worked at Los Alamos National Laboratory, where she investigated cosmic ray effects on supercomputers.

Diana Epstein is the Evidence Team Lead at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), where she supports implementation of Title 1 of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, chairs the Evaluation Officer Council, and provides technical assistance on evidence and evaluation activities for a broad range of Federal agencies and functions. She was previously a research and evaluation manager at the Corporation for National and Community Service and a program evaluator and policy analyst at Abt Associates, the American Institutes for Research, and the RAND Corporation. She has a Ph.D. from the Pardee RAND Graduate School, an MPP from the Goldman School at UC Berkeley, and a bachelor's degree in applied math-biology from Brown University.

Erica Groshen is Senior Economic Advisor at Cornell University—ILR and Research Fellow at the Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. From 2013 to 2017, she served as 14th Commissioner of the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the principal federal agency responsible for measuring labor market activity, working conditions, and inflation. She currently serves as a member of the Federal Economic Statistics Advisory Council and the Committee on National Statistics of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, and as chair of the STARs Insights Advisory Committee for Opportunity@Work. Before that she was Vice President in the Research and Statistics Group of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Her research centers on employers' roles in labor market outcomes. She coedited *Improving Employment and Earnings in Twenty-First Century Labor Markets*, from RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Science, co-authored *How New is the "New Employment Contract"?* from W.E. Upjohn Institute Press and co-edited *Structural Changes in U.S. Labor Markets: Causes and Consequences*, from M.E. Sharpe, Inc. Dr. Groshen received the 2017 Susan C. Eaton Outstanding Scholar-Practitioner Award from the Labor and Employment Relations Association and was appointed a Fellow of the American Statistical Association in 2020. She holds a Ph.D. in economics from Harvard University and a B.S. in mathematics and economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Batia Katz is a research analyst in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, where she researches workforce development. Katz's previous research experience includes studying the science labor market, the impact of personality traits on employment outcomes, and gender and family in the workforce. Katz graduated with high honors from Haverford College, where she earned a BA in economics.

Ryan Kelsey is the Urban Institute's inaugural director for Building America's Workforce, where he helps shape Urban's workforce research agenda, leveraging the Institute's expertise in workforce development, postsecondary education, training, apprenticeships, work supports, job quality, and much more. Kelsey has more than twenty years of experience weaving together innovations in education, philanthropy, and workforce programs to foster a more equitable world. Before Urban, Kelsey served as the Markle Foundation's executive director for partnership development, where he led the formation of strategic partnerships with leading philanthropies and nonprofits as well as internal strategic planning and Markle's learning and evaluation agenda. He was previously the chief strategy and innovation officer at Achieving the Dream, a national nonprofit that supports a network for reformed-minded community colleges; and program officer at the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, where he developed and managed a \$45 million portfolio of grants focused on US higher education, STEM learning, K-12 teacher preparation, and educational technology. Earlier in his career, Kelsey spent more than a decade at Columbia University, where he was one of the leaders of a center focused on innovation in teaching and learning using purposeful technology. He taught graduate courses in educational technology and instructional design at Teachers College, Columbia University, and at New York University as well as introductory undergraduate science at Columbia. Kelsey earned his BS in biology from Santa Clara University and his MA and EdD in communication and education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Shelley Metzenbaum runs The BETTER Project to Bring Everyone Together to Enhance Results. She previously served as OMB associate director for performance and personnel management, founding president of The Volcker Alliance, head of Regional Operations and State/Local Relations at the US Environmental Protection Agency, capital budget director in Massachusetts, head of Boston's Washington office, and economic development specialist for Arkansas. She teaches and writes about using goals and measurement to improve outcomes in effective, cost-effective, and equitable ways and not using them unfairly and in ways that make people afraid, compromising performance gains.

Demetra Nightingale is an Institute fellow at the Urban Institute, where her research focuses on social, economic, and labor policy issues. She was the chief evaluation officer at the US Department of Labor from 2011 to 2016, where she developed what is recognized as one of the premier evaluation units in the federal government. Before joining the Department of Labor, Nightingale was at the Urban Institute for three decades, conducting research and evaluations on employment, labor, welfare, and other social and economic policies and programs, and at the Johns Hopkins University for seven years, where she taught graduate courses in social policy and program evaluation. She is also a professorial lecturer at the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration at the George Washington University, teaching graduate courses in program evaluation, integrating evaluation, and performance management in the context of evidence-based policymaking. Nightingale is the author or coauthor of five books and numerous articles. Among her books are *Repairing the US Social Safety Net* (with Martha Burt) and *Reshaping the American Workforce in a Changing Economy* (with Harry Holzer). She is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration and serves on many task forces and advisory panels. She received her doctorate in public policy from the George Washington University.

Irma Perez-Johnson is an expert social policy researcher with more than 30 years of experience conducting rigorous evaluations in the fields of education, labor, family support, and economic development. She has deep expertise in the design and execution of mixed-methods, experimental, and quasi-experimental studies including varied components (implementation, fidelity, outcomes, impacts, cost-benefit, etc.). She has authored dozens of evaluation and other research reports, policy briefs, literature reviews, research syntheses, and is an accomplished presenter on methods and findings for diverse audiences, including policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and the general public. Her clients include federal agencies, state governments, foundations, and others. Irma is also an experienced and effective business leader; a dedicated and trusted mentor; and a strong technical advisor. Most recently, she served as Vice President at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), overseeing the organization's portfolio of U.S.-based work on issues related to human capital, economic, and workforce development. There she led a team of 200+ staff with expertise in both research, evaluation, training, and technical assistance in the areas of career and technical education, college readiness and success, postsecondary education, adult learning, workforce policies and programs, human capital solutions, vocational rehabilitation and other supports for individuals with disabilities, and skill-building and employment supports for justice-involved individuals, opportunity youth, and other underserved populations. Irma also led AIR's multi-million \$ mission-oriented investments aimed at discovering and helping to replicate and scale effective strategies to help millions of currently underserved Americans equitably access livable-wage jobs and escape poverty.

Brian Scholl is Principal Economic Advisor and Senior Economist of the Office of the Investor Advocate (OIAD). He directs economic research for OIAD and advises on economic and financial market policy. A prominent advocate for evidence-based policymaking, Dr. Scholl designed and launched the SEC's new investor-testing research initiative POSITIER (Policy-Oriented Stakeholder and Investor Testing for Innovative and Effective Regulation), which provides an array of rapidly deployable, investor-focused data collection capacities to inform investor research and rulemaking. POSITIER has ongoing research streams in the areas of improving investor experience through more effective disclosure, as well as on investor perceptions and behavior. Prior to his appointment with the SEC, Dr. Scholl served as Chief Economist of the U.S. Senate Budget Committee. At the Senate, he managed the Committee's Economics Unit, advised members on economic developments, organized hearings, and participated in international congressional delegations. He helped to develop a broad range of economic policies to aid recovery from the Great Recession with particular attention to issues in labor, macroeconomic policy, household finance, international finance and financial markets. Previously, Dr. Scholl worked to improve the statistical foundations of the FDIC's stress test, and conducted economic and policy research with the Federal Reserve. Dr. Scholl completed his M.A. in Statistics and his Ph.D. in Economics at the University of California at Berkeley.