
BEST OF THE BLOG



EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Emily Cipolla is a second-year Master of Public Administration student concentrating in Program Evaluation and Policy Analysis, as well as Public-Private Policy and Management. She also holds a BA in Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies from The Ohio State University. She works as a Research Assistant with the George Washington University, where she facilitates faculty in their research endeavors. She is also currently conducting multiple contracted evaluation projects. Her work is grounded in rigorous, evidence-based research and a commitment to understanding how policy design and implementation shape real outcomes. Outside of work and school, she enjoys reading and exploring all the museums the DMV has to offer.

STAFF WRITERS

Lydia Woodley is a first-year MPA student with a concentration in Managing State and Local Governments and an interest in infrastructure. She is from Ocean City, Maryland, and graduated from St. John's University with a degree in Public Administration and Public Service with minors in Social Justice Theory and Business Administration. She is a Wolcott and Women's Leadership Fellow. Currently, Lydia is an intern with the Department of Transportation, bringing past experience in budget policy and political fundraising. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, crocheting, and reading.

Maddie Brown Shirley is a second-year Master of Public Policy Student specializing in fiscal welfare. She grew up in Washington State and received her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Southern New Hampshire University. She completed post-baccalaureate studies in Economics and Public Policy at Central Washington University. Maddie has work experience spanning fiscal and social policy, as well as operations. Post graduation, she hopes to continue her work in economic security and fiscally sustainability. She is also passionate about running and creating fun memories with friends in D.C.

Samantha Marcotte is a second-year Master of Public Policy student concentrating in Social Policy with a background in policy, advocacy, and nonprofit fundraising. Samantha graduated from American University in 2021 with a BA in Political Science and a certificate in Leadership Studies. Throughout

her time at GWU, Samantha has worked at the National Partnership for Women & Families, the American Sustainable Business Network, and the Data Foundation, where she has contributed to multiple research projects and had her writing published. In her free time, she enjoys walking her pitbull Quinny around D.C., reading thrillers/nonfiction/essays, and doing yoga classes.

Saumya Mutatkar is a second-year Master of Public Policy student specializing in social policy. She currently works as a Legislative Analyst at Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies, where she supports policy research, legislative tracking, and strategic advocacy efforts. She graduated from the University of California, Riverside, with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Affairs. In her free time, Saumya enjoys reading, drawing, and puzzling with friends.

Vannia Yalan is a Master of Public Administration candidate at the George Washington University's Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration. She serves as a Writer for *Policy Perspectives*, contributing to both the print journal and online blog. Originally from Peru, Vannia brings five years of experience working across Canada, the United States, and Latin America in areas of justice advocacy, sustainability, and international development. Her professional background includes collaboration with organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank Group (WBG), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV). Her research interests center on the intersection of public administration, social equity, and science and technology policy, with a focus on improving governance and citizen trust in institutions. Beyond her academic and professional work, she is passionate about storytelling, photography, and cultural diplomacy.

DEPUTY EDITORS

Adrienne Davis is a first-year Master of Public Policy candidate within the Trachtenberg School, on track to receive a certificate in Regulatory Policy and Practice. Originally from Washington, D.C., she recently graduated from Towson University with a degree in Healthcare Management, minoring in Business Administration. She currently serves as the Quality, STARS, and Risk Adjustment Project Coordinator for CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield's national account, with a focus on initiatives aimed at closing care gaps and enhancing effective member outreach. She also has experience in small insurance brokerages and customer relationship management (CRM) at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. She hopes to transition into government affairs, working on social and educational policies that impact her fellow native Washingtonians. Outside of work and school, she enjoys trying new restaurants, traveling, and attending concerts.

Jacob Carson is a Master of Public Policy candidate at the Trachtenberg School. He graduated with a degree in Finance and a minor in Behavioral Economics from the University of New Haven, where he was Captain for his Track & Field and Cross-Country teams. Jacob's past experiences include researching policy and political data for Gary Goodweather's DC Mayoral campaign, consulting for startup tech companies and think-tanks, and publishing a research paper on a state school-choice program in an academic journal. After graduation, Jacob aims to use his finance knowledge to promote government and policy efficiency in order to address societal inequities. In his free time, Jacob can be found running, playing basketball, reading, and cheering on both UCONN basketball and the New York Jets.

Mary Macklem is a first-year Certificate in Budget and Public Finance candidate at the Trachtenberg School. She most recently worked for the National Endowment for the Humanities as a Senior Program Officer in the Division of Research, where she led a portfolio of grant programs for faculty at HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs and served as the co-chair of the NEH HBCU Working Group. Mary holds a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania (Music History) and a BA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Music and Italian, with Distinction). She lives in Montgomery County, Maryland, and enjoys going to museums and concerts, and exploring the outdoors.

Tosha Skolnik is a second-year Master of Public Policy student concentrating in Social Policy. A lifelong District resident, Tosha is proud to have served his community as Senior Research Analyst for the DC Council's Committees on Labor and Housing, and as a Legislative Assistant for Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George. While at the Trachtenberg school, Tosha has applied himself through client-based program evaluation projects for the Mayor's Office on Volunteerism and Partnerships, Miriam's Kitchen, and Friendship Place. He earned his BA in History and Policy Studies from Grinnell College.