

Private Data, Public Impact: Unlocking Insights to Advance Financial Well-Being

Speaker Biographies

Raj Date is the Managing Partner of Fenway Summer LLC, a Washington DC-based venture investment firm focused on the financial services sector. He is also the co-founder of FS Vector, an advisory firm that counsels financial services companies on regulatory strategy, compliance, and public policy. Raj serves on the boards of directors of a number of innovative firms, including Circle, the digital asset infrastructure firm, and Customers Bank, the technology-forward commercial bank. He also serves on the Board of Trustees for Third Way, a nonprofit think tank. For Raj, Fenway Summer is the latest chapter in a long and varied career in and around U.S. financial institutions — as a policymaker, as a bank executive, and on Wall Street. Raj was the first-ever Deputy Director of the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). As the Bureau's second-ranking official, he helped steward the CFPB's strategy, its operations, and its policy agenda. He also served on the senior staff committee of the Financial Stability Oversight Council, and as a statutory deputy to the FDIC Board. Before being appointed Deputy Director, Raj acted as the interim leader of the new agency, serving as the Special Advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury. He led the CFPB for most of the first six months after its launch. Before his time in public policy, Raj was a Managing Director in the Financial Institutions Group at Deutsche Bank Securities, where he led the firm's investment banking coverage for the largest U.S.-based banks and thrifts. Before that, Raj was Senior Vice President for Corporate Strategy and Development at Capital One Financial, where he led M&A development efforts across the U.S. banking and specialty finance markets. He began his business career in the financial institutions practice of the consulting firm McKinsey & Company. He has also served as an attorney in both private practice and government service. He is a graduate of the College of Engineering at the University of California at Berkeley (highest honors) and the Harvard Law School (magna cum laude).

Yolanda Davila is PNC Bank's senior vice president and Southwest territory executive of Community Development Banking in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. In this role, Davila leads community development lending and investment strategies including the regional implementation of PNC's \$88 billion commitment to bolster economic opportunities in low- and moderate-income communities. Davila joined PNC through the BBVA USA acquisition and has nearly a decade of senior leadership experience with the combined companies. Prior to her current role, Davila served as PNC's Community Development Market Manager for Texas, where she led a team charged with managing Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) performance, volunteerism, community giving, and community lending and investment efforts statewide. Her professional career also includes ten years as a Texas Legislative Budget Board senior analyst, where she worked with various stakeholders including members of the legislature, state and local agencies, and state service recipients. Active in a range of community organizations, Davila lives in Austin, TX and serves on the board of LiftFund, the Economic Growth Business Incubator, the IDEA Public Schools regional board, as a roundtable member of the Texas Association of CDCs, and advisory committee member of the National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations. Born and raised in El Paso, TX, she is a first-generation college graduate and received a B.A. in Political Science from Williams College, Massachusetts, and a M.P.A. from the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas in Austin.

Mathieu Despard is Vice President of Research and Policy with SaverLife, leading efforts to deliver actionable insights to influence public policy and private sector change to improve the lives of people and families living on low- to moderate incomes in the U.S. Before joining SaverLife in 2024, Mat spent 17 years in academia, conducting research about household financial security with appointments at UNC-Chapel Hill, University of Michigan, Washington University in St. Louis, and UNC Greensboro and chairing and serving on the Academic Research Council of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) from 2021-2023. His published work with colleagues has been cited in numerous media outlets including the Atlantic Monthly, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, New York Times, Newsweek, and Forbes Magazine. Before his academic career, Mat worked for 14 years in and with

nonprofit organizations mostly focused on low-to-moderate-income families. He received his PhD from UNC-Chapel Hill with a focus on social intervention research.

Thea Garon is an associate director in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, focusing on financial well-being and economic security. She leads the Financial Well-Being Data Hub, a new initiative designed to introduce evidence-based solutions to improve households' financial security and advance equity. Garon has more than a decade of experience researching financial health and well-being. Before joining Urban, she founded and led the Financial Health Network's Financial Health Pulse, a national research initiative. She also led the development of the FinHealth Score®, a measurement framework that has become recognized as an industry standard. Garon's research has been featured in such media outlets as the *New York Times*, *Forbes*, the Associated Press, *The Hill*, and *Vox*. Garon graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in history from Carleton College and holds a master's degree in urban planning from New York University's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service.

Signe-Mary McKernan is vice president for labor, human services, and population at the Urban Institute. She is a national wealth and financial well-being expert with two decades of experience researching access to assets and credit and the impact of wealth-building programs and policies on family well-being. She coedited the book *Asset Building and Low-Income Families*, coauthored a chapter in the *Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Poverty*, and advised the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in setting up its research unit. Before joining Urban in 1999, she was lead economist on credit issues at the Federal Trade Commission. She has been a visiting professor at Georgetown University and served on the US Financial Health Pulse Advisory Council, the SafetyNet CUNA Independent Advisory Board, and EPIC's Consumer Debt Advisory Board. McKernan has extensive experience leading large projects and using rigorous econometric methods, randomized controlled trials, and administrative and survey data. Her research has been published in books, policy briefs, reports, and refereed journals including the *Journal of Public Economics*, *American Economic Association Papers and Proceedings*, *Demography*, and *Review of Economics and Statistics*. She has testified before Congress and the District of Columbia Council and been cited in media outlets such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Forbes*, and *Time*. Her consumer finance research includes credit health during the COVID-19 pandemic, debt, wealth disparities and solutions, matched savings accounts, financial products and services, and the alternative financial sector. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a doctoral degree in economics from Brown University.

Nick Mitchell-Bennett is the Chief Executive Officer of the *cdcb- come dream. come build.* headquartered in Brownsville, Texas where he has served as the CEO since 2008. Prior to taking the position of CEO Nick served in multiple positions within the cdc organization. During his tenure with cdc he has assisted and/or led in the development and preservation of over 4,000 affordable homes, raise over \$100 million in public and private grant funds and deployed over \$300 million in private lending capital and equity. Nick also serves as the Administrator of the Rio Grande Valley Multibank (RGVMB) CDFI. In his role as Administrator, Nick led the RGVMB to be the first CDFI to join the Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas. In 2011, the RGVMB launched the Community Loan Center (CLC), a small dollar alternative to payday lending product. The RGVMB has franchised the CLC model into 20+ markets around the nation allowing the entire CLC franchise network of lenders to originate \$107+ million and conducted 105,000+ transactions. Nick has a BA from Tabor College in Political Science and International Studies and MS Degree from Eastern University in Community and Economic Development. He is a certified Housing Development Finance Professional and has completed the NeighborWorks America Achieving Excellence program at Harvard JFK School. In 2015 Nick was recognized by Texas Low Income Housing Information Service with the *Texas Houser of the Year Award*. Nick is a founding member of the Partners For Rural Transformation, sits on the Board of Directors for both the Housing Partnership Network and the Housing Assistance Council.

Alena Stern is the chief data scientist at the Urban Institute, leading Urban's data science team. She is also a member of the Racial Equity Analytics Lab within the Office of Race and Equity Research. Her research focuses on creating data science tools and informing policy solutions to advance equity and inclusion. Before joining Urban, she worked at AidData, the Sunlight Foundation, and the Center for Data Science and Public Policy, where she used machine learning, natural language processing, statistical analysis, and geospatial data to inform the design of government

policies and international development programs. Stern holds a BA in economics and international relations from the College of William and Mary and an MS in computational analysis and public policy from the University of Chicago.

Sarah Rosen Wartell, in 2012, became the third president of the Urban Institute since its founding in 1968. A nonprofit research organization of more than 650 staff members, Urban provides data and evidence to accelerate solutions and advance upward mobility and equity. Urban is a trusted source for changemakers who seek to strengthen decisionmaking, create inclusive economic growth, and improve the well-being of families and communities. Urban has delivered facts that inspire solutions, and this remains our charge today. Before joining Urban, Wartell was the founding chief operating officer and then executive vice president of the Center for American Progress, where her work focused on the economy and housing markets. She also served as deputy assistant to the president for economic policy and deputy director of the White House National Economic Council. At the US Department of Housing and Urban Development from 1993 to 1998, Wartell advised the federal housing commissioner on housing finance, mortgage markets, and consumer protection. She was later a consultant to the bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission. Before her government service, Wartell practiced law with the Washington, DC, firm Arnold & Porter. Wartell serves on the boards of Enterprise Community Partners and Georgetown Day School. She is also a member of the executive board of the National Academy of Public Administration's Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships, the Sadie Collective's Advisory Council, Bank of America's National Community Advisory Council, and the Evidence and Equity Collaborative. Her areas of expertise include community development, consumer finance, asset building, and housing finance. Wartell has an AB with honors in urban affairs from the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs, a JD from Yale Law School, and an honorary doctorate of public service from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Chris Wheat is the President for the JPMorgan Chase Institute. Prior to joining JPMCI, he served as the Director of Analytics at a financial technology startup, where he led the development of advanced analytics algorithms. He previously was an Assistant Professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management and at the Center for Urban Entrepreneurship and Economic Development at Rutgers Business School. As a faculty member, he taught and researched topics in strategy, entrepreneurship, global microfinance, economic sociology, and social network analysis. Chris earned a B.S.E. in Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering from Princeton University, an M.S. in Computer Science from Stanford University, an M.A. in Sociology from Harvard University, and a Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior from Harvard University.