

The Evolving Relationship Between Nonprofits and Government: Past, Present, and Future

Speaker Biographies



Alan J. Abramson is Professor and Founding Director of the Center on Nonprofits, Philanthropy, and Social Enterprise in the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. In these positions, he teaches, conducts research, and works with those interested in the broad field of public administration, with a particular focus on issues related to the nonprofit sector and philanthropy. For more than a decade, Dr. Abramson directed the Aspen Institute's Nonprofit Sector and Philanthropy Program (now the Program on Philanthropy and Social Innovation), overseeing the Nonprofit Sector Research Fund and other initiatives that helped to build the nonprofit research field in the U.S., strengthen nonprofit and foundation leaders, and deepen the understanding of policymakers about nonprofit activities. Before joining the Aspen Institute, Dr. Abramson was on the staff of the Urban Institute, where he conducted research on a variety of domestic public policy issues. He is the author and co-author of numerous books and articles, and his work has twice won awards from the American Political Science Association. Dr. Abramson has served on many national and local nonprofit boards and advisory committees, and has been named among the 50 most influential leaders in the U.S. nonprofit sector. In 2015-2016, Dr. Abramson served as President of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), the nation's leading association for nonprofit researchers, and in 2022 he received ARNOVA's highest award for Distinguished Achievement and Leadership in Nonprofit and Voluntary Action Research. In 2016, he was elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, and in 2018-2019 he served as the first Visiting Scholar at Independent Sector. In 2021, Dr. Abramson became Co-Editor-in-Chief of the scholarly journal *Nonprofit Policy Forum*. At Mason, Dr. Abramson has previously served as Interim MPA Director, an elected faculty representative to the Board of Visitors Development Committee, and a long-time member of the Faculty Senate. Knowledgeable about a broad range of nonprofit issues, Dr. Abramson's major, current interests are: employment and other data collected by the federal government that contain information about nonprofit organizations; public policy toward social enterprise; and shared governance, the engagement of all three sectors – nonprofit, government, and business – in addressing social problems. Dr. Abramson received his Ph.D. in political science from Yale University and his B.A. from Wesleyan University. Dr. Abramson is on study leave from George Mason University in academic year 2025-2026.



Elizabeth T. Boris is an Institute fellow at the Urban Institute and founding director of the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, which she led from 1996 to 2015. The center researches the role and impact of nonprofit organizations and the policy issues that affect them. The center also hosts the National Center for Charitable Statistics, which builds and maintains the nation's largest research database on nonprofit organizations. From 1991 to 1996, Boris was founding director of the Aspen Institute's Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, the first grantmaking program devoted to supporting research on the nonprofit sector and philanthropy. Before her tenure at the Aspen Institute, Boris was vice president for research at the Council on Foundations, where she developed the research program and directed it for 12 years. Boris is actively involved as an adviser and board member for various organizations in the nonprofit sector. In 2006, she received the Distinguished Achievement and Leadership Award from the Association for Research on Nonprofits and Voluntary Action. She was named a member of the NPT Power & Influence Top

50 nonprofit leaders nine times by the *NonProfit Times*. The author of many research publications on nonprofits and philanthropy, she edited *Nonprofits and Government: Collaboration and Conflict* with C. Eugene Steuerle and wrote *Working in Foundations: Career Patterns of Women and Men* with Teresa Odendahl and Arlene Kaplan Daniels. Boris holds a BA from Douglass College, Rutgers University, graduating with honors and Phi Beta Kappa, an MA and PhD in political science from Rutgers University, and an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Indiana University.



Ellie Buteau manages research projects and supports research design and analysis training and work across CEP's teams. Ellie is managing CEP's Big Gifts study, a three-year research project designed to understand how nonprofit organizations are using large, unrestricted gifts and what the impact of those gifts has been. She is a leading authority on foundation strategy, foundation performance assessment, and foundation-grantee relationships, as well as an expert in research design and statistical analysis. She has authored or co-authored numerous reports, articles, opinion pieces, and blog posts on issues related to foundation effectiveness, including *Foundations Respond to Crisis: Lasting Change*, *Persevering Through Crisis: The State of Nonprofits*, and *Crucial Donors: How Major Individual Givers Can Best Support Nonprofits*. Ellie is also a Certified Professional Coach (CPC). She has coached professionals in the United States, Canada, China, and India. She is a graduate of the International Coach Academy and credentialed by the International Coach Federation as an Associate Certified Coach. Ellie volunteers with The Women's Impact Alliance, a nonprofit that provides coaching to young women leaders of high potential impact. Before joining CEP in 2004, Ellie led the design and analysis of education and health-related research projects at Cornell University, Tufts University, and a variety of nonprofit organizations. She taught courses on statistics at Tufts University and published research in a number of journals. She received a PhD in Social-Personality Psychology from City University of New York Graduate Center and a BA in Psychology, awarded with Great Distinction, from McGill University in Montreal.



Cathleen Clerkin leads the research function at Candid and is responsible for executing Candid's research agenda and managing the day-to-day operations of the Insights Division. In this role, she works closely with partners across Candid to help make meaning out of data and share it with the field. Cathleen is passionate about conducting, translating, and leveraging research to turn ideas and data into action and impact. She is a psychologist by training, with interests in organizational behavior, resilience, equity, diversity, inclusion, and leadership development. Before joining Candid in December 2020, she worked at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) a nonprofit dedicated to improving the understanding, practice, and development of leadership at all levels for the benefit of society worldwide. During her tenure (2013-2020), she went from a research associate to leading the strategic research function—the team primarily responsible for CCL's research agenda and scientific contributions. Cathleen's research has been published broadly in both academic and popular press venues and she has been awarded multiple honors for her work, including recognition from the National Science Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the American Association of University Women, and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. Cathleen holds a B.A. in Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley, and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Psychology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Center for Creative Leadership.



Harvey P. Dale, an expert in international tax law, began examining the viability of creating a program that studied the legal issues affecting nonprofit organizations at the request of then-Dean Norman Redlich in 1986. Two years of thorough research later, Dale determined that such a program was indeed viable and redirected his professional efforts to establish the Program on Philanthropy and the Law at the New York University School of Law. The program is now known as the National Center on Philanthropy and the Law.

Today, the National Center on Philanthropy and the Law explores a broad range of legal issues affecting the nation's nonprofit sector and serves as an academic forum for an integrated examination of the legal doctrines related to the activities of charitable organizations. The center boasts a library with the most comprehensive collection of resources ever assembled on the subject of nonprofit law. Its annual publication of student articles written on critical issues affecting nonprofit organizations is well respected throughout the field. After teaching international and corporate and tax law for almost two decades, Dale is now a recognized expert and leader in the field of nonprofit law, both in this country and abroad. He has advised groups in Australia, China, Mexico, Russia, the United Kingdom, and South Africa regarding legal issues affecting nonprofit organizations and the formulation of laws governing these organizations. He has also published several articles concerning, among other subjects, the rationales for tax exemption, international grantmaking, and issues surrounding unrelated business income tax. In addition to his work as the director of the National Center for Philanthropy and the Law, Dale has served as an advisor and consultant for the Internal Revenue Service, the Exempt Organizations Tax Review, Independent Sector, and several other nonprofit organizations and government agencies. He was an adviser to the American Law Institute, Restatement of the Law of Charitable Nonprofit Organizations. Dale is founding president of the Atlantic Philanthropies and was for approximately 20 years (until September 1, 2001) the president and CEO of the Atlantic Foundation. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, and from 1996 to 2005 was a member of the Cornell University Trustees Investment Committee. He received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from University of the Witwatersrand in 2017.



Nathan Dietz, PhD, is a research professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy, research director at the Do Good Institute, and a co-investigator for the interdisciplinary Maryland Democracy Initiative. Dietz joined the University in March 2017 after over twenty years of conducting and managing research projects in government, the nonprofit sector and academia. His research focuses on social capital, volunteering, charitable contributions, civic engagement and social entrepreneurship. In

addition, he has an extensive record of service both within and outside of the university, and has been widely quoted and frequently invited to participate in public conversations about philanthropy, civic engagement and the nonprofit sector. Dietz is the author or coauthor of all of DGI's published research reports, and currently leads a multidisciplinary team of university researchers who are providing evaluation services to the State of Maryland's Department of Service and Civic Innovation. He recently led externally funded research projects on strategic volunteer engagement and the social determinants of generosity. His recent publications include articles in peer-reviewed journals such as *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, and *Nonprofit Policy Forum*. He currently serves as Associate Editor for Quantitative Methodology for *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. From 2013 until 2017, Dietz held an appointment as senior research associate at the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Urban Institute. While at Urban, he served as principal investigator for several research and evaluation projects, including four evaluations of AmeriCorps grantees; served the associate director for the National Center for Charitable Statistics, the national clearinghouse of data on the nonprofit sector in the United States; and led the center's participation in the (nonprofit) Fundraising Effectiveness Project and the Fourth Sector Mapping Initiative. Immediately prior to joining the Urban Institute, Dietz served as senior program manager at the Partnership for Public Service. From 2002 through 2012, he worked at the Corporation for National and

Community Service (CNCS; now called AmeriCorps), serving from 2011-2012 as associate director for research and evaluation. Prior to government service, he held an appointment as assistant professor of political science in the School of Public Affairs at American University. He earned a master's degree and a PhD in political science from the University of Rochester and earned a bachelor's degree with dual major in political science and mathematical methods in social sciences from Northwestern University.



Stephen "Steve" Glaude applies his diverse leadership experiences in government, the private sector, and nonprofits as President & CEO of the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED). Steve previously served as the director of community affairs for the District of Columbia. In this role, he oversaw 13 agencies for the mayor, including the offices of Latino Affairs, Asian Affairs, African Affairs, Religious Affairs, Veterans Affairs, Women's Policy, Youth Advisory Council, Grants and

Partnerships, and others. Prior to this post, he served as director of constituent services for then-DC Council Chairman Vincent Gray. Steve has led two associations: the National Congress for Community Economic Development and the National Association of Neighborhoods. At the NCCED, he more than quadrupled annual funding in two years and created National Community Economic Development Day, a nationally-coordinated public education effort. He was responsible for fundraising, public education, legislative affairs, staff development, and more. At the National Association of Neighborhoods, he managed a national trade association with more than 2,000 members and was responsible for negotiating federal contracts and conducting critical research for the White House. Under his leadership, membership grew by 300 percent. In between those posts, Steve worked at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, serving as deputy assistant secretary for planning and community development and as deputy undersecretary for intergovernmental relations. There, he was HUD's liaison to the nation's mayors and governors, and he played a key role in the passage of the National Affordable Housing Act, which was the first housing legislation in 37 years. He has also served as special assistant to the president in the Office of National Drug Control Policy at the White House, where he advised the president on demand-reduction strategies for substance abuse problems. Steve served as president of Men Can Stop Rape, Inc., where he worked with the U.S. Department of Defense to develop a comprehensive sexual assault strategy for the five branches of the U.S. Military. Steve has managed more than \$8 billion in federal grant programs. As a non-profit fundraiser, he has directly raised more than \$50 million and has worked with clients to raise more than \$500 million in resources. He has received the highest honors within academia, government, and the community. In addition to his role at CNHED, Steve also serves as the board chair of The National Alliance of Community Economic Development Association (NACEDA), and as a board member of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC). Steve Glaude is a native Washingtonian, a father of three, and a proud graduate of Morgan State University.



George Jones has been Chief Executive Officer of Bread for the City (BFC) since January 2, 1996. BFC is a nonprofit that provides food, clothing, medical, legal and social services to DC residents living on low-incomes. Mr. Jones is responsible for managing all administrative, financial, and programmatic aspects of the agency and its 131 full time staff. He has led BFC's growth from a \$1.2 million operation in 1996 to a \$22 million operation in fy 2025. He has overseen the agency's development of a 9,000 sq. ft.

community center in Southeast DC in 2002, a 11,000 sq. ft. expansion of BFC's Northwest Center and the construction of BFC's new 27,000 sq. ft. Center on Good Hope Road, in Southeast DC. Under Mr. Jones' leadership, BFC has taken on the challenge of attacking poverty through a racial equity lens. The agency is committed to embedding racial equity in all of its direct services and its efforts to organize around and advocate for affordable housing. BFC strives to be an anti-racist agency and one that helps to lead the movement of creating a racially equitable DC. Mr. Jones is the chairman of the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond and the DC Fiscal Policy Institute. He also serves on the Boards of the Directors of the

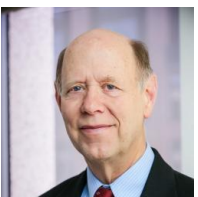
DC Primary Care Association (DCPCA), the DC Affordable Law Firm, and the Meyer Foundation. He is also a founding member of the DC Initiative on Racial Equity and Local Government and the Anti-Racist DC Campaign. He has a B.A. in Psychology from Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Virginia.



Hannah Martin is a policy associate in the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Urban Institute. Her work focuses on social sector infrastructure, charitable giving, and nonprofit trends. She manages and conducts projects on these topics, collecting and analyzing survey, interview, and administrative data to inform policy solutions. Before joining Urban, Martin was research manager at the Center for Effective Philanthropy, where she led projects about funder practices and the state of nonprofits. As a graduate student, she served as a research assistant for the Indiana Nonprofits Project. She holds a BS in public affairs and an MPA from the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University.



Benjamin Soskis is a senior research associate in the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Urban Institute. His work explores the ways historical inquiry can inform contemporary philanthropic practice. He is especially interested in the relationship between philanthropy and democratic norms and institutions. A historian and journalist, Soskis is the coeditor of *HistPhil*, a web publication devoted to the history of civil society and the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors and was a Visiting Scholar at Independent Sector in 2025, focusing on building a broad-base of support for civil society. A frequent contributor to the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, his writing on philanthropy has also appeared in the *Washington Post*, the *Atlantic*, the *Guardian*, *Inside Philanthropy*, the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Town & Country*. He is coauthor of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic: A Biography of the Song that Marches On* (Oxford University Press, 2013); author of “A History of Associational Life and the Nonprofit Sector in the United States” in the third edition of *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook* (Stanford University Press, 2020); coeditor of *Giving in Time: Temporal Consideration in Philanthropy* (Rowman & Littlefield/Urban Institute Press, 2023); and coauthor of *Standing Up for Nonprofits: Advocacy on Federal, Sector-Wide Issues* (Cambridge University Press, 2024). Soskis has taught at the George Washington University and the University of California, Washington Center. He received his PhD in American history from Columbia University.



Eugene Steuerle is a co-founder of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, the Urban Institute's Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, its Retirement Project, and ACT for Alexandria, a community foundation. Among past roles, he served as deputy assistant secretary of the US Department of the Treasury for Tax Analysis. He is the author, coauthor, or coeditor of 20 books and more than 1,500 articles and columns.



Jennifer Talansky heads the Marketing & Communications department, which develops and shares accessible resources for the nonprofit sector, and uses NFF's platforms to advocate for more equitable nonprofit funding practices. Jen also manages and partners on large projects that contribute new knowledge about nonprofit finance, including NFF's State of the Nonprofit Sector Survey, a widely cited barometer of the US social sector's financial health, and a partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco to inform the national conversation around outcomes-oriented social services. Previously, Jen held marketing, branding, and communications roles at Credit Suisse Asset Management, Hearst Magazines Brand Development, and JPMorgan's Private Client Group. Jen is on the Community Advisory Board for the WNET Group, and authored a chapter in the US Surgeon General's 2021 report, Community Health and

Economic Prosperity. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Duke University and a Master of Science in social psychology from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Jen is a mother of two and lives in New York City. When she's not on mom or work duty, she enjoys reading, local volunteering, and taekwondo.



Laura Tomasko is a senior policy program manager at the Urban Institute where she leads the Center for Nonprofits and Philanthropy. Her portfolio includes leadership of the National Center for Charitable Statistics and Nonprofit Trends and Impacts study, a collaboration with George Mason University and American University. Her work examines trends in nonprofit organizations, charitable giving, philanthropy, the social sector infrastructure, and impact investing. With over 20 years of experience across the nonprofit, philanthropic, and public sectors, she ensures research informs both policy and practice. Her previous roles include associate program officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and senior policy adviser for social innovation in the Obama White House. She has also held positions at national philanthropy associations and community-based organizations. Tomasko earned her BA from Occidental College and an MPA from Syracuse University's Maxwell School.



Cecili Wake is the Deputy Director of Democracy 2076. The daughter of a foreign service officer and an educator, Cecili grew up around the world living in conflict zones and gaining a first hand understanding of the role the United States plays in global security, democracy, and human rights. She has applied these lessons during her more than two decades of experience leading mission-driven projects on global and domestic issues including poverty, healthcare, and human rights, including with Amnesty International USA, RESULTS Educational Fund, and the National Partnership for Women & Families. In 2015, she founded and served as the Chief Strategist for We Divine Water, a consulting group helping changemakers build strategic and effective organizations and programs—a role through which she researched emerging organizational models, developed a bespoke campaign strategy framework, and built strategic plans for organizations working across issues. Most recently she led the development of a narrative strategy on nuclear weapons at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, researching the public's understanding of nuclear weapons and how they might be moved to engage with policymakers to ask for common sense reforms. Cecili previously led global and nuclear security work as Senior Partner for Strategy and Innovation at Global Zero and Executive Director at Beyond the Bomb. She also serves as a faculty member at the Center for Social Design at the Maryland Institute College of Arts where she teaches a graduate seminar on campaign strategy.



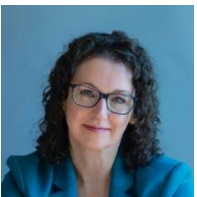
Sarah Rosen Wartell is the third president of the Urban Institute since its founding in 1968. Urban is a nonprofit research organization with hundreds of staff working to provide data and evidence to accelerate solutions and create a future where every person and every community has the power and opportunity to thrive. It serves as 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 is a former board member of Georgetown Day School. She is also a member of the steering committee for the 10-year Roadmap for Public Housing Sustainability, executive board of the National Academy of Public Administration's Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships, and Bank of America's National Community Advisory Council. 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.



Akilah Watkins is the president and CEO of Independent Sector, the only national membership organization that brings together a diverse community of changemakers, nonprofits, foundations, and corporate giving programs working to strengthen civil society and ensure all people in the United States thrive. Since joining in 2023, Dr. Watkins has been a key voice on policy and practice in the charitable sector and an advocate for the nation's 1.8 million nonprofits and philanthropies. With over 25 years as a national

thought leader, community organizer, and nonprofit executive, Dr. Watkins' expertise spans leadership development, nonprofit advocacy, and community development. She has led a variety of place-based and legislative initiatives that have helped hundreds of communities across the country. Her thought leadership has been featured by outlets including *Nonprofit Quarterly*, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, and more. Prior to Independent Sector, Dr. Watkins was the president and CEO of the Center for Community Progress, the nation's leading nonprofit dedicated to helping state and local governments turn vacant properties into vibrant places. Her work began at the age of 14 when she led efforts to convert a vacant lot and abandoned home into a community center in Roosevelt, New York. Since then, she has served as an executive leader for nonprofits and community development initiatives with NeighborWorks America, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy. Dr. Watkins holds a Ph.D. in Sociology and an MA in Sociology from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She also holds two MS degrees in Education and Community Economic Development from Southern New Hampshire University, and a BS in Community and Human Services from the State University of New York, Empire State College. She currently serves on advisory boards with the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University and the Maryland Chapter of CISV International. She is a 2025 Nonprofit Times Power & Influence Top 50 honoree.



Diane Yentel is president and CEO of the National Council of Nonprofits, the largest network of nonprofit organizations in North America, where she leads an exceptional team of 18 NCN staff. Since joining in January 2025, Diane has been a leading national voice, thought leaders, and advocate for the nonprofit sector. Under Diane's leadership, NCN has filed and won two landmark lawsuits to ensure over \$1 trillion dollars in federal funding continues to support nonprofits in their crucial work to meet community needs, and

launched a major national narrative campaign to build public support for the vital work of nonprofits throughout the country. Diane has spent the entirety of her nearly 30-year career working for, with, and in support of nonprofits. Prior to joining NCN, Diane was President and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) for 9 years, leading multiple national campaigns to historic success. Diane has also held leadership roles at Enterprise Community Partners and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and worked to advance equitable public policies with Oxfam America, the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, and in a prior role at NLIHC. Diane also served 3 years as a community development Peace Corps volunteer in rural Zambia. In 2025, Diane was named Influencer of the Year by The Nonprofit Times, and one of Washington DC's Most Powerful Women by the Washingtonian.