

BUILDING EVIDENCE AND LEARNING AGENDAS IN FEDERAL AGENCIES

Speaker Biographies

Diana Epstein is the evidence team lead at the Office of Management and Budget. The Evidence Team collaborates with other Office of Management and Budget offices on setting evidence-building priorities and selecting appropriate evaluation methodologies, using findings from evaluations and other studies in program design, and developing agency capacity to build and use evidence. The team also provides expert advice and technical assistance on evidence-related activities and initiatives for many federal agencies and functions. Epstein was previously a research and evaluation manager at the Corporation for National and Community Service, and before that she worked as a program evaluator and policy analyst at Abt Associates, the American Institutes for Research, and the RAND Corporation. She has a BS from Brown University in applied math-biology, an MPP from the Goldman School at the University of California, Berkeley, and a PhD in policy analysis from the Pardee RAND Graduate School.

Nick Hart is the director of Bipartisan Policy Center's Evidence Project. Before joining Bipartisan Policy Center, he was the policy and research director for the US Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking. There he oversaw the commission's policy and research support team and led the drafting process for "The Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking," the commission's final report and recommendations presented to Congress and the president in 2017. Hart has worked on issues such as social security, disability, antipoverty, environment, energy, economic development, and criminal justice. He worked at the White House Office of Management and Budget as a senior analyst and special assistant, where he helped write executive branch budget proposals and encouraged increased capacity for evidence-based practices across government. Hart has spoken widely about the history of evidence-building efforts and the need for organizational capacity to generate and use evidence to inform policymaking. He is an expert in evaluation, statistical, data, science, and privacy policy. Hart is an adjunct professor of program evaluation at the George Washington University. He chairs the American Evaluation Association's Evaluation Policy Task Force. He also serves on the boards of the Washington Statistical Society, Washington Evaluators, and the Eastern Evaluation Research Society. Hart earned a PhD from the George Washington University Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration, specializing in program evaluation. He also holds an MS in environmental science, an MPA from Indiana University, and a BS from Truman State University.

Maia Jachimowicz is the vice president for Evidence-Based Policy Implementation for Results for America. Jachimowicz previously served as director of policy in the Office of the Mayor for the City of Philadelphia, where she directed the research, design, and execution of public policy across issues like workforce development, violence prevention, and impact investing. Jachimowicz's experience with the City of Philadelphia spanned nearly eight years, during which she also served as assistant finance director and assistant budget director for the Office of Budget and Program Evaluation. Previously, she served as a researcher in education policy at Princeton University and in immigration policy at the Migration Policy Institute.

Terell P. Lasane is a lead program evaluator at the US Small Business Administration, where he began his tenure in August 2016. Terell was onboarded in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Performance Management to help the agency establish a framework for program evaluation to guide the agency's Enterprise Learning Agenda. He led the establishment of an Evaluation and Performance Community of Practice and leveraged this group to foster collaborations with federal and nonfederal evaluators to share best and promising practices for program evaluation. Lasane received his BS in Psychology from Howard University and his MA and PhD in Social Psychology from the University of Delaware. He served as professor of psychology at St. Mary's College of Maryland from 1994 to 2008. In 2008, he joined the Environmental Protection Agency's Evaluation Support Division as a social scientist. Lasane began his foray into program evaluation in 1996 as an independent evaluator for local, state, and federal programs. He has devoted the last 22 years of his career to advancing program evaluation as a tool of performance management that fosters high-performing organizations.

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 conducted research at the Urban Institute for three decades.

Pamela Hughes Patenaude is the Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Patenaude brings to HUD more than 30 years of experience in housing, economic development, real estate, and public policy. Before joining HUD, she cofounded and served as the president of the J. Ronald Terwilliger Foundation for Housing America's Families. Before that, she was the director of housing policy for the Bipartisan Policy Center, where she led a 21-person commission to present a new direction for national housing policy. Patenaude served as executive vice president of the Urban Land Institute and founding executive director of the Urban Land Institute Terwilliger Center for Workforce Housing. Earlier in her career, Patenaude served as assistant secretary for Community Planning and Development at HUD, where she administered more than \$8 billion in housing and community development funds and played a significant role in HUD's efforts to rebuild the Gulf Coast region following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Before her work at Community Planning and Development, Patenaude served HUD as the assistant deputy secretary for Field Policy and Management. Patenaude started her career at the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority and later worked as state director and deputy chief of staff for US Senator Bob Smith and as the director of the New Hampshire Small Business Development Center. Patenaude holds a BS from Saint Anselm College and an MS in community economic development from Southern New Hampshire University.

Melissa Patsalides is the acting deputy assistant administrator in the Bureau for Policy Planning and Learning at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Before this short-term assignment, she was the Director of USAID's Office of Learning, Evaluation, and Research. In her 15 years at USAID, she has worked on strategic planning and project design, monitoring, and evaluation. Her work has spanned all sectors and geographic regions and includes four years of intensive work on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Before joining USAID, she worked in international human rights and advocacy nongovernmental organizations and served as a Peace Corps volunteer. Her focus on monitoring, evaluation, and organizational learning in the last seven years has made her an advocate of right-sized monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems, because no method or approach answers all questions for all purposes. She is a strong proponent of evaluation capacity building and an organizational culture that values using monitoring and evaluation for adaptation and learning. She holds an MA in international development from the Joseph Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver.



Erika Poethig is vice president and chief innovation officer at the Urban Institute. She leads the Research to Action Lab, an innovation hub serving decisionmakers and creative thinkers eager to effect social change. The Lab draws on the breadth and depth of Urban’s research insights to test new strategies; develop cutting-edge tools, programs, and trainings; and provide strategic advice to public, philanthropic, nonprofit, and private sectors.

Emily Schmitt is the deputy director of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families. As deputy director, Schmitt works closely with the deputy assistant secretary for Planning, Research, and Evaluation to provide leadership and strategic direction for OPRE. Schmitt joined OPRE in 2009 and served as a research fellow, social science research analyst, senior social science research analyst, and team leader for Behavioral Science in OPRE before becoming deputy director in 2016. In these roles, she initiated and led OPRE’s work on the application of behavioral science to human services and oversaw projects related to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, employment and training, and homeless and disconnected families. Before joining OPRE, Schmitt worked for the US House of Representatives and the National Alliance to End Homelessness. She is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Kennedy School.