

Culture of Policing and Police Reform

Speaker Biographies

Jocelyn Fontaine is vice president for strategic program development at the Urban Institute. She works with the executive office, development office, and the research and program divisions to develop strategies and build support for Urban's research and policy initiatives. She is also a senior fellow of justice policy. She has significant experience as an executive leader, strategist, and researcher, and she is committed to using research to improve the safety and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Before joining Urban in this new capacity, Fontaine was vice president for criminal justice research at Arnold Ventures. She led high-impact investment strategies and oversaw the development of research agendas and research projects on community safety, policing, pretrial justice, and corrections that use rigorous social science methods to advance justice reform and racial equity. Fontaine is also the inaugural executive director of the Black and Brown Collective for Community Solutions to Gun Violence, an organization of scholars committed to supporting community-driven solutions to gun violence prevention and equitable policy and practice change. Fontaine previously worked at the Urban Institute leading multimethod research and evaluation projects on gun violence and community safety initiatives, policing reforms, and issues related to corrections and reentry. She has also held roles at the Pew Charitable Trusts and the National Institute of Justice. Fontaine received her bachelor's degree in sociology and criminology from Villanova University and her doctoral degree in justice and public policy from American University.

Jesse Jannetta is a senior policy fellow in the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where he leads projects on prison and jail reentry, community antigang and antiviolence initiatives, police-community relations, parole and probation supervision, and risk prediction. He is the project director for the Safety and Justice Challenge Innovation Fund, the principal investigator for the Evaluation of Procedural Justice in Probation project, and a member of the leadership team for the Prison Research and Innovation Initiative. He was previously project director for the Transition from Jail to Community initiative, the process and fidelity assessment lead for the evaluation of the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, and coprincipal investigator for evaluations of the Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development strategy and the Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy. He applies mixed-methods approaches to process and impact evaluations and provides direct technical assistance to jurisdictions improving justice system functioning. Before joining Urban, Jannetta was a research specialist at the Center for Evidence-Based Corrections at the University of California, Irvine. He conducted several projects, including an evaluation of GPS monitoring for sex offender parolees, an analysis of parole discharge and violation response policies, and an analysis of the role of the Division of Juvenile Justice in the California juvenile justice system, measuring the scope of correctional control in California and assessing inmate and parolee programs in terms of evidence-based program design principles. Jannetta holds a BA in political science from the University of Michigan and an MPP from the Harvard Kennedy School.

Walter Katz a Chicago native began his legal career as a public defender in Southern California, handling over 75 jury trials and investigating convictions tainted by police misconduct. He then shifted to police oversight, serving as Deputy Inspector General in Los Angeles County and later as Independent Police Auditor appointed by the San Jose city council. In San Jose, Katz pushed for reform in investigations of police use of force. Returning to Chicago in 2017, Katz joined the Mayor's Office as Deputy Chief of Staff for Public Safety, leading reform efforts and overseeing the police department. He played a key role in negotiations over the consent decree, which took effect in 2019. In his most recent role as Vice President of Criminal Justice at Arnold Ventures, Katz led philanthropic initiatives focusing on police accountability, gun violence reduction, and alternatives to arrest for individuals living with mental illness. He has also published works addressing issues such as transparency in police union collective bargaining and the impact of redlining in the 20th-century on modern policing.

David Pitts is vice president for justice policy and director of the Prison Research and Innovation Initiative, a multiyear project that leverages research to promote transparency, innovation, and well-being in US prisons. Pitts uses evidence-based strategies to promote prison reform that benefits both incarcerated people and correctional

staff, and toward that end, he has partnered with an array of advocacy organizations, nonprofit service providers, and departments of corrections. His work has addressed a variety of topics in this area, including restrictive housing, prison education, visitation, and correctional staff well-being. In addition to his criminal legal system research, Pitts has written extensively on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in public policy. He has consulted for government organizations at all levels, from small cities to federal agencies, and has taught a variety of courses to graduate students in public policy and criminal justice programs. He is currently an adjunct professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, and he spent a decade in academia as a tenure-track and tenured professor prior to his work in applied criminal legal research. A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Pitts earned a bachelor's degree from Birmingham-Southern College; master's degrees from Indiana University and the University of California, Irvine; and a PhD from the University of Georgia.

Michael Sierra-Arévalo is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Associate Director of the Liberal Arts Honors Program at the University of Texas at Austin. His new book, "*THE DANGER IMPERATIVE: Violence, Death, and the Soul of Policing*", shows how policing's preoccupation with danger shapes police culture and violence in the United States. Sierra-Arévalo's research is published in leading journals, including the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Criminology, Law & Society Review, and the Annual Review of Law and Social Science. His writing and research are widely featured in media, including The Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post, Times Higher Education, Slate, GQ, and NPR. From 2020 to 2023, he served on the City of Austin's Public Safety Commission. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Yale University and his B.A. in Sociology and Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin.