

The background of the page is composed of several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of orange and yellow. These shapes, which include circles and polygons, create a dynamic, layered effect. The colors range from a deep, vibrant orange to a lighter, almost white-yellow, with the overlapping areas creating intermediate tones. The overall composition is modern and abstract, occupying the upper two-thirds of the page.

# **SCHOLARS STRATEGY NETWORK**

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear Friends,

In 2019, the **Scholars Strategy Network** built relationships between researchers, community leaders, and journalists to improve policy and strengthen democracy across the United States.

This annual report tells stories that show how relationships between researchers and policymakers inform changes in policy and practice that improve people's lives. There are stories that show how researchers and journalists, working together, have helped change national debates for the better, adding new perspectives and challenging assumptions, while addressing the crisis facing local news through local partnerships. On issues ranging from paid family leave to modernizing Congress, SSN researchers found ways to make research matter by asking — they went to stakeholders, learned their questions, and found answers.

In 2019, SSN grew, learned, and became stronger. Our efforts to strengthen democracy expanded, from working with dozens of universities to help students vote to working with community organizations in states like Georgia to secure fair state and national election rules. We welcomed new board members Hahrie Han and Jamila Michener, and a new Managing Director, Pao Maynard-Moll, to our executive leadership. And we created a new set of pathways to membership that help researchers create relationships with policymakers, community leaders, and journalists from the beginning of their membership.

The work of 2019 prepared SSN well for the great challenges of 2020. With a presidential election in high gear and the coronavirus crisis at hand, helping communities use research to make better policy choices is more important than ever. We thank our community — member researchers, donors, board members, chapter leaders, and staff — for all they did to fuel SSN's success and learning in 2019. And we are looking forward to growing our community with you in the years ahead.

**Avi Green, Executive Director**

**Theda Skocpol**, Director and Victor S. Thomas Professor of Government and Sociology, Harvard University

## ABOUT

The **Scholars Strategy Network** connects America's top researchers with policymakers, civic leaders, and journalists to improve policy and strengthen democracy. SSN exists because when decisions are informed by research, public policy strengthens communities and spurs innovation. To achieve its mission of increasing collaborative relationships between researchers and leaders, SSN trains and coaches scholars and builds national topical working groups and regional networks. SSN also helps organizations like research funders, colleges and universities change to better serve democracy and to increase the likelihood that the research they create will be used to improve people's lives.

Across the United States, the Scholars Strategy Network is working to advance the use of research wherever policy decisions are made — from city halls to state legislatures to Washington.

### Contact Info

#### Scholars Strategy Network

1035 Cambridge Street Suite 14B  
Cambridge, MA 02141

**No Jargon Podcast:** [iPhone](#), [Android](#), [Web](#)

**Find a researcher:** <https://scholars.org/connect-scholar>

**Book a workshop:** <https://scholars.org/trainings>

**Find a chapter:** <https://scholars.org/chapters>

**Support:** [www.scholars.org/donate](http://www.scholars.org/donate)


## A YEAR OF GROWTH AND IMPACT

SSN began 2019 with a membership of **1,192 researchers** and grew to **1,485 members** by year's end. SSN expanded from **32 chapters** in **26 states** to 35 chapters in **29 states**. The network also instituted a new member survey that captures researchers' knowledge, skills, communities, identities, and access needs in order to learn more about who our researchers are, identify ways to serve them and help them serve communities, and to reduce disparities in SSN, academia, and policymaking. And to strengthen the ties between research and policy, SSN implemented a new relational database to track the connections between researchers and practitioners nationwide.

# **STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY**

## Securing Fair Elections

After **Stacey Abrams** lost an election rife with irregularities, she created Fair Fight, an organization dedicated to securing the right to vote for everyone across Georgia and the United States. Fair Fight reached out to the Georgia SSN chapter for non-partisan, unbiased, independent research. Twenty SSN political scientists worked together to write a report, [“Securing Fair Elections: Challenges to Voting in the United States and Georgia.”](#) that explains how unfair, antiquated election procedures harm individuals, communities, and businesses. Abrams’ team knew to reach out to the Georgia SSN chapter because of on-the-ground connections that the Georgia SSN chapter had built with local policymakers and community groups over the past few years. Many in Georgia, including nonprofit and business leaders, journalists, professors and students, have used the report to learn more about the issue and consider possible solutions.




**“The Scholar Strategy Network’s Georgia chapter and national team have been valuable collaborators in working for free and fair elections. The Scholar Strategy Network’s academic researchers provide independent voices and strong evidence. Their briefs, research notes, advice, and the report they wrote, ‘Securing Fair Elections: Challenges to Voting in Georgia and Across the United States,’ demonstrate the need to protect every vote.”**

**— LAUREN GROH-WARGO, CEO, FAIR FIGHT**

## Creating Relationships to Transform City Governance

In advance of 2019 mayoral election, the Chicago SSN chapter reached out to the candidates and Board of Aldermen to ask what research they needed, share evidence-based policy information, and offer to connect them to experts on issues like public transportation and education reform. SSN researchers met with more than half of the candidates, including Lori Lightfoot, who ultimately became mayor. After the election, the new mayor and Board of Aldermen continued to collaborate with researchers of the Chicago SSN chapter to improve governance in America's 3rd largest city. The Chicago SSN chapter leaders, Professors Barbara Risman (*University of Illinois Chicago*) and Christine Percheski (*Northwestern University*), wrote about the effort in *The Fulcrum*, "[Making Evidence a Part of Campaigns: Lessons from Chicago.](#)"


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OPINION



Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot has been appreciative of evidence based policy briefs prepared by the Scholars Strategy Network, according to Risman and Percheski, encouraging them to broaden their work. (Scott Olson/Getty Images)

### Making evidence part of campaigns: lessons from Chicago

By [Barbara Risman](#) and [Christine Percheski](#) July 23, 2019

*Risman is a distinguished professor of Sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Percheski is an associate professor of sociology and faculty fellow of the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University. They co-chair the Chicagoland chapter of the Scholars Strategy Network.*



“

**In the 2018 midterm elections, average student voting rate at U.S. colleges and universities more than doubled from the last midterm elections, jumping from 19 percent in 2014 to 40 percent in 2018.”**

**- NANCY THOMAS, SSN MEMBER,  
DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY & HIGHER EDUCATION,  
TUFTS UNIVERSITY**

## Working for Student Voting and Civic Engagement

Young people are less likely to vote, decreasing their clout in public policy decisions at every level of government. Since 2016, SSN has helped faculty at colleges and universities across the United States secure institution-wide commitments to increase student civic engagement. SSN sees voting as a critical bedrock practice within the broader democratic skill set every student should learn, which also includes understanding the basics of how government works, how to analyze claims and find facts in a time of misinformation, and how to come to together in organizations to address public problems.

In 2019, SSN provided over **1,000 researchers** with ideas and opportunities to institutionalize civic engagement and student voting on their campuses. To measure progress, SSN researchers encourage universities to participate in the Tufts Institute for Democracy & Higher Education's National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (IDHE NSLVE), the largest study of student voting ever conducted.

A report by SSN member Michael Peshkin (*Northeastern University*), along with a group of colleagues and leaders across several universities, found that if colleges and universities make plans to give students the opportunity to register to vote, student registration rates can hit **99 percent** of eligible voters. SSN organized researchers in Louisiana, Mississippi, Michigan, Georgia, and many other states to advocate for these commitments from university presidents. SSN's efforts have been particularly targeted to large public universities, institutions that serve large numbers of students of color, and institutions in states that have a recent history of creating barriers to voting.

## Advancing the Right to Vote

Many SSN chapters worked to bring evidence-informed best practices into election administration.



In Maine, SSN political scientists Amy Fried (*University of Maine*) submitted written [testimony](#) to explain why automatic voter registration makes sense. Soon after, automatic voter registration became law.



In Massachusetts, SSN members Elizabeth Rigby (*The George Washington University*), Jake Martín Grumbach (*University of Washington*), and Joseph Anthony (*Oklahoma State University*) submitted written testimony explaining how Election Day registration encourages more people to vote. SSN also helped Grumbach and Charlotte Hill (*University of California, Berkley*) laid out the case for Election day registration in an op-ed for [the New York Times](#).



In California, SSN member Michael Latner (*California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo*) sent state legislators a *CalMatters* [op-ed](#) he wrote explaining why the University of California system has a responsibility to designate a campus coordinator to ensure that every UC campus makes and executes a plan to develop student voters. A related bill passed in September.



In Georgia, the local SSN leaders contacted Congressman John Lewis, a co-sponsor of the [For the People Act](#) – H.R.1, to inform him about evidence-based ways to strengthen student voting provisions in the bill. Georgia SSN political scientists explained the merits of language from the Help Students Vote Act, requiring higher education institutions to designate a “campus vote coordinator.” The U.S. House of Representatives passed a version of H.R.1 that includes this language.

## Advancing the Right to Vote Continued

Turnout in local, off-year elections is often much lower than turnout in national elections. In 2019, SSN helped Zoltan Hajnal (*University of California, San Diego*) build connections with voting rights advocates to put the issue of local election timing on the agenda in Washington State. Informing legislators on both sides of the aisle, Hajnal brought [research](#) to explain how moving local elections to on-cycle years boosts turnout and representation, and how several states, including Arizona, California, and Iowa, have recently moved to hold local elections on the same day as national elections.

With polarization threatening the nation, SSN Executive Director Avi Green worked with leaders at New America, R Street, and the Stanford Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law to recruit more than 20 researchers to form the Election Reform Research Group, thanks to support from the Hewlett Foundation and Arnold Ventures. Its first mission: to determine how and when ranked choice voting might improve elections and politics in the US.

## Modernizing Congress

Responding to Chairman Derek Kilmer (D-WA) of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, SSN provided ideas from 11 researchers from fields including public administration, computer science, and organizational management, for ways to strengthen Congress so it can better serve the American people. Some of those ideas included:

- How to make Congress more attractive to millennials by creating greater workplace flexibility (Erin Borry, *University of Alabama at Birmingham*)
- Improving Congress's understanding and use of technology (Erhardt Graeff, *Olin College of Engineering*)
- What Congress could learn from other stressful occupations, like nursing (Frankie Weinberg, *Loyola University New Orleans*)
- How Congress should address workforce diversity (Adia Wingfield, *Washington University in St. Louis*)
- Moving beyond Diversity to Inclusion by, for example, by creating mentorship programs (Ariana Levinson, *University of Louisville*)

# LEARNING AND ADAPTING

**SSN encourages experiments, evaluates programs, and aligns practices with the best research on organizing, nonprofit management, and increasing the likelihood that research will get used in policy and practice. Below are major steps SSN took in 2019 to learn and adapt.**

## New Ways to Become an SSN Member

In 2019, SSN created new pathways to membership in response to research about where and when evidence is used, and feedback about how and when people most valued researchers' work. Researchers are encouraged to join SSN by writing a piece for a community organization, policymaker, or media outlet. Responding to real world needs, in 2019 researchers wrote official public comments, amicus briefs, op-eds and commentaries, testimony, policy briefs, and research memos. SSN members created over **300 such pieces** in 2019 — helping researchers deliver value to communities from the moment they join SSN.

### Examples include:

- Kevin Lee on [How California's Workforce Development System Excludes Immigrants, Why It Matters, And What We Can Do About It](#), *SSN Memo*
- Inez Valdez's op-ed in *The Washington Post* on [Why Anti-immigration Politics Hurt White Workers](#)
- Jennifer Elaine-Gaddis on the [Revision of the Categorical Eligibility Requirement in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#), *Public Comment*



## Understanding and Addressing Disparities

Informed by **10 experts** on diversity and inclusion, SSN built and implemented a new demographic survey to assess researchers' access and inclusion needs and measure SSN's progress on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Over **450 members** responded to the survey, which will be sent out annually to every member so that individuals are given the opportunity to self-define their identities, share access needs, and provide ideas for more action.

## Upgrading Tech

SSN seeks to create researcher-practitioner collaborations in states to accelerate progress on policy. In 2019, SSN implemented a new database to track the relationships SSN is building between researchers, community leaders, and journalists. The database helps SSN chapters, national working groups, and staff map social networks, track the use of research evidence, steward relationships, move people up leadership ladders, and find opportunities.

# IMPROVING PUBLIC POLICY





## North Carolina: Putting Paid Family Leave on the Map

In North Carolina, SSN members Anna Gassman-Pines (*Duke University*) and Elizabeth Ananat (*Barnard College*) worked with students and leaders from local civic organizations *NC Child* and *Moms Rising* to develop policy proposals for a paid leave insurance program for workers across the state.

Gassman-Pines and Ananat discussed the costs and benefits of paid leave in the state's capital city newspaper, [\*The News & Observer\*](#), and hosted a briefing with local residents to discuss the challenges families face and how paid family leave can help workers care for their families during significant life events. Nearly 20 state legislators and staffers attended, including NC Rep. Graig Meyer, who introduced a paid family leave bill later weeks later. Gassman-Pines spoke at the press conference at which Rep. Meyer introduced the bill.

**“The benefits of this study are tremendous and have helped stimulate conversation around the possibilities of such a policy in North Carolina, including the introduction of the first ever family leave insurance bill in the North Carolina General Assembly. We are grateful for the work of Ananat and Gassman-Pines.”**

**— TINA SHERMAN, CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR, MOMSRISING**



## Colorado: Fighting Wage Theft

Wage theft — when employers refuse to pay their employees — hurts some of the most vulnerable people in America, hitting immigrants and low-wage workers the hardest. In Colorado, half a million people suffer from wage theft. Collectively, they are robbed of \$750 million a year, and the state loses approximately \$25 million in state tax revenue.

Building off work in 2018 with the mayor of Denver, SSN researchers and worker advocates turned their focus statewide in 2019. As the Colorado legislature debated an anti-wage theft bill, SSN member Rachel Galemba (*University of Denver*) explained her own research on ways wage theft hurts workers and families in [\*The Colorado Sun\*](#). In Galemba's interviews with construction and day-laborers, she found that 62 percent had experienced wage theft. She also provided supporting research briefs to legislators, community groups working for change, and journalists. Soon after, Colorado passed a bill creating stiff penalties for employers who intentionally withhold wages from employees.



## Maine: Protecting Public Health

When Maine leaders grappled with a measles outbreak, SSN member Jennifer Wriggins (*University of Maine School of Law*) was called on to [\*testify\*](#) to answer a key concern of lawmakers, explaining that ending religious and personal exemptions for vaccinations would be constitutional. The legislature moved ahead, and the Governor signed a bill to strengthen vaccination requirements in May. Wriggins wrote about the process in the [\*Bangor Daily News\*](#).



## New York City: Defending Women's Autonomy

In June 2019, the New York State legislature adjourned without passing a bill — backed by the Governor — that would have legalized commercial surrogacy in the state. The legislation failed by a close margin, in part due to major flaws pointed out by scholars and civic leaders that could have reduced abortion access and reproductive justice, setting a precedent that might further chip away at *Roe v. Wade* by decreasing pregnant women's autonomy.

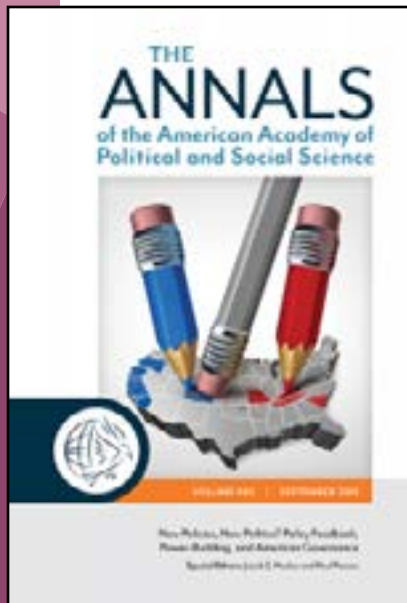
New York City SSN chapter co-leader [Wendy Chavkin](#) (*Columbia University*) worked closely with State Senator Liz Krueger to inform policymakers the complex health effects and legal ramifications of bill. Chavkin wrote a letter to the New York Assembly, signed by 10 other medical experts. SSN member Yasmine Ergas (*Columbia University*) testified. And in an [op-ed in Albany's Times Union](#), member Laura Briggs (*University of Massachusetts*) explained how the bill as written could set back the cause of reproductive justice for all.

In a [New York Times article](#) that explained why the bill failed, Chavkin spoke to the health concerns surrogates face. SSN members ended the year by turning to the future, working with Senator Krueger to on new ideas to ensure the health of pregnant people, protect access to abortion, and create options to help families seeking children.



### Member Close-Up: Diana Romero

After introductions and coaching from SSN, New York City chapter co-leader Diana Romero (*City University of New York*) seized new opportunities to increase the use of research to advance women's health. Through connections to the Center for Reproductive Rights made by SSN, as well as connections to funders and advocates, Romero has begun a major new research initiative to determine whether and when organizations advocating for women's rights are most effective. And, through another SSN connection, Romero's own expertise was called on to provide expert testimony in Indiana, as a part of a case examining whether the state's new laws restricting access to abortion meet constitutional muster.



## Imagining Bold New Policy

For four decades, inequality in the United States has been increasing. Since economic power can buy political and social power, decreasing inequality is very difficult. Could a new generation of public policies change the equation? If so, a first wave of policy would need to not only reduce inequality, but also create self-sustaining political power to prevent backsliding and promote further reductions in inequality. Most famously, Social Security initiated such a policy moment from the 1940s to the 1960s, becoming the widely popular political program it is today.

Led by SSN political scientists Jacob Hacker (*Yale University*) and Paul Pierson (*University of California Berkeley*), researchers studied policy feedback — the ways policies impact policy — and created proposals for policies to reduce inequality. Presented to members of Congress and think tanks, the ideas were discussed in a [column in the New York Times](#) and collected in a [volume](#) of the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Policy topics included climate change, health care, jobs and labor, policing, criminal justice, and civic engagement. Contributors included Alex Hertel-Fernandez (*Columbia University*), Jamila Michener and Suzanne Mettler, (*Cornell University*), Vesla Weaver (*Johns Hopkins University*), and several others.



## EXPLAINING THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF MEDICAID WORK REQUIREMENTS

In 2018, Arkansas became the first state to implement Medicaid work requirements, causing more than 18,000 Arkansans to lose healthcare coverage. The National Health Law Project connected with SSN to engage Medicaid researchers in public comment periods across the states — a critical step in the process of vetting changes to state Medicaid programs, to ensure that any changes in state Medicaid programs do no harm — and fulfill Medicaid’s statutory goal to provide health insurance to low-income people.

SSN took action. Thirty-three researchers jumped at the opportunity to communicate research on the negative impacts of requiring recipients of Medicaid to provide proof-of-work. Twenty-three SSN members submitted public comments. Eleven SSN members signed onto amicus briefs. In March, U.S. District Judge James Boasberg blocked Arkansas from continuing its work requirement program, preserving Medicaid access for thousands of families. And in July, citing the public comment of SSN member Phillip Rocco (*Marquette University*), Judge Boasberg [blocked](#) Medicaid work requirement stipulations in New Hampshire as well.

**“A legitimate critique of academic scholarship, much of which is funded via philanthropy, is its limited audience and lack of public engagement. SSN is different. Its focus is on helping researchers build relationships with non-academic organizations and leaders, like policymakers, journalists and grassroots groups to apply that research in a way that improves the human condition. For example, by introducing me to U.S. Member of Congress Ayanna Pressley and her team, SSN has catalyzed a partnership that is taking ideas to close the racial wealth gap to the floors of Congress.”**

**— DARRICK HAMILTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KIRWAN INSTITUTE, THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

# TRAINING RESEARCHERS



**“Too few social scientists know that there are best practices based on research that can help ensure their work is useful to — and used by — policymakers and practitioners. SSN has synthesized this research to create nuts and bolts workshops that empower scholars to achieve greater social impact.”**

**— VIVIAN TSENG, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,  
WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION**

**Across the nation in 2019, SSN trained over 800 researchers, spanning disciplines from Biology to Engineering to Sociology, in skills to develop relationships with journalists, community leaders, and policymakers. SSN hosted these trainings in addition to online webinars and created a new set of tools for researchers available at [www.scholars.org/resources](http://www.scholars.org/resources).**

## **Reducing Inequalities Facing Youth**

For research to help reduce inequalities facing youth, it must inform policy and practice. That means researchers need collaborative relationships with policymakers and practitioners. With support from the William T. Grant Foundation, SSN worked with more than 20 researchers around the nation to help them create relationships with local, state, and federal policymakers, agency leaders, advocates, and practitioners.

One researcher of the WTG cohort, Janelle Scott (*University of California, Berkeley*), studies how education is funded, charter school debates, and how and when research is used to inform education policy. After attending SSN’s Researcher Impact Accelerator training, Scott made new connections. First, she met local California Assemblyperson Buffy Wicks and shared research on K-12 education funding and privatization to inform budget decisions in the nation’s largest state. Scott was also approached by Elizabeth Warren’s presidential campaign staff and asked to share her research on school funding. Many of Scott’s ideas were later echoed in Warren’s platform.



**SSN's Research Impact Accelerator workshop was one of the best professional development experiences I've ever had. Working with state and federal policymakers and practitioners afterwards, I was able to call on the skills and insights from the training to communicate research and build relationships."**

**- JANELLE SCOTT, PROFESSOR,  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY**



# COMMUNICATING RESEARCH

## Communicating Research

SSN helped researchers across the United States communicate research and support journalists.



SSN assisted researchers in publishing **127** op-eds.



SSN members were cited in **53,735** news stories — a **61 percent** increase over 2018.



SSN published **217** research briefs.



## Local Media Partnerships Close-Up: Maine

When SSN chapters build relationships with local newspapers, it's a win-win. Scholars strengthen the role research plays in local policy debates, and journalists get the information they need to communicate the impact of policy shifts on communities in their region.

Over the past several years, SSN Maine has built a deep relationship with the Bangor Daily News. In 2019, the paper ran 20 op-eds from Maine SSN chapter members on issues ranging from long-term care to the opioid epidemic.

In 2019, Maine SSN began a new relationship with the *Kennebec Journal*, where researchers regularly contribute timely, research-driven op-eds to an ongoing column. University of Southern Maine sociologist and Maine SSN chapter co-leader Luisa Deprez notes,

**“All legislators and state government folks read the *Kennebec Journal*. It gets to the folks we want to reach out to and help.”**

Soon after one of the first pieces ran in the paper, chapter member Lisa Miller reported:

**“Senator Brownie Carson corralled me at a conference and said ‘Great op-ed!’ and said he’d already sent it to the Commissioner of the Department of Labor share with the Governor’s cabinet.”**

## SHIFTING POLICY NARRATIVES



### Member Close-Up: Christina Cross

With help from SSN, in an op-ed in the *New York Times*, Christina Cross (*Harvard University*) debunked the myth that a lower percentage of two-parent households are a key driver of the education achievement gap facing black communities. After reading the op-ed, the Chief of Policy for the City of Boston asked Cross to present to local policymakers on strategies to better support black youth and families.



### Member Close-Up: Matthew Kraft

Matthew Kraft (*Brown University*) evaluates what makes teachers effective. With help from SSN, Kraft published an op-ed in the *New York Times* about ways to support teachers and improve student outcomes. Acknowledging calls by presidential candidates to raise teacher pay across the board, Kraft argued that blanket raises might be less effective than more targeted approaches. With support from SSN, Kraft reached out to Congressional offices and presidential candidates to develop relationships and help inform more nuanced approaches.

## The No Jargon Podcast

SSN's podcast *No Jargon* is beloved by policy staffers, researchers, and thousands of listeners weekly. As downloads of *No Jargon* passed the **1.4 million** mark, the show was named one of the top "slightly-wonky economics shows" by *Financial Times* writer Brendan Greeley. "It's like going to college lectures, only they've carefully found only the most conversational professors, and forbidden them from speaking anything other than plain English," notes Greeley.



**1.4 million downloads**



## The No Jargon Podcast: Top 5 Episodes from 2019

In 2019, SSN partnered with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Health Policy Research Scholars program, to bring new perspectives to *No Jargon* from early career scholars on critical issues of public health and health equity.

### Top 5 Episodes from 2019

1. Peggy Compton, [#164: Treating Pain, Treating Addiction](#)
2. Tondra Loder-Jackson, [#165: Civil Rights in Our Schools](#)
3. Caitlyn Collins, [#174: Making Motherhood Work](#)
4. Keramet Reiter, [#181: Locked Away](#)
5. Janelle Scott, [#189: Who Owns America's Schools?](#)



# OUR COMMUNITY

## FAREWELL TO INAUGURAL SSN POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

The Scholars Strategy Network congratulates the inaugural cohort of SSN Postdoctoral Fellows on the completion of their fellowship. SSN, the chapters that hosted them, and the communities that they joined benefitted greatly from the research they conducted and policy connections they made throughout their two-year fellowship.

SSN wishes them the best in their next endeavors, and we look forward to working with them in the future.



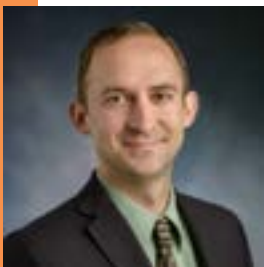
**Sayil Camacho**, *Vanderbilt University*

Sayil will continue her work at Peabody and research with the Policies for Action Research Hub at Vanderbilt University, which will illuminate ways that current policies, processes, and programs might be adapted to better serve the needs of families, particularly for children of immigrants.



**Natalie D. Hengstebeck**, *National Science Foundation*

Natalie is an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellow (STPF) based at the National Science Foundation. She will join the strategic partnerships and Convergence Accelerator teams.



**Daniel Lanford**, *Georgia Health Policy Center*

Daniel is a Senior Research Associate at the Georgia Health Policy Center at Georgia State University, where conducts research on initiatives aligning health care, public health, and social services. His main projects are commissioned by the Georgia Department of Community Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



**Fernando Tormos-Aponte**, *University of Maryland, Baltimore County*

Fernando is a Postdoctoral Research Associate with a joint appointment at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County School of Public Policy and Department of Political Science, as well as a Visiting Scholar at the Johns Hopkins University Department of Political Science.



## 2018-2020 SSN POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

**The second cohort of SSN Postdoctoral Fellows spent the first year of the fellowship helping researchers in their state bring research, evidence, and scholarly perspectives into policy debates. The program focuses on building relationships between researchers and policymakers, civic leaders, and journalists to inform and improve the policymaking process.**

### **Amanda Bertana**, *Maine SSN*

Amanda Bertana's research focuses on the political economy of climate change and local, national, and international efforts to adapt to a changing climate. Her recent book project explores the social, political, and cultural aspects of community relocation as an adaptation to rising sea levels in the Fiji islands. As a postdoctoral fellow, she has assisted local scholars with policy briefs, contributed to the SSN Maine chapters' biweekly column in the *Bangor Daily News*, and helped local scholars draft legislative testimony. Additionally, she has worked with Reversing Falls Sanctuary's *Climate Action Net*, a local organization dedicated to building environmental resiliency and community efforts in the Blue Hill Peninsula.

### **Sarah Diefendorf**, *Utah SSN*


Sarah Diefendorf studies how and why religious groups shift their beliefs on issues related to gender and sexuality. As a postdoctoral fellow, she has fostered relationships between Utah scholars and policymakers, organized scholar visits to Capitol Hill, and has facilitated connections between researchers and local organizations including *Action Utah*, *Voices for Utah Children*, and *Alliance for a Better Utah*.

### **Jennifer Nations**, *San Diego SSN*

Jennifer Nations studies the government and institutional rules that contribute to social inequalities. As a postdoctoral fellow, she has brought SSN's media and policy engagement trainings to the chapter and has forged connections and partnerships between community groups and academics in the San Diego area, specifically on housing, immigration, and policing issues. As a result, the San Diego chapter has hosted large and small events where regional partners and scholars discuss research and advocacy priorities, data sharing and dissemination, and best practices for university-community partnerships.

## BOARD MEMBERS


- Theda Skocpol, Scholars Strategy Network Founder and Director, Victor S. Thomas Professor of Government and Sociology, Harvard University, (Secretary and Treasurer)
- Robert S. Bowditch, Jr., Scholars Strategy Network, (Chair)
- David desJardins, Consultant and Investor
- Amy Fried, Professor of Political Science, University of Maine
- Jacob S. Hacker, Director of the Institution for Social and Policy Studies and Stanley B. Resor Professor of Political Science at Yale University
- Hahrie Han, Professor of Political Science and Inaugural Director, Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University
- Lawrence R. Jacobs, McKnight Presidential Chair in Public Affairs and Director of the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance, University of Minnesota
- Suzanne Mettler, John L. Senior Professor of American Institutions, Cornell University
- Jamila Michener, Assistant Professor of Government, Cornell University
- Ian Simmons Co-Founder and Principal, Blue Haven Initiative
- Lee Wasserman, Director and Secretary, Rockefeller Family Fund



In 2019, the Scholars Strategy Network welcomed two new Board Members, **Hahrie Han** and **Jamila Michener**:

**“SSN’s mission to bridge the divide between research and practice is at the center of my own work. In my own research, I have seen how membership organizations can grow, transform institutions, and make a difference across the nation. I am proud to be part of SSN.”**

**— HAHRIE HAN**



**“SSN’s mission reflects the reason I entered academia in the first place. Like many graduate students, I hoped that my training and education would give me tools to effect change in the world. But the leap from hope to reality became daunting as I progressed. SSN helps bridge the gap, enhancing the prospects for research to make a difference.”**

**— JAMILA MICHENER**



## LIST OF 2019 CHAPTER LEADERS AND GRADUATE FELLOWS

**SSN recognizes and thanks the researchers and graduate fellows who led regional SSN chapters in 2019. Asterisk denotes chapter fellows.**

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**SSN is grateful to the many journalists who worked with SSN researchers to inform the public. Below is a partial list.**

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