

The Future of Local Justice Innovation

Speaker Biographies

Nida Abbasi is a Senior Program Officer on the Criminal Justice team at MacArthur Foundation, where she focuses on safely reducing incarceration and racial disparities in jails across the country. Prior to joining MacArthur, Nida was an Associate Director at the Center for Justice Innovation in New York City and guided several national technical assistance programs designed to transform justice system responses to gender-based violence. She also served clients on domestic violence and family law cases at the Legal Aid Society in Chicago and worked on policy reform at the University of Cape Town's Gender, Health & Justice Research Unit. Nida earned a BA in Sociology and Political Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a JD from the University of Michigan Law School.

Javier Aguirre is the Director of Diversion and Reentry Services for the County of Santa Clara, California responsible for the operations and day-to-day functions of the County's Reentry Resource Centers in San Jose and Gilroy and countywide coordination, evaluation and oversight of the Public Safety Realignment Program and Adult Reentry Strategic Plan. The County's strategy is to provide alternatives to incarceration, diversion, and reentry programs that advance equity by increasing access to care and supportive services, moving from a system that harms to a system that repairs. A graduate of both Stanford University and Loyola Law School, Javier has 25 years of experience working for the County of Santa Clara, including eight years as a Senior Policy Aide and five years as a Budget Analyst. Javier was a former School Board Trustee for the Gilroy Unified School District and founded the Latino Family Fund de Gilroy, a family-advised fund to increase the participation and visibility of Latinos in the philanthropic sector. Since the fall of 2020, Javier serves as a member of Stanford Haas Center's National Advisory Board, motivated to support the Haas Center to foster community partnerships advancing racial equity while encouraging public service to students. Outside of work, he enjoys coaching his youngest daughter's softball team and training for the next Reentry Rise Up and Run 5k, raising funds to support the immediate needs of justice-involved people (clothing, food, hygiene, transportation, etc.).

Jesse Jannetta is a senior policy fellow in the Justice and Safety Division at the Urban Institute, where he leads projects on gun violence reduction initiatives, prison and jail reentry, local justice reform, and community supervision. He directs Urban's work as a partner in the Safety and Justice Challenge, is co-principal investigator for the Evaluation of Oakland's Measure Z Services, and is a member of the leadership team for the Prison Research and Innovation Initiative. He was previously principal investigator for the Developing a Research-Based Practice Guide to Prevent Youth Gun and Gang Violence project, co-lead for the Community Violence Intervention Research and Evaluation Training and Technical Assistance Center, project director for the Transition from Jail to Community initiative, process and fidelity assessment lead for the evaluation of the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, and co-principal 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 technical assistance to state and local jurisdictions. Before joining Urban, Jannetta was a research specialist at the Center for Evidence-Based Corrections at the University of California, Irvine. He evaluated GPS monitoring for parolees, analyzed parole discharge and violation response policies, measured the scope of correctional control in California, and assessed inmate and parolee programs against 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.

Marc Levin co-leads the [Centering Justice initiative](#) and supports multiple other workstreams and initiatives as CCJ's chief policy counsel. Widely respected across the political spectrum, he played a key role for the Council in developing a set of [landmark bipartisan principles](#) on criminal justice policy embraced by 14 leading organizations on the left and right. Earlier in his career, Levin worked for the Texas Public Policy Foundation, launching its criminal justice program in 2005 and, in 2010, developing the concept for the foundation's influential Right on Crime initiative. He also served as a law clerk to Judge Will Garwood on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and as a staff attorney at the Texas Supreme Court. Levin has authored [hundreds of publications and articles](#) on criminal justice policy and has testified multiple times before Congress and state legislatures. He speaks frequently with the media on national criminal justice trends and has presented his ideas in meetings with U.S. presidents, House speakers, and the Justice Committee of the United Kingdom Parliament. In 2023, Levin was invited by the U.S. State Department to visit Uruguay to present on criminal justice policy before the nation's vice president and other leaders, and he has conducted similar meetings with policymakers in Australia. Among other professional honors, he was recognized by the Texas House of Representatives with a 2007 resolution noting his "indispensable contributions" to state juvenile and criminal justice reforms. Levin serves on the American Legislative Exchange Council Judiciary Task Force, the Aspen Institute Criminal Justice Initiative Advisory Council, the Urban Rural Action Board of Directors, the Executive Committee of the Federalist Society's Criminal Law & Procedure Practice Group, the Corrections News Editorial Advisory Board, the University of Texas/Lyndon B. Johnson School's Prison and Jail Innovation Lab Advisory Committee, The Marshall Project Advisory Board, and the Caruth Police Institute Advisory Board. He graduated with honors from the University of Texas with a BA in Plan II Honors and Government and earned his JD with honors from the University of Texas School of Law.

Lisel Petis leads the Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties team at the R Street Institute. She also works as a scholar, actively researching, writing, and presenting on commonsense solutions to reduce recidivism rates, advance equity, and uphold individual liberties. Prior to joining R Street, Lisel served as executive director of Better Tomorrow, an organization dedicated to supporting victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. During her tenure, she established the first Child Advocacy Center in her community to provide forensic interviews and exams to victims of child abuse and actively participated on the policy committees of Violence Free Colorado and the Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Additionally, she has received distinguished appointments from the governor of Colorado to the 14th Judicial Performance Commission and from the 14th Judicial District Chief Judge to a committee focused on pretrial services. Before Better Tomorrow, Lisel practiced law, bringing her expertise to both criminal and civil cases. She spent several years as a prosecutor, handling a diverse range of cases from attempted

murder to robbery. Her civil legal acumen led her to argue a matter of first impression before both the Colorado Court of Appeals and the Colorado Supreme Court. Her commitment to the community resulted in a five-year tenure on the Steamboat Springs City Council, where she played a pivotal role in advocating for the implementation of a co-responder program within the local police department. In her work with R Street, Lisel has made significant contributions to the criminal justice reform movement through policy studies like [“Navigating Bail Reform in America: A State-by-State Overview”](#); a six-part blog series titled [“Reform Efforts and Rise in Crime”](#); and op-eds published in outlets including [The Southern Illinoisan](#), [Nevada Current](#), and [The Lima News](#). She has participated as an expert in the National League of Cities’ [Mayoral Convenings on Community Safety and Violence Prevention](#), the Salzburg Global Seminar’s [Whole System Approach to Justice](#), the [Association of Prosecuting Attorneys](#) Leadership Institute, and other events and has appeared on several news outlets including [C-SPAN](#) and [Fox 31 Colorado](#). Lisel holds a juris doctor from the University of Denver and a bachelor’s degree in finance from the University of Colorado. She lives in Greenville, South Carolina, with her husband, Geoff, and daughter, Penelope.