

JONATHAN SCHWABISH

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PROFESSIONAL SYNOPSIS

Jonathan Schwabish is a Senior Fellow at the [Urban Institute](http://urban.org), a nonprofit research institution in Washington, DC, and founder of the data visualization and presentation skills firm, [PolicyViz](http://policyviz.com). At Urban, he is a researcher in the Tax and Income Supports Division and a member of the Institute's Communication team where he specializes in data visualization and presentation design. His research primarily focuses on issues around nutrition and disability policy.

Dr. Schwabish is also considered a leader in the data visualization field and is a leading voice for clarity and accessibility in research. He has written on various aspects of how to best visualize data including technical aspects of creation, design best practices, and how to communicate social science research in more accessible ways. He speaks widely on the issues of data visualization, open data, and data use in organizations.

Dr. Schwabish also teaches data visualization and presentation skills at Georgetown University, Cornell University, and American University, as well as in public workshops and for private clients through his consulting firm, [PolicyViz](http://policyviz.com). He also hosts the [PolicyViz Podcast](#), which focuses on data, open data, and data visualization. He is the author of four books—[Better Presentations](#), [Elevate the Debate](#), [Better Data Visualizations](#), and [Data Visualization in Excel](#)—which provide practical guidance for people looking to improve how they create, present, and communicate data-rich content. His forthcoming book, [Thoughtful Data: A Guide to Empathy and Equity in Data Communication](#), co-authored with Alice Feng, is scheduled to be released later this year.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., M.A., Economics, Syracuse University, 2003

M.A., Economics, The Johns Hopkins University, 2001

B.A., Economics, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1998

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Long-Term Positions

January 2013–Present	Founder and CEO, PolicyViz, LLC
May 2014–Present	Urban Institute, Tax and Income Supports Division and the Communications Department, Washington, DC Senior Fellow (2016–Present) Senior Research Associate (2014–2016)
April 2005–April 2014	Principal Analyst, Congressional Budget Office Long-Term Analysis Unit Microeconomic Studies Division

July 2003–March 2005 Senior Director
Partnership for New York City

Consulting, Teaching, and Other Short-Term Positions

June 2026–Present Visiting Lecturer
Cornell University
S.C. Johnson College of Business
Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management
Data Visualization—Tools, Practice, and Application

September 2017–Present Adjunct Professor
American University
School of Public Affairs
Core Principles of Data Visualization & Better Presentations

September 2007–Present Adjunct Professor
Georgetown University
McDonough School of Business
Introduction to Data Visualization (September 2014–Present)
Georgetown Public Policy Institute
Statistical Methods for Policy Analysis (September 2007–May 2010)

May 2014–December 2017 Adjunct Professor
Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)
Statistical Applications for Information Visualization

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Thoughtful Data: A Guide to Empathy and Equity in Data Communication, Columbia University Press, forthcoming 2026.

Data Visualization in Excel, CRC Press, London, UK, May 2023.

Better Data Visualizations, Columbia University Press, New York, New York, 2021.

Elevate the Debate: A Multi-Layered Approach to Communicating Your Research, editor, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., February 2020.

Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks.
Columbia University Press, New York, New York, November 2016.

Human Capital in the United States from 1975-2000: Patterns of Growth and Utilization. W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, Kalamazoo, MI (2003) (with Robert Haveman and Andrew Bershadker).

Papers and Reports

“What Would Reducing the Federal Workforce Look Like for America?” Urban Institute Brief (January 2025).

“Report on Procedures and Practices for the Equitable and Timely Provision of Data to the Public,” (November 2024) Bureau of Labor Statistics (led by Stephanie Swirsky).

“Do No Harm Guide: Global Perspectives on Equity in Research and Data,” Urban Institute Report (October 2024) (with Wesley Jenkins and Shubhangi Kumari).

“Local Impacts of Economic Development Administration Construction Investments,” Urban Institute Brief (July 2024) (with Brett Theodos, Daniel Teles, Christina Plerhoples Stacy, Christopher Davis, and Tanay Nunna).

“Bringing Data to Life: Community Data Physicalization,” Urban Institute Brief (July 2024).

“Comment Letter on the Test to Include Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in the American Community Survey,” Urban Institute Public Comment (June 2024) (with Katie Visalli).

“Evaluating EDA’s Role in Disaster Recovery and Resilience,” Urban Institute Brief (March 2024) (with Rebecca Marx, Daniel Teles, Brett Theodos, Christopher Davis, and Tanay Nunna).

“Do No Harm Guide: Crafting Equitable Data Narratives,” Urban Institute Report (February 2024) (with Alice Feng and Wesley Jenkins).

“Do No Harm Guide: Collecting, Analyzing, and Reporting Gender and Sexual Orientation Data,” Urban Institute Report (December 2023) (with Donovan Harvey, Mel Langness, Vincent Pancini, Amy Rogin, and Gabi Velasco).

“Building color palettes in your data visualization style guides.” *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association* 31, no. 2 (2024): 488-498 (January 20224) (with Maxene Graze).

“Testimony of Jonathan Schwabish before the DC State Board of Education,” (September 2023).

“The Location of Economic Development Administration Grants: EDA Program Evaluation,” Urban Institute Report (July 2023) (with Brett Theodos, Christopher Davis, Daniel Teles, Christina Plerhoples Stacy, and Tanay Nunna).

“Public Comment on Initial Proposals from the Federal Interagency Technical Working Group on Race and Ethnicity Standards for Revising OMB’s 1997 Statistical Policy Directive No. 15,” Urban Institute (April 2023) (with Rita Ko, Rekha Balu, Claire Bowen, Danielle DeRuiter-Williams, Rejane Frederick, Nancy M. Pindus, Marokey Sawo, Alena Stern, Timothy Triplett, and Sonia Torres Rodríguez).

“Share Our Strength Community of Practice Grant Case Studies,” Urban Institute Report (April 2023) (with Danielle Kwon, Poonam Gupta, Heather Hahn, and Elaine Waxman).

“Do No Harm Guide: Centering Accessibility in Data Visualization,” Urban Institute Report (December 2022) (with Susan J. Popkin and Alice Feng).

“Comment Letter on Equitable Data Engagement and Accountability,” Urban Institute Report (October 2022) (with Rekha Balu, Judah Axelrod, and Kathryn L.S. Pettit).

“Technology and Disability: The Relationship Between Broadband Access and Disability Insurance Awards,” Urban Institute Report (October 2022) (with Barbara Butrica).

“Do No Harm Guide: Additional Perspectives on Data Equity,” Urban Institute Report (September 2022) (with Alice Feng and Wesley Jenkins).

“Comment Letter on CEQ’s Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool Beta Version,” Urban Institute Report (April 2022) (with Sara McTarnaghan, Anne N. Junod, Anna Shipp, and Ajjit Narayanan).

“Categorizing and Ranking Graphs in Economics Research: The American Economic Review over the Last Century,” *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis*, 13, no. 1 (2022): 20-33 (Spring 2022).

“The Geography of Disability and Food Insecurity,” Urban Institute Brief (March 2022) (with Barbara Butrica and Stipica Mudrazija).

“Are Your Data Visualizations Racist?” *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (December 2021) (with Alice Feng).

“The Relationship Between Disability Insurance Receipt and Food Insecurity,” Boston College Center for Retirement Research at Boston College Working Paper 2021-16 (November 1, 2021), (with Barbara Butrica and Stipica Mudrazija).

“The Practice of Visual Data Communication: What Works,” *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, December 2021; 22(3):97-109. doi:10.1177/15291006211057899.

“Economic Development Administration Programs and Project Types,” Urban Institute Report (October 2021) (with Brett Theodos, Leiha Edmonds, Daniel Teles, Christina Plerhoples Stacy, Christopher Davis, Benny Docter, and Tanay Nunna).

“History and Programmatic Overview of the Economic Development Administration,” Urban Institute Report (October 2021) (with Brett Theodos, Leiha Edmonds, Daniel Teles, Christina Plerhoples Stacy, Christopher Davis, Benny Docter, and Tanay Nunna).

“The Relationship Between Disability Insurance Receipt and Food Insecurity,” Retirement and Disability Research Center Working Paper, 2021. Chestnut Hill, MA: Center for Retirement Research (with Barb Butrica and Stipica Mudrazija).

“Are There ‘Hot Spots’ of Primary Impairments Among New SSDI Awardees—and Do We Know Why?” Retirement and Disability Research Center Working Paper, 2021. Chestnut Hill, MA: Center for Retirement Research (with Jody Schimmel Hyde, Anna Hill, and Aaron R. Williams).

“Innovative Graphics for NCES Online Reports,” National Institute of Statistical Sciences Technical Expert Panel Report, January 2021 (with Daniel B. Carr, Nola du Toit, Miriah Meyer, and Leland Wilkinson).

“Do No Harm Guide: Applying Equity Awareness in Data Visualization,” Urban Institute Report (June 2021) (with Alice Feng).

- “Understanding the Local-Level Predictors of Disability Program Flows: New Adult Awards and Beneficiary Work Activity,” Retirement and Disability Research Center Working Paper, 2020. Chestnut Hill, MA: Center for Retirement Research. (with Jody Schimmel Hyde, Paul O’Leary, and Dara Lee Luca).
- “The Impact of SNAP Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Time Limit Reinstatement in Nine States,” Urban Institute Report (June 2021) (with Laura Wheaton, Tracy Vericker, Theresa Anderson, Kevin Baier, Joseph Gasper, Nathan Sick, and Kevin Werner).
- “Rethinking Economics in the Black Lives Matter Era,” Urban Institute Report (April 2021) (with Kilolo Kijakazi).
- “Applying Racial Equity Awareness in Data Visualization,” OSF Preprint (August 2020) (with Alice Feng), <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/x8tbw>.
- “Ten Guidelines for Better Tables,” *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis* 11, no. 2 (2020): 151-178 (Summer 2020).
- “Organizing the Work of Data-Driven Visual Storytelling,” in *Data-Driven Storytelling*, AK Peters, Riche, Hurter, Diakopoulos, and Carpendale, eds. (April 2018) (with Christina Elmer and Benjamin Wiederkehr).
- “Communicating Data to an Audience,” in *Data-Driven Storytelling*, AK Peters, Riche, Hurter, Diakopoulos, and Carpendale, eds. (April 2018) (with Steven Drucker, Samuel Huron, Robert Kosara, and Nicholas Diakopoulos).
- “Data Journalism in 2017: The Current State and Challenges Facing the Field Today,” Google News Lab Report (September 2017) (with Simon Rogers and Danielle Bowers).
- “Geographic Patterns in Disability Insurance Receipt: Mental Disorders in New England,” Urban Institute Research Report (June 2017).
- “Reforming the Disability Insurance Program Should Start Now: Long-Term Reform Requires Structural Change,” Urban Institute Brief (June 2017).
- “Analysis of the Impact of Expiration of Time Limit Waivers on ABAWD Participation: Literature Review and Insights from Regional Directors,” Exploratory Research Memorandum for the Food and Nutrition Service (February 2017) (with Elaine Waxman and Laura Wheaton).
- “The Social Genome Model: Estimating How Policies Affect Outcomes, Mobility and Inequality across the Life Course,” *Journal of Social Issues* 72: 656-675 (December 2016) (with Greg Acs, Steven Martin and Isabel V. Sawhill).
- “Understanding Social Security Disability Insurance: Interactions with Other Programs,” Urban Institute Brief (February 2016) (with Stephan Lindner and Pamela J. Loprest).

“Understanding Social Security Disability Programs: Diversity in Beneficiary Experiences and Needs,” Urban Institute Brief (February 2016) (with Melissa M. Favreault).

“Challenges and Choices for the New Mayor: Leveraging the Power of Open Data to Improve City Services,” Urban Institute Brief (December 2014) (with Kathryn L.S. Pettit).

“Promoting Social and Economic Mobility in Washington, DC: Challenges and Choices for the New Mayor,” Urban Institute Brief (April 2015) (with Gregory Acs and Lauren Eyster).

“Effects of a Higher Minimum Wage in the District of Columbia,” Urban Institute Research Report (July 2014) (with Austin Nichols).

“Visualizing Data: An Economist’s Guide,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Winter 2014): pp. 209-234.

“Modeling Individual Earnings in CBO’s Long-Term Microsimulation Model,” Congressional Budget Office Working Paper No. 2013-04 (June 4, 2013).

“The Future of Social Security Disability Insurance,” *Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco Economic Letter*, June 24, 2013 (with Mary C. Daly and Brian Lucking).

“Subtle Sources of Bias and Error,” in *Bad Data Handbook*, Q. Ethan McCallum, ed., O’Reilly publishing, November 2012.

Policy Options for the Social Security Disability Insurance Program. Congressional Budget Office (July 2012).

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Congressional Budget Office (April 2012) (with Molly Dahl, Kathleen FitzGerald, and Emily Holcombe).

“The Earned Income Tax Credit and Expected social Security Retirement Benefits Among Low-Income Women,” Congressional Budget Office Working Paper No. 2012-06 (March 2012) (with Molly Dahl, Thomas DeLeire, and Timothy Smeeding).

A Description of the Immigrant Population: An Update. Congressional Budget Office (June 2011) (with Nabeel Alsalam).

“Identifying Rates of Emigration in the U.S. using Administrative Earnings Records,” *International Journal of Population Research* (Summer 2011).

Migrants’ Remittances and Related Flows. Congressional Budget Office (February 2011) (with Robert Shackleton).

“Year-to-Year Variability in Workers Earnings and in Household Incomes: Estimates from Administrative Data,” *Journal of Human Resources* Vol. 46, No. 1 (Winter 2011) (with Molly Dahl and Thomas DeLeire).

“The Long-Term Budget Outlook in the United States and the Role of Health Care Entitlements,” *National Tax Journal* Vol. 63 (June 2010): 285-305 (with Joyce Manchester).

Changes in the Distribution of Workers' Annual Earnings Between 1979 and 2007. Congressional Budget Office (October 2009) (with Molly Dahl).

"Stepping Stone or Dead End? The Effect of the EITC on Earnings Growth," *National Tax Journal*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (June 2009): 329-346 (with Thomas DeLeire and Molly Dahl).

CBO's Long-Term Model: An Overview. Congressional Budget Office Background Paper (June 2009) (with others).

"Measurement Error in the SIPP: Evidence from Administrative Matched Records," *Journal of Economic and Social Measurement*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2007) (with Julian Cristia); Congressional Budget Office Working Paper 2007-03 (January).

Assigning Education Status in CBO's Long-Term Microsimulation Model. Congressional Budget Office Background Paper (October 2008).

Recent Trends in the Variability of Individual Earnings and Household Income. Congressional Budget Office (June 2008) (with Thomas DeLeire and Molly Dahl).

"Can America Afford to Get Sick?" *National Tax Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (September 2007): 407-418 (with Julie Topoleski and Ignez Tristao).

Trends in Earnings Variability Over the Past 20 Years. Congressional Budget Office, April 2007 (with Thomas DeLeire and Molly Dahl).

"Take a Penny, Leave a Penny: The Propensity to Round Earnings in Survey Data," *Journal of Economic and Social Measurement*, Vol. 32, No. 2-3 (2007): 93-111.

"Social Security Individual Accounts and the Impact on Low Earners," *Journal of Pension Economics and Finance*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2008) (with Julie Topoleski).

"Estimating Employment Spillover Effects In New York City with an Application to The Stock Transfer Tax," *Public Finance Review*, Vol. 33 (November 2005): 663-689.

Earnings Inequality and High Earners: Changes During and after the Stock Market Boom of the 1990s. Congressional Budget Office Working Paper 2006-06 (April 2006).

"Do youth nonmarital childbearing choices reflect income and relationship expectations?" *Journal of Population Economics*, Vol. 20 (January 2007): 73-100 (with Barbara Wolfe, Robert Haveman and Karen Pence).

Projecting Labor Force Participation and Earnings in CBO's Long-Term Microsimulation Model. Congressional Budget Office Background Paper (October 2006) (with Amy Rehder Harris and John Sabelhaus).

"Income Distribution and Social Expenditures: A Cross-National Perspective," In *The Distributional Effects of Government Spending and Taxation*, Dimitri Papadimitriou, ed., New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2006) (with Timothy M. Smeeding and Lars Osberg).

"Regulating Underground Industry: An Economic Analysis of Sports Betting," *New York State Economic Review* (Fall 2005): 65-77.

"New Job and Business Growth among Recent Immigrants: Rising Self-Employment in New York City," *Regional Labor Review* (Fall 2005) (with Jane E. Lynch): 33-44.

"Employment Spillover Effects in New York City with an Application to the Stock Transfer Tax," *Public Finance Review* (Fall 2005): 663-689.

"Insurance Coverage for New York City in an Age of Terrorist Risk," In *Resilient City: The Economic Impact of 9/11*, Howard Chernick, ed., New York: Russell Sage Foundation (August 2005) (with Joshua Chang).

Hidden Revenue: Regulating the Underground Economy of Sports Betting. Partnership for New York City Issue Brief No. 3 (February 2005) (with Michael Simas).

The Stock Transfer Tax and New York City: Potential Employment Effects. Partnership for New York City Issue Brief No. 2 (December 2004).

New York City and Terrorism Insurance in a Post-9/11 World. Partnership for New York City Issue Brief No. 1 (September 2004) (with Joshua Chang).

"Accounting for the wage-benefit tradeoff using the ECI," *Monthly Labor Review* (September 2004): 26-41.

"Income Distribution and Public Social Expenditure: Theories, Effects, and Evidence," In *Social Inequality*, Kathryn Neckerman, ed., New York: Russell Sage Foundation (2004) (with Lars Osberg and Timothy M. Smeeding).

Income Distribution and Social Expenditures: A Cross-National Perspective, Luxembourg Income Study Working Paper No. 350. Center for Policy Research, Syracuse, NY: Luxembourg Income Study (May 2003) (with Timothy M. Smeeding and Lars Osberg).

"Has Macroeconomic Performance Regained its Antipoverty Bite?" *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 18(4) (2000): 415-427 (with Robert Haveman).

"Economic growth and poverty: A return to normalcy?" *Focus*, Institute for Research on Poverty publication, 20(2) (1999): 1-7 (with Robert Haveman).

PRESENTATIONS

2025 The Nature Conservancy, Arlington, VA and Mexico City, Mexico
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (virtual)
Data Visualization Society Outlier Conference (virtual)
Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (virtual)
NERA (virtual)
Academy Health (virtual)
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (virtual)

2024	The Nature Conservancy, Arlington, VA and Mexico City, Mexico Virginia Department of Health, Richmond, VA Congressional Research Service, Washington, DC Eli Lilly, Indianapolis, IN Community College of Spokane, Spokane, WA Ohio State University, Columbus, OH Population Reference Bureau (virtual) American Institute for Boys and Men (virtual) Council for Community and Economic Research (virtual) Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (virtual) Detroit Future City (virtual) Financial Conduct Authority (virtual) Academy Health (virtual)
2023	Virginia Department of Health Visual Communication Symposium, Rice University Congressional Research Service Bay Area Regional Inequities Initiative Data Visualization DC Meetup Group
2022	University of Iowa Tippie College of Business Data Visualization Society Outlier Conference Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Department of Health and Human Services University of Pittsburgh Horizon Health Network (Halifax, Canada)
2021	SELC Applying Racial Equity Awareness in Data Visualization (virtual) Washington Evaluators (virtual) People Analytics World Conference (virtual) Data Visualization New York City Meetup (virtual) Data Visualization Dallas-Fort Worth Meetup (virtual) Columbia University (virtual) South Big Data Hub (virtual) Freddie Mac (virtual) University of California-Irvine (virtual) Lisbon (Portugal) Data Visualization Meetup (virtual) Creative ProWeek (virtual) United Way of Houston (virtual) 20th Annual Social Equity Leadership Conference (virtual) Apolitical: An Introduction to Inclusive Data Practices (virtual) US Bureau of the Census (virtual) Federal Reserve Board Tableau Day (virtual) University of Pittsburgh (virtual) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (virtual) USAID (virtual)
2020	IEEEVIS Annual Conference (virtual) AARP (virtual)

NABE Annual Conference (virtual)
Data Visualization New York Meetup (virtual)
University of Minnesota (virtual)
JMP (virtual)
DataVizLive conference (virtual)
Denver University, Denver, CO
University of Denver, Denver, CO
Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

2019 Human Capital Institute, Miami, FL
Graphic Hunters, Amsterdam, Netherlands
University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada
Population Association of America, Austin, TX
Oracle, San Francisco, CA

SERVICE

Policy Service

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Policy Council, 2024-present
Bureau of Labor Statistics Data Users Advisory Committee, 2020-2025
World Bank Group Gender Data Portal Advocacy Advisory Group Meeting, 2020-2022
VisComm Workshop co-organizer, 2021-2023, 2025-2026
Co-Organizer, Data Visualization DC Meetup Group, 2013-2015
President, Society of Government Economists, 2005-2006

Journal Referee

Economic Development Quarterly
IEEE Computer Graphics and Applications
Journal of Economic Inequality
Journal of Economic and Social Measurement
Journal of Human Resources
Journal of Policy Analysis and Management
Journal of Population Economics
Review of Income and Wealth
Social Security Bulletin