

# Elizabeth Lower-Basch

## Gray Cat Policy



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### Profile

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Strategic policy analyst and advocate with 25+ years of experience influencing federal and state policy on public benefits, economic mobility, and immigrant access to supports. Proven track record shaping regulatory and legislative outcomes and building the coalitions that make change possible. Skilled at rapid-response analysis of complex federal actions and their implications for states, localities, and the families they serve. Committed to equity-centered policy that respects the dignity of the people programs serve.

#### Policy areas of expertise include:

- Public benefit programs (TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, EITC/CTC, housing) with a focus on cross-program alignment, reducing administrative burden, and improving payment accuracy without undermining access
- Work requirements across programs: planning for implementation, creating and analyzing metrics for monitoring, and mitigating harm for families and agencies
- Immigrant inclusion and mixed-status family access to benefits
- Benefit cliffs, subsidized employment, and TANF-workforce coordination

### Services

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#### Policy Analysis, Monitoring and Communications

- Analyze complex federal and state policies to identify requirements, opportunities and risks.
- Design and implement systems for monitoring rapidly evolving policy landscapes, including AI-assisted tools for monitoring proposed rules, state legislation, and administrative actions.
- Create accessible materials that explain technical policies to diverse audiences, including testimony, regulatory comments, presentations and trainings, policy manuals, and articles, reports and fact sheets.

#### Advocacy Campaigns and Coalitions

- Navigate and influence regulatory and legislative processes.
- Connect organizations to advocacy ecosystem, allowing them to contribute in the most effective ways.
- Develop high-functioning collaborations and coalitions, including across sectors, to advance policy goals.
- Mentor staff in developing and implementing advocacy strategies.

#### Strategic Advisory and Technical Assistance

- Support state and local agencies in modernizing and improving benefit delivery systems.
- Analyze rapidly changing federal administrative and regulatory actions and their implications for state programs and the families they serve.
- Identify opportunities based on analysis of potential funding streams, program requirements and opportunities for flexibilities or waivers.
- Guide program design and implementation based on research on best practices and lessons learned from other jurisdictions and/or other programs.
- Incorporate equity in policy design and implementation, including through stakeholder engagement.

## Professional Experience

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### **GRAY CAT POLICY, Founder and Lead Consultant (October 2024-)**

Provide strategic policy advice, technical assistance, and rapid-response analysis to national and state-based organizations on economic mobility, public benefits, and immigrant access to supports.

- As senior advisor to Protecting Immigrant Families and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, track and analyze federal administrative changes affecting immigrant and mixed-status families' access to benefits, data sharing demands, and their implications for states, localities and service providers.
- Advise on policy responses to federal changes affecting SNAP and Medicaid access, including work requirements and immigrant restrictions.
- Conduct policy analysis on federal rental assistance programs and economic mobility, including formal comments on HUD proposed rulemaking on time limits and work requirements.
- Advise on benefit cliff mitigation strategies, drawing on research on how program phase-outs affect employment and earnings trajectories for families with low incomes.
- Provide technical assistance on use of TANF funds in Mississippi.

### **CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY (CLASP)**

*National, nonpartisan, anti-poverty nonprofit advancing policy solutions for people with low incomes.*

#### **Deputy Executive Director for Policy, 2022-2024**

#### **Director, Income and Work Supports, 2013-2022**

#### **Senior Policy Analyst, 2006 – 2013**

- Developed and led innovative cross-organization areas of work, including incorporating the expertise of people with lived experience of poverty into policy development, feedback and advocacy as part of our racial and gender equity commitment. Designed scenario planning process to identify partnerships, research and other activities to undertake based on emerging opportunities and challenges.
- Drew on lessons from the Work Support Strategies initiative, a multi-state technical assistance project transforming delivery of TANF, SNAP, child care, and Medicaid, to design and lead a 15-state learning community of advocates focused on administrative reform. Results included improved client communications, reduced administrative burden, better use of technology, and increased enrollment. Provided technical assistance to diverse state and county agencies on federal policies, requirements and flexibilities, data sharing, performance measurement, best practices from other states, process mapping, and rapid cycle testing to improve access, support dignity and remove administrative burden.
- Together with partners at CLASP and the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), conceived, launched and implemented the multi-sector [Protecting Immigrant Families \(PIF\)](#) campaign building a coalition to protect low-income immigrant families' access to SNAP, Medicaid and other benefits. Set ambitious goals for both quality and quantity of comments on the public charge proposed rule, resulting in over 260,000 comments. Developed effective collaboration structures that overcame previous tensions across sectors and competing organizational demands. Transitioned PIF into an independent, ongoing coalition.
- As appointed member of U.S. Department of Agriculture's Equity Commission, educated fellow members on systemic barriers to access to nutrition programs for communities of color. Developed actionable recommendations that would have meaningful and lasting impact that were unanimously included in report. Led Income and Work Supports team to identify racial equity as a core goal of our work and to develop the knowledge and self-awareness needed to speak about racism in public benefits programs.
- Identified and championed opportunities to use subsidized employment as an economic mobility tool. During the Great Recession, identified that states were leaving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Emergency Fund money on the table. Real-time research and intensive technical assistance led to states drawing down the full \$5 billion, twice as much as the Congressional Budget Office originally estimated. Resulted in families receiving cash assistance and more than 260,000 low-income parents and youth being hired in subsidized jobs.

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PLANNING AND EVALUATION (ASPE)**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Policy Analyst (1996 - 2006)**

- Assessed proposed TANF and job training policies to support senior officials across administrations. Analyzed expected effects on families and made recommendations for improving program effectiveness.
- Synthesized research on AFDC waivers and TANF "leaver" studies, including first analysis of differential outcomes for Black and Latino/a parents leaving cash assistance.
- Led Congressionally mandated study of TANF outcome and performance measures, including review of the research literature and implications for program accountability.

## **Education**

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**Master of Public Policy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University**

Kennedy Fellow; Thesis: Employment in the Health Care Industry as an Economic Resource for Boston

**Bachelor of Arts, Yale University**

Phi Beta Kappa, Magna cum laude and with Distinction in History.

## **Selected Publications**

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### **RECENT WORK**

- Schwartz and Lower-Basch, [Executive Action Spotlight](#), Protecting Immigrant Families, 2026.
- Lower-Basch, [Work Requirement in H.R. 1 \(OBBBA\) as Enacted](#), Updated 2026.
- Lower-Basch, [Five reasons states should be planning for Medicaid and SNAP work requirements together](#), 2025.
- Danker, Gonzales, Lower-Basch, and Rachamalla, [House Republican Reconciliation Bill Takes Away Health Coverage, Food Assistance, Tax Credits from Millions of Immigrants and Their Families](#), CBPP, 2025.

### **EARLIER PUBLICATIONS**

- Lower-Basch and Mehta, [Putting the Pieces Together for Families with Young Children: Aligning State HHS, Nutrition, Child Care, and Paid Family Leave](#), CLASP, 2023.
- Lower-Basch and Fairbanks, [Understanding State Contexts for Benefit Administration](#), CLASP, 2021.
- Lower-Basch, [Fight Poverty, Hunger and Health Care Needs by Removing Barriers to Program Access](#), CLASP, 2020.
- Lower-Basch, [Improving Access, Cutting Red Tape](#), APHSA Policy and Practice, 2017.
- Lower-Basch and Schmit, [TANF and the First Year of Life: Making a Difference at a Pivotal Moment](#), CLASP, 2015.
- Lower-Basch and Dorn, [Moving to 21st Century Public Benefits: Emerging Options, Great Promise, and Key Challenges](#), Coalition for Access and Opportunity, 2012.
- Pavetti, Schott and Lower-Basch, [Creating Subsidized Employment Opportunities for Low-Income Parents: The Legacy of the TANF Emergency Fund](#), CLASP and CBPP, 2011.
- Lower-Basch, [Guide to Use of TANF and MOE Funds](#), CLASP, 2011.
- Lower-Basch and Greenberg, [Single Mothers in the Era of Welfare Reform](#), Labor and Employment Relations Association, 2009.
- Lower-Basch, [Leavers and Diversion Studies: Preliminary analysis of racial differences in caseload trends and leaver outcomes](#), ASPE, 2000.