



Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance, Region IX

Speaker Biographies

Lauren Eyster, MPP is a research associate at the Urban Institute's Center on Labor, Human Services and Populations. Ms. Eyster provides over 15 years of experience in policy research and evaluation, particularly on welfare and workforce programs. Her recent work has focused on evaluating career pathway programs for TANF and low-income individuals. She is currently Project Director for an evaluation of a Gates-funded initiative that accelerates adult basic education and technical instruction in high-demand careers through contextualized learning programs at community colleges. She is also leading several tasks for the evaluation design and performance management system of the Health Professions Opportunity Grant (HPOG) program. Ms. Eyster has a Master of Public Policy from Johns Hopkins University and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in public policy and public administration at George Washington University.

Julie Gondry is the Program Director of the Professional Services, Custom Training and Tribal TANF Professional Development Program at the Center for Human Services, UC Davis Extension. Ms. Gondry leads and oversees one of the largest continuing education programs for social services agencies and other helping professionals in the nation. She has over 25 years experience working in the areas of eligibility, TANF, employment services, child welfare and adult services. Since 2003, Ms. Gondry has led and managed the development of the Tribal TANF Professional Development program at UC Davis.

Kelly Goodall, MSW is currently the Director of Economic Empowerment for the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Since the implementation of the Economic Empowerment Project in April of 2007, Ms. Goodall has been working on economic issues for domestic violence survivors throughout Illinois. This has included, training and technical assistance for advocates, economic resource development and collaborations with community partners. In 2007, she received her MSW in social and economic development from Washington University in St. Louis. Prior to entering her career in social work, Kelly worked in public relations and development for nonprofit organizations in Nebraska.

Colsaria Henderson is the Managing Advocate at the Family Violence Law Center in Oakland. Ms. Henderson has been working in the field of violence against women for over 12 years. She is a certified domestic violence and sexual assault advocate in multiple states, and has a Master's in Social Work. Ms. Henderson has experience in family and child based domestic violence intervention programs, the management of confidential shelter programs, and now oversees an extensive 24-hour emergency, and law enforcement response program, along with other direct intervention services offered at the Family Violence Law Center in Oakland.



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Nicole Levine, MBA is the Executive Director of the Women's Initiative, a program that builds the entrepreneurial capacity of high-potential low-income women to overcome economic and social barriers and achieve self-sufficiency in San Francisco and the North Bay. Ms. Levine has more than 20 years experience in the Bay Area private and nonprofit sectors, with a special focus on economic development. She has a long history with the Women's Initiative including serving as a volunteer, program assistant, and business trainer at different times in her career. Ms. Levine's professional background includes serving as the interim executive director for Urban Solutions and the Oakland Ballet, and executive director for Wardrobe for Opportunity. She also spent four years providing microloans and business assistance at OBDC Small Business Finance. Leveraging her experience in the nonprofit sector, she has worked with HP, Agilent and Chevron to strengthen their community and grant making programs. Ms. Levine earned an MBA from UC Davis and is honored to be on the advisory board of the Bay Area Women's and Children's Resource Center, a Tenderloin nonprofit where she has been volunteering since she was a teenager.

Claire McCullough, MSW is the Community Programs Director, managing La Casa de las Madres' continuum of services, providing direct, comprehensive, confidential assistance to victims of domestic violence in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area. Ms. McCullough received her BSW from Texas Christian University, where she worked as a social work intern at Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas. She then attended the University of Texas at Austin, completing a MSW focused on clinical practice. While in Austin, she worked as a Crisis Counselor with the Austin Police Department providing crime scene counseling to victims of crime including family violence, homicide, suicide, child neglect and abuse, traffic fatality, fire, robbery and sexual assault. Over her four years at La Casa, Ms. McCullough has built community support and partnership around services for victims, especially focused on enhanced collaboration with low income housing sites, law enforcement, and medical and elder care providers. In addition to managing La Casa's programs, she trains across the Bay Area on the dynamics of domestic violence and best practice intervention strategies for business and service providers.

Lorne Needle, MBA is Chief Community Investment Officer at United Way of the Bay Area. Mr. Needle holds a BA in Public Policy and MBA from Stanford University. He leads United Way's programs and partnerships in seven counties including Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Solano. Mr. Needle oversees United Way's community investment team (CIT) which operates initiatives to move people out of poverty, including the SparkPoint Centers (www.sparkpointcenters.org) which served 2,400 people in 2010-11, and the Earn It Keep It Save It EITC coalition (<http://earnitkeepitsaveit.org/>), which helped 57,000 households claim more than \$63 million in tax refunds in 2011. Mr. Needle chairs the Youth Council of San Francisco's Workforce Investment Board, and is also a mayoral appointee to the Citizens Advisory Committee for the S.F. Department of Children, Youth, and Families. He has worked for over twenty years in youth development, prevention and health, workforce development, school-linked services, and other areas. Mr. Needle has directed San Francisco Peer Resources, launched and led community programs in East Palo Alto, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, and taught at Stanford on youth development programs and policy.



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Liz Schott, JD is a Senior Fellow with the Family Income Support team at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), working primarily on TANF. Ms. Schott served as a Senior Policy Analyst at CBPP from 1997-2000 and continued to work as a consultant for CBPP after 2000 until rejoining the Center staff in 2007. Ms. Schott has taught at Seattle University Law School and has consulted on public policy issues affecting low-income persons for several national research organizations. Ms. Schott worked as a legal services attorney in Washington State for nearly 20 years, serving for ten of those years as a statewide coordinator on public benefits issues. She received her law degree from Boston University School of Law.



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Peter Simon is currently a Senior Consultant with the Career Ladders Project. Mr. Simon has been engaged with developing and administering workforce development and basic skills programs with California community colleges for over 25 years. In the role of manager, project director, and instructor, his work has been consistently focused on providing educational and career-related opportunities for people who have been traditionally excluded from pathways to advancement. His particular expertise is in the area of developing and supporting complex, multi-organization partnerships (community colleges, K-12 districts, employers, labor unions, community organizations, and government agencies) that provide integrated basic skills and job training leading to living wage employment and career progression.

Sierra Solomon is an Associate at ICF Consulting with five years of experience with community development, asset building, and the Assets for Independence (AFI) program. In her work with the AFI Resource Center, she designs and delivers asset building training, provides technical assistance to grantees, and produces the AFI newsletter. As resource coordinator for the Department of Health and Human Services Region IX, she engages with AFI grantees in California, Nevada, and Arizona, serving as their first point of contact and supporting the growth of strong programs. She also organizes community outreach conferences in order to develop and foster potential grantees in Region IX. Ms. Solomon recently won an "HHS Partnering for Excellence" award for her work coordinating an outreach event in Sacramento, California.

Diana Spatz is the founding director of LIFETIME, Low-Income Families' Empowerment through Education, a statewide organization of low-income parents in California who are pursuing postsecondary education as their pathway out of poverty. A former welfare recipient, Ms. Spatz founded LIFETIME in 1996 after graduating with honors from the University of California Berkeley with a BA in Political Economies of Industrialized Societies. An award-winning author and advocate for low-income families, in 1997 Ms. Spatz won the I.F. Stone Award by The Nation for "Welfare Reform Skips School," her article on postsecondary education as a pathway out of poverty for low-income parents under welfare reform. Under her leadership, LIFETIME has received widespread recognition, including a commendation by the California State Senate, the Ford Foundation's Leadership for a Changing World award, and the Harry Chapin Award for Self-Reliance. Ms. Spatz has served on several national and state advisory committees, including the board of directors for the National Center for Law and Economic Justice and the California Joint Legislative Committee to End Poverty in California (EPIC). She currently serves on the TANF Stakeholders Advisory Committee to the California Department of Social Services and the steering committee for the Institute for Women's Policy Research Student Parent Success Project. Ms. Spatz currently lives in Oakland, California with her daughter, Eden, a student at the College of Alameda.



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Carin Zimmerman, Ph.D., is a Biotechnology Instructor and Coordinator of the Stem Cell Technology Certificate Program at City College of San Francisco. She is also the Program Director of a training grant through the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine. After spending 15 years in molecular and cell biology research, Dr. Zimmerman moved on to teaching and has been part of the Bridge to Biotech program since 2004. The Bridge to Biotech program at City College has aided over 600 students, with little or no science background, prepare for a lucrative career in the Biotechnology industry. Currently, this successful program based on contextualized learning and building learning communities is being disseminated nationwide. Dr. Zimmerman received her B.S. degree from the University of California Berkeley and her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of California Davis.