



# Annual Poverty Research and Policy Forum

## *Understanding and Addressing Inequities in Human Services*

September 28 & 29, 2021

*Convened by the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin–Madison  
Supported by the Office of Human Services Policy, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S.  
Department of Health and Human Services*

### Speaker Bios

#### WELCOME AND OVERVIEW



***Katherine Magnuson, Director, Institute for Research on Poverty;  
Professor, School of Social Work, University of Wisconsin–Madison***

Katherine Magnuson, PhD, is a Vilas Achievement Professor of Social Work and the Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She was elected into the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare in 2018. Her research focuses on the well-being and development of economically

disadvantaged children and their families. She examines how disparities in socioeconomic status affect children’s development and how these effects may be altered by policies and programs, especially early childhood education programs.



***Miranda Lynch-Smith, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning  
and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services***

Miranda Lynch-Smith was appointed the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Services Policy in ASPE in March 2021. Prior to joining the Biden Administration, Ms. Lynch-Smith was a Policy Fellow at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. At Chapin Hall, Lynch-Smith provided strategic guidance and capacity building to child welfare agencies to

enhance their performance and services for families and become more prevention and well-being oriented. Prior to joining Chapin Hall, Lynch-Smith was a career employee at HHS for 20 years. At the Children’s Bureau, she was responsible for leading the Child and Family Service Review process, strengthening states' focus on outcomes and evidence, and establishing a federal framework for continuous quality improvement systems in child welfare systems.

## September 28

### KEYNOTE



***Celeste Watkins-Hayes*, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Director, Center for Racial Justice; Jean E. Fairfax Collegiate Professor of Public Policy; University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor; Professor of Sociology, University of Michigan**

Celeste Watkins-Hayes, PhD, is a nationally-recognized scholar and expert on health inequities, HIV/AIDS; social policy; societal safety nets; and race, class, and gender. Her latest book, *Remaking a Life: How*

*Women Living with HIV/AIDS Confront Inequality* (University of California Press, 2019), is an examination of the decades-long transformation of the AIDS epidemic told through the voices of over two hundred female AIDS activists, policy officials, advocates, and women living with HIV/AIDS who have been on the front lines of this fight. Prior to joining the faculty at U of M, she served as a professor of sociology and African American studies and Faculty Fellow at the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University. In addition, she served on the board of trustees of Spelman College for over a decade in various leadership roles and is a Founding Steering Member of the Black Trustee Alliance for Art Museums, having served on the board of directors of the Detroit Institute of Arts from 2017 to 2021.

### **PRESENTATIONS AND PANEL DISCUSSION: Understanding and Addressing Inequities from a Systems Level Perspective**

#### **Moderator:**



***Margaret Simms*, Nonresident Fellow, Urban Institute**

Margaret C. Simms, PhD, is a nonresident fellow at the Urban Institute. Until April 2018, she was an Institute Fellow and director of the Low-Income Working Families project. Before joining Urban, Simms was vice president for governance and economic analysis at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. She began working at the Joint Center as deputy director of research and held positions of increasing

responsibility during her 20-year tenure. In 2006, she was the center's interim president. Before joining the Joint Center, Simms was a program director at the Urban Institute. A nationally recognized expert on the economic well-being of African Americans, her current work focuses on low-income families, with an emphasis on employment and asset building. In 2005, Simms was elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2008, the National Economic Association presented her the Samuel Z. Westerfield Award.

## Presenters/Panelists:



### ***Bradley Hardy, Associate Professor, Georgetown University***

Bradley Hardy, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University. He is a nonresident senior fellow in Economic Studies at the Brookings Institution, a research fellow with the Center for Household Financial Stability at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and a research affiliate of both the University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty and the University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research. His research interests lie within labor economics, with an emphasis on economic instability, intergenerational mobility, poverty policy, racial economic inequality, and socio-economic outcomes. His research examines trends and sources of income volatility and intergenerational mobility within the United States, with a focus on socio-economically disadvantaged families, neighborhoods, and regions. Hardy is a co-editor at Contemporary Economic Policy and the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management and is a member of the editorial boards of the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management and the Review of Black Political Economy. He serves on the executive board of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management and is an elected member of the National Academy of Social Insurance.



### ***Kimberly Mills, Senior Executive Director, University of the Virgin Islands Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities***

Kimberly Mills is the executive director for the Virgin Islands Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD). She also holds an Affiliate Faculty appointment with the University of Hawaii. Her research and community priorities include best treatment practices for autism spectrum disorders, technical assistance and evaluation, the study of phenomenon surrounding the school-to-prison pipeline, cultural and linguistic competence through a behavioral analytic lens, disability employment, health disparities research, and emergency preparedness. Prior to joining VIUCEDD in 2014, Mills spent over 20 years serving people with disabilities as a classroom teacher, school principal, executive director, clinical consultant and program manager for various organizations and agencies through the continental United States and abroad.



***Ellen Kahn, Senior Director of Programs and Partnerships, Human Rights Campaign***

Ellen Kahn provides national leadership and expertise in public education and advocacy efforts on behalf of LGBTQ youth and families. Kahn oversees a portfolio of highly successful projects that promote fair and inclusive policies and practices; All Children—All Families; Welcoming Schools; the HBCU Project, and Youth Well-Being, which includes the annual Time to Thrive conference. Kahn is sought out as an expert on topics related to LGBTQ youth and families, and frequently speaks at national and regional conferences and provides training and consultation for child welfare professionals, educators, and healthcare providers. Prior to joining HRC, Kahn spent 12 years at the Whitman-Walker Health in various roles; Director of the Lesbian Services Program, Associate Director of LGBTQ Health Promotion, and as supervisor of a behavioral health program for people with HIV.

**PRESENTATIONS AND PANEL DISCUSSION: Understanding and Addressing Inequities from a Direct Service Level Perspective**

**Moderator:**



***Bernadine Futrell, Director, Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services***

Bernadine Futrell, PhD, a Head Start child herself, began her career as an assistant Head Start teacher in Richmond, Virginia. She came to OHS in the Biden Administration from the National Head Start Association (NHSA), where she was most recently the senior director for effective practice. Prior to NHSA, Futrell led superintendent certification programs at the American Association of School Administrators. She is co-author of the book *ConnectED Leaders: Network and Amplify your Superintendency*, and a regular contributor in research studies. Committed to service, she is a member of the advisory committees at George Mason University and Howard University.

**Presenters/Panelists:**



***Drayton Jackson, Co-Chair, Poverty Reduction Workgroup***

Drayton Jackson is a member of the Central Kitsap School District's Board of Directors, a Club Level Manager at the University of Washington's Husky Stadium, and co-chair of the Poverty Reduction Work Group's Steering Committee. He's also been homeless on both ends of the country, has struggled with depression, and still lives in poverty. Through it all he's realized his story isn't unique, which led to volunteering with a handful of advocacy groups and, ultimately,

directed him to the [Poverty Reduction Work Group's Steering Committee](#) and providing his valuable input and leadership during the development of the PRWG's [10-Year Plan to Reduce Poverty and Inequality in Washington](#). Drayton was also involved in the Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP Parent Ambassadors (WSA), a leadership and advocacy program for low-income parents.



***Maria Martinez, Founder, Pueblo Brain Injury***

Maria Martinez is the founder of Pueblo Brain Injury, a nonprofit that advocates for and connects survivors of brain injuries. Martinez has worked in the domestic violence field as well as for the Colorado Department of Corrections. Martinez is a survivor of a stroke and a brain injury. She is a support group leader, peer mentor, brain injury advocate and non-profit Director. She is a board member of the

Colorado Advisory Board, Professional & Lived Experience Contributor to The National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices (NCAPPS) and Systems Learning Collaborative and National Traumatic Brain Injury Technical Assistance and Resource Center.



***Terra Russell-Slavin, Director of Policy and Community Building, Los Angeles LGBT Center***

Terra Russell-Slavin is Director of Policy and Community Building at the Los Angeles LGBT Center, the world's largest provider of programs and services for LGBT people. She works to advance LGBTQ rights in accordance with the Center's mission to build a world where LGBTQ people thrive as healthy, equal and complete members of society. Terra

began her career at the Center in 2006 and was previously the Center's Lead Staff Attorney responsible for overseeing the delivery of comprehensive and holistic legal services for LGBTQ survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Russell-Slavin is also co-chair of the LGBT Subject Matter Committee of the National Taskforce to End Sexual and Domestic Violence and was a leader in the efforts to obtain, as part of the 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the first ever non-discrimination provisions in federal law based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

## CLOSING



***Rebecca Haffajee, Acting Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services***

Rebecca Haffajee, J.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., is the Acting Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Before joining ASPE, she was a policy researcher at the RAND Corporation and an assistant professor of health management and policy at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. A lawyer and health policy researcher, Haffajee's work combines detailed legal analyses with empirical investigations of the relationships between policy and health. Her main research interests are behavioral health, drug policy, and public health policy. Prior to pursuing health policy research, she practiced health care law at Ropes & Gray LLP, where she advised domestic health care providers on regulatory compliance and reimbursement matters. She also served as a law fellow at the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University.

# September 29

## PANEL DISCUSSION: Understanding and Addressing Inequities in Data and Research

### Moderator:

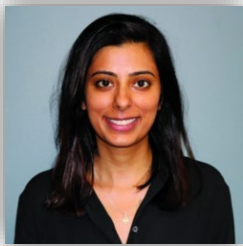


#### **Kirk O'Brien, Senior Director, Casey Family Programs**

Kirk O'Brien, Ph.D., is a Senior Director at Casey Family Programs where he has worked since 2001. His primary responsibilities include managing, evaluating, and providing consultation on studies in support of efforts to help youth and families thrive in their communities. Early on at Casey, Kirk coordinated the National Alumni Study and the Northwest Alumni Study. More recently, he has led efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of supports, services and policies implemented in

communities.

### Presenters/Panelists:



#### **Jenita Parekh, Senior Research Scientist, Child Trends**

Jenita Parekh, M.P.H., Ph.D., is a Senior Research Scientist at Child Trends with 15 years of experience conducting implementation and evaluation research, specializing in community-based participatory research (CBPR) and racial equity approaches to research. At Child Trends, she leads evaluation and implementation studies focused on historically excluded youth and families and manages a team of researchers in implementation science and process evaluation research.

Parekh has managed CBPR projects with multiple grassroots community partners. She leads trainings nationwide for foundations, universities, and research organizations on how to integrate racial equity in research. She is a lead author of *"Five Guiding Principles for Integrating Racial Equity into Research"* and the report, *"How to Embed Racial and Ethnic Equity Perspective in Research."* She also serves on the faculty at George Washington University's School of Public Health, teaching community engagement and advocacy to graduate students.



***Amy Hawn Nelson, Director of Training and Technical Assistance, Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania***

Amy Hawn Nelson, PhD, is Research Faculty and the Director of Training and Technical Assistance for Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (AISP), an initiative of the University of Pennsylvania that helps state and local governments collaborate and responsibly use data to improve lives. She has provided in-depth Technical Assistance in support of cross-sector data integration to 30+ sites across the US. Prior to joining AISP in 2017, Hawn Nelson was the Director of Social Research for the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute and Director of the Institute for Social Capital, an integrated data system (IDS) charged with supporting university research and data-informed decision-making in the Charlotte region. She is the lead author of *A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration* (2020), AISP's *Introduction to Data Sharing & Integration* (2020), and co-editor of *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: School Desegregation and Resegregation in Charlotte* (Feb. 2015, Harvard Education Press). Prior to entering the world of IDS' in 2012, Hawn Nelson served as a teacher and school leader for 11 years.



***Krista Thomas, Senior Policy Fellow, Chapin Hall, University of Chicago***

Krista Thomas, PhD is a Senior Policy Fellow at Chapin Hall. Thomas leads blended teams of policy, practice, and research experts in efforts to build the capacity of state and local human service systems across the country to execute large-scale reform initiatives and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families. Leveraging opportunities like the federal title IV-E waiver authority, Thomas partners with human service leaders to identify a set of priority outcomes, articulate a set of strategies to improve performance, execute their implementation, and monitor their effectiveness. Her areas of expertise include federal child welfare policy, programs, and monitoring; large-scale child welfare performance improvement at the state and local level; strategic planning; evidence use in decision making; implementation; continuous quality improvement; and differential response in child welfare. Prior to coming to Chapin Hall, Thomas served for over a decade in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau in both regional and national offices.





**Sharrica Miller, University of California Fullerton, Founder & CEO, Starter Nurse Academy**

Sharrica Miller teaches nursing at the University of California, Fullerton. She is also a board certified pediatric nurse practitioner with over 16 years of experience in nursing and nursing education. After spending 12 years of her childhood in foster care, Dr. Miller went on to obtain her BSN from Howard University and worked bedside in multiple areas including pediatrics, med-surg, and critical care for five years before going back to school to become a nurse practitioner. She earned her PhD from UCLA in 2017 and was named as one of five Johnson and Johnson's Minority Nurse Faculty Scholars two years in a row. Dr. Miller is a foster youth mentor, advocate, and researcher who recently won the 2019 Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity award at California State University, Fullerton for her work as director of the Diversity Support Team. She is also active in the community and her advocacy work earned her the 2021 Casey Family Foundation Alumni award. She utilizes both a professional and personal lens to create and sustain diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Her research focuses on the health services utilization and transition readiness in transitional age foster youth.

**REPORT OUT: Breakout Groups**

**Moderator:**



**Sofi Martinez, Social Science Analyst, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

Sofi Martinez is a Social Science Analyst in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). At ASPE she is responsible for policy analysis and research on reentry from incarceration, immigration, and social capital. She also supports ASPE's response to the *Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*. Martinez was a 2015 Presidential Management Fellow who comes to ASPE from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid's Division of Quality Measurement.

## KEYNOTE



***Steven Lopez, Counselor to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services***

Steven Lopez is Counselor to the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on Equity for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, Health Resources and Service Administration, and Indian Health Services. A proud native of California's Central Valley region, he most recently served as Senior Director of Health Policy at UnidosUS (formerly NCLR), the nation's largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization. Lopez's prior experiences have ranged from providing analysis and technical assistance to the California Legislature, creating and implementing public health interventions in the South Texas border region, and advancing equitable policy interventions while at the San Mateo County Health System. Lopez is a Public Policy and International Affairs Fellow and an alum of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Public Policy Fellowship Program.