

David C. Wittenburg, Ph.D.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nationally recognized expert in disability policy, employment, and human services systems with more than two decades directing large-scale federal demonstrations and systems-change initiatives. Has overseen portfolios of \$50–\$100 million spanning SSA, NIDILRR, RSA, and state agencies, led multidisciplinary teams of more than 100 staff, and guided organizational strategy, restructuring, and business development at Westat and Mathematica. A trusted advisor to federal and state leaders, known for translating complex evidence into actionable policy and practice that strengthens inclusion, employment, and outcomes for people with disabilities. National influence includes testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives and service on two National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) committees.

CORE EXPERTISE AND SKILLS

Disability Policy & Systems Transformation • Organizational Leadership • Grant & Portfolio Management • Federal & State Partnerships • Program Evaluation & Research Design • Business Development • SSI/SSDI & Disability Benefits Policy • Competitive Integrated Employment • Child, Youth & Foster Care Policy • Workforce Development & Retention

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Syracuse University | 1997

B.A., Economics, Hobart and William Smith Colleges | 1991

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Wittenburg Consulting

Strategic Advisor & Consultant

March 2026 – Present

- Providing strategic consulting and advisory services in disability policy, employment, and human services systems, including program evaluation design, policy analysis, and organizational strategy for federal, state, and foundation clients.

Westat

Vice President and Practice Director, Social Policy

May 2024 – March 2026

- Led a multidisciplinary organization spanning disability, employment, and human services research and technical assistance, with portfolio backlog of up to \$60 million across five program areas.
- Managed a multidisciplinary team of approximately 120 staff across five program areas, providing direct oversight to 20+ senior staff and project leaders.
- Directed a major internal reorganization to strengthen alignment across portfolio areas, clarify leadership roles, and support growth.
- Built and implemented systems to track business development, staffing, and quality review, improving management of proposals, project oversight, and organizational capacity.
- Selected roles include Senior Advisor, Disability Innovation Fund (RSA), supporting model demonstration projects that transition youth and adults with disabilities to competitive integrated employment. As a corporate officer, provided quality oversight across multiple human service related projects.

Mathematica

Senior Fellow

2022 – 2024

Senior Director, Disability Business Development & Area Director

2014 – 2022

Senior Researcher

2005 – 2014

- Directed a national disability research and policy portfolio with backlog of \$50–\$100 million, spanning SSA, NIDILRR, RSA, and other federal partners.
- Led business development and proposal efforts, including awards up to \$20–\$30 million and grant portfolios up to \$5 million.
- Expanded disability portfolio into state and foundation partnerships, including the California Youth Behavioral Health Initiative and Peterson Foundation-funded initiatives, while advising on strategy, business development, and cross-sector client engagement.
- Advanced from researcher to project director on major SSA demonstrations, building the track record and national reputation leading to the Disability Area Director role.
- Developed specialized expertise in transition-age youth with disabilities through the Youth Transition Demonstration and related projects, contributing research and policy insights that shaped federal and state approaches to youth transition.

Selected Projects

- Project Director, RETAIN (Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network) Evaluation (SSA and U.S. Department of Labor): Directed 6-year evaluation of early intervention strategies to support labor force retention following injury or illness, spanning multiple states across two demonstration phases.
- Project Director, California Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) Evaluation (State of California, 2023–2024): Led evaluation of a \$4.7 billion, five-year initiative to reimagine California’s youth behavioral health ecosystem. Work included directing a developmental evaluation spanning retrospective implementation review, rapid-cycle evaluation, training and technical assistance, and development of a Results-Based Accountability dashboard.
- Project Director, Promoting Opportunity Demonstration (SSA): Led a 5-year randomized controlled trial examining work incentives and benefit simplification for 10,000+ disability beneficiaries, which was one of the largest SSA employment demonstrations of its kind.

The Urban Institute

Senior Research Associate

2000 – 2005

- Conducted disability, income support, and workforce policy research and evaluation for SSA, the U.S. Department of Education, and USDA, with projects spanning national disability statistics, child SSI transitions, and an 18-state food program evaluation.

The Lewin Group

Senior Associate

1997 – 2000

- Conducted health, disability, and workforce policy analysis and program evaluation for SSA, AARP, and DOL, with projects covering Unemployment Insurance reciprocity trends and disability economics and employment policy.

LEADERSHIP, SERVICE, AND RECOGNITION

- Testified before the Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives (2011) on SSI benefits for children.
- Member, Committee on Opportunities for Improving Programs and Services for Children with Disabilities, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) (2017–2018).
- Member, Standing Committee of Medical and Vocational Experts for SSA’s Disability Programs, Health and Medicine Division, NASEM (2018–2024).
- Board Co-Chair, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Mercer-Burlington County (2020–2024); received a New Jersey Changemaker Award for leadership advancing outcomes for children and families, including those with disabilities.
- Editorial Board Member, Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation (2004–present).

Publications, reports, presentations, testimony, and professional activities available upon request.