SSI at 50: Modernizing the Social Safety Net for People with Disabilities and Older Adults

October 2024

Speakers

Gina Livermore, Mathematica (moderator)

Gina Livermore is director of the Center for Studying Disability Policy and a senior fellow at Mathematica. She is an expert in evaluation research and design, as well as employment policy and health insurance for people with disabilities. Her work focuses on improving the economic well-being and self-sufficiency of transition-age youth and working-age people with disabilities. She directs two survey data collection efforts for the Social Security Administration (SSA) and leads an evaluation of a 20-state grant program focused on transition-age youth with disabilities for the Rehabilitation Services Administration. She has also extensively researched the quality of national disability data. She holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and an M.P.H. in epidemiology from Tulane University.

Tracey Gronniger, Justice in Aging

Tracey is managing director of economic security at the Justice in Aging. She leads the organization's efforts to ensure that older adults with low income can fulfill their basic needs, including food, shelter, and more as they age. She and her team focus on income-based programs such as Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and advocate for affordable housing solutions and tools to prevent evictions and homelessness among older adults. Tracey received her undergraduate degree from Harvard University and her J.D. from the University of Michigan School of Law. She is on the board of the National Academy of Social Insurance and serves as a co-chair of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Social Security Task Force.

Jeffrey Hemmeter, Social Security Administration

Jeffrey Hemmeter is the deputy associate commissioner in the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support at SSA. There he supports the design, evaluation, and oversight of research, evaluations, programs, and policies related to disability and work. He has worked on several SSA demonstrations, evaluations, and studies and coedited Lessons from SSA Demonstrations for Disability Policy and Future Research, a compilation of papers on SSA's research. Hemmeter received a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Katie Savin, California State University, Sacramento

Katie Savin is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at California State University, Sacramento where they teach on health, disability, and social welfare policy. Their current research, funded through the University of Wisconsin-Madison Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC), uses qualitative methods to explore the sociostructural contexts in which SSI recipients make work-related decisions. Previously, as an extramural fellow with University of Wisconsin Madison RDRC, they used mixed-methods, community-based research to assess administrative burden among SSI recipients in California. Savin's experience as a Social Security Disability Insurance recipient and as a medical social worker informed their current research. Savin received a Ph.D. in social welfare from the University of California, Berkeley.

Jack Smalligan, Urban Institute

Jack Smalligan is a senior policy fellow in the Income and Benefits Policy Center at the Urban Institute. He brings 30 years of relevant experience working on Social Security and SSI programs and policies. In his current position, he analyzes disability, retirement, and paid leave policy. Before joining Urban, Smalligan was deputy associate director at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) within the Executive Office of the President. As director of OMB's Education, Income Maintenance, and Labor Division, he conducted program oversight and analysis in the Departments of Education and Labor and the SSA. He also oversaw assistance programs for persons with low income in the Administration on Children and Families, Food and Nutrition Service, and the Department of Treasury. In 2012, he was a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution, where he researched and analyzed Social Security disability programs; while there, with Jeff Liebman, he published recommendations and organized a convening that helped shape the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015. He also served on the Biden-Harris presidential transition team for SSA. Smalligan received a master's degree in public policy from the University of Michigan.