Mahika Rangnekar

Senior Associate
Social Policy Research Associates

Mahika brings deep expertise in culturally responsive evaluation that centers social, racial, and economic justice. She has led mixed-methods research across many projects, including conducting administrative data collection efforts, social network analyses (SNAs), and interviews and focus groups with program participants, funders and grantmakers, and employer and industry partners; and facilitating strategic conversations about job quality and economic mobility through Communities of Practice. Currently, she serves as the Project Director for Workforce Matters' Fund for Workforce Equity Evaluation, a pooled funding initiative that supports grantees working to center workers and learners of color in designing or implementing workforce policies and programs. Mahika has also served as a project lead, key analyst, and writer on several workforce and human services evaluations and technical assistance projects designed to support individuals in accessing meaningful career pathways. For example, for the *English Learner Technical Assistance and Evaluation* she works with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to support six California organizations developing Integrated Education and Training (IET) models to enhance critical job skills that English Language Learners (ELLs) need to enter careers in growing local industries. She also co-authored the *Best Practices in SNAP Employment and Training Programs: 2016-2020* report, which involved an extensive review of the relevant research literature on participant outcomes from the SNAP E&T program and other workforce development programs that serve individuals from low-income households. Prior to joining SPR, Mahika served as an Eligibility Worker in Marin County and has a working knowledge of SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid program policies and operations.

EDUCATION & WORK EXPERIENCE

M.P.A., Evans School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Washington, 2019

M.P.H., Department of Global Health, University of Washington, 2019

B.A., Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley, 2013

B.A., Spanish Language and Literature, University of California, Berkeley, 2013

2023 – present   ***Senior Associate***
Social Policy Research Associates

2019 – 2022   ***Associate***
Social Policy Research Associates

2018   ***Policy Analyst***
Sacred Valley Health

2017 – 2018   ***Graduate Teaching Assistant***
University of Washington

2017	***Program Evaluator***
	Girls, Inc. of Alameda County
2013 – 2016	***Eligibility Worker II Bilingual***
	Marin County Health and Human Services

SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

Areas of expertise:

- Workforce system delivery
- Economic mobility
- Public assistance programs (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, Medicare, SSI)
- Public health initiatives

Research methods and approaches:

- Mixed methods research
- Community-based participatory research
- Data collection, cleaning, and analysis
- Program and policy analysis
- Technical assistance and strategic learning

REPRESENTATIVE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Workforce Research and Evaluation and Workforce Technical Assistance

California Apprenticeship Initiative Technical Assistance and Evaluation (2016-2020). On behalf of the California Community College Chancellors Office (CCCCO), SPR conducted a developmental evaluation of the California Apprenticeship Initiative (CAI) 2016 grantees and provided multi-modal technical assistance to all of the (approximately 75) current CAI grantees who were implementing new and innovative apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.

TA Provider: Identify and disseminate promising practices in real-time; stay connected to the grantee community through an online of a Community of Practice, biannual grantee convenings, regular cohort calls, and a monthly newsletter; and develop tools and materials that assist stakeholders in advancing apprenticeship (factsheets, webinars, briefs).

English Learner Technical Assistance and Evaluation (2021-2022). The International Rescue Committee (IRC) subcontracted Social Policy Research Associates to support a set of individual and group-based technical assistance (TA) to six organizations in California that are developing Integrated Education and Training (IET) models to enhance critical job skills that ELLs need to enter careers in growing local industries. This TA was responsive and aligned with advancing the California's Employment Development Department (EDD)'s goal of strengthening workforce services to English language learners. SPR helped develop WIOA Title I/Title II partnerships, reviewed grantee QPRs to document progress and identify opportunities for technical assistance, facilitated convenings and communications, led data validation workshops (CalJOBS and TOPSpro), and provided one-on-one TA support to the pilot sites.

valuation and Data Validation Analyst. Support data validation sessions, provide individual technical assistance to pilots, review CalJOBS and TOPSpro data to inform pilot strategies, conduct qualitative data collection and analyses, and report and disseminate findings.

English Language Learner (ELL) Co-Enrollment Navigator Pilot Program (2019-2021). The California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) contracted with the California

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Workforce Association (CWA) and SPR to examine the implementation of the ELL Co-Enrollment Pilot Program across four grantees in California. The evaluation utilized mixed-methods and included an implementation and an outcomes study. Its primary objective was to provide in-depth information about how pilots projects implemented strategies to co-enroll ELL participants in WIOA Title I and WIOA Title II services.

Data Validation Analyst: Evaluation and Data Validation Analyst. Support data validation sessions, provide individual technical assistance to pilots, review CalJOBS and TOPSpro data to inform pilot strategies, conduct qualitative data collection and analyses, and report and disseminate findings.

Fund for Workforce Equity Evaluation (2022-2027). SPR is the evaluation and learning partner for the Fund for Workforce Equity, a Workforce Matters initiative that funds grantees working to center workers and learners of color in designing and implementing workforce policies and programs. Evaluation activities include revising the Fund's theory of change, interviewing key grantees and Fund partners, facilitating participant focus groups, administering a grantee survey, attending Learning Community meetings, and developing interim and final evaluation reports.

Project Director: Oversee all activities associated with the project, including management, design, data collection and analysis, and production of written deliverables.

San Francisco One Stop Operator (2018-2022). As the One Stop Operator for the City and County of San Francisco, SPR provided partner coordination and oversight of local WIOA implementation as specified through the Local and Regional WIOA Plans and partner MOUs. Other tasks included completing the Comprehensive Access Point's Hallmarks of Excellence Certification, developing a Continuous Improvement Plan, providing technical assistance and training to WIOA system partners, and liaising with the Workforce Investment Board of San Francisco (WISF) and its staff.

TA Provider: Coordinate and facilitate bi-monthly meetings for the WIOA Partners team and support its progress on its WIOA Action Plan. Manage data for partner pilot activities.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Study (2017-2021). SPR worked with Mathematica, AIR, and ideas42 to study the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. The long-term evaluation component of the study focused on using knowledge gained from previous evidence to design a long-term impact and implementation study of the program (to be conducted at a future date). SPR led the development of an evidence scan to identify knowledge gaps to inform the design of a long-term evaluation, and led data collection activities for the behavioral intervention study.

Project Manager: Oversee day-to-day project administration, support data collection activities by developing a data tracking tool, assist with data management and analysis, and serve as primary contact for participating state agencies.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Battle Creek Evaluation and Technical Assistance (2021-2024). This implementation and outcomes evaluation served multiple W.K. Kellogg Foundation workforce development grants. Grantees improved access to and utilization of employment and training services in Battle Creek, Michigan by low-income communities, women, and communities of color, and expanded economic development services to small and medium-sized businesses. The evaluation included an implementation study (site visits, document reviews, observations) and an outcomes study based on administrative data from the program, social

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network analysis, and wage data. The project also included a significant technical assistance component, focused on building the collaborative workforce system in Battle Creek.

> *Social Network Analysis Lead and Cohort Study Lead.* Oversee social network survey data collection, analysis, and reporting; oversee the participant cohort study, including design, data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Worker Advancement Study (2020-2021). SPR conducted a peer benchmarking study for an Undisclosed Client's educational assistance program that it provides to employers. The study included conducting a knowledge review on worker advancement strategies, conducting stakeholder interviews, creating a benchmarking rubric, and then assessing the program.

> *Qualitative Data Analyst and Writer:* Analyze data from interviews with employers and subject matter experts and produce and present a Benchmarking Report.

Economic Mobility

Marin Guaranteed Income Pilot Evaluation (2021-2024). MOMentum is a 2-year pilot that engaged 125 mothers from four diverse communities in Marin and provided $1,000 per month for 24 months. In keeping with the principles of guaranteed income, the cash was unrestricted and unconditional. MOMentum was a collaborative partnership that included the County of Marin, non-profit organizations, and an Advisory Committee and four workgroups (Waiver, Communications, Evaluation, and Opportunity Fund). Over the course of the project, qualitative and quantitative data was collected to assess outcomes and to support policy advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

> *Qualitative Data Analyst*: Support evaluation design, data collection and analysis, and dissemination and reporting.

San Francisco Guaranteed Care Income Evaluation (2024-2025). SPR is evaluating a 1-year guaranteed income program providing $2,000 per month to 10 low-income single mothers residing in San Francisco who are at risk of criminalization and/or losing their children. Over the course of the evaluation, the SPR study team will support the development of a pilot logic model, train program staff to conduct pre- and post-program interviews with all 10 participants, analyze interview data, facilitate a meaning making session with participants, and produce a final report.

> *Qualitative Data Lead*: Support evaluation design, data collection and analysis, and dissemination and reporting.

Sobrato Economic Mobility (2022-2023). SPR worked with Sobrato Philanthropies to assess and understand how equity was centered within the Silicon Valley Programs and to bring its three Economic Mobility (EM) portfolios and the Sobrato Center for Nonprofits (SCNP) together under an aligned framework of "Economic Mobility."

> *Co-Project Director.* Oversee all activities associated with the project, including client communication, budgeting, data collection, facilitation, and development of final deliverables.

Sonoma County First 5 Guaranteed Income Pilot Evaluation (2022-2024). This 2.5-year evaluation aims to understand outcomes related to economic and social outcomes for low-income residents of Sonoma County, participating in a pilot guaranteed income program, who receive

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$500 monthly for 24 months. The purpose of the evaluation is to understand the economic and social outcomes associated with the implementation of the pilot, using a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews, pre-post quantitative survey, and PhotoVoice. Findings are anticipated to support policy advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

Data Collection Analyst: Supported evaluation design, data collection and analysis, and dissemination and reporting.

Community and Public Health

Cedars-Sinai Community Benefit Giving Office (CBGO) Impact Evaluation (2022-2023). SPR conducted an impact evaluation to assess the influence of Cedars-Sinai's grantmaking investment in improving access to care, addressing social determinants of health, and promoting civic engagement to improve the health status of the communities they serve. This involved conducting an inventory and assessment of available grantee data and grantee interviews to understand the impact of Cedars-Sinai's grantmaking in each of its three priority giving areas. Final deliverables included a presentation, report, and case studies of each funding priority area (Access to Care, Civic Engagement, and Social Determinants of Health).

Project Manager: Oversee day-to-day project administration, data collection and analysis activities, and production of final deliverables.

Evaluation of the Cedars-Sinai Health Equity Grant Program (2021-2022). In January 2021, Cedars-Sinai Community Benefit Giving Office (CBGO) awarded 12-month grants through their newly launched Health Equity Grant Program to 72 organizations focused on equitable systems change to improve health outcomes. SPR's evaluation of this program includes grantee portfolio/document review, in-depth interviews with all 72 grantees, and an organizational capacity for health equity survey to assess grantees activities and outcomes of their work, as well as recommendations to strengthen the program for future funding.

Project Manager: Oversee day-to-day project administration, data collection and analysis activities, and production of final deliverables.

Evaluation of the NoVo Foundation's Move to End Violence (2017-2022). This ten-year initiative sponsored by the NoVo Foundation worked toward ending violence against women and girls through a series of leadership development convening, broken up across five two-year cohorts. The evaluation collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data before and after each leadership convening to assist with ongoing improvements to programming and documenting an overarching narrative of the program's evolution.

Mixed-Methods Analyst: Design data collection plan, including instruments; administer surveys; facilitate interview data collection; analyze data, including social network analysis; contribute to final reports.

Evaluation of the Exemplary Advocate Cohort (2018-2023). This five-year initiative sponsored by the Missouri Foundation for Health strengthened the field of health advocacy in Missouri by developing leadership and building the capacity of 22 advocates and their organizations to engage in efforts to affect policy, systems, and environment change to improve the health and well-being of Missourians. This evaluation documented and assessed cohort participants' growth and their interactions throughout the initiative as well as their collective influence on the health

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policy environment in the state. SPR utilized a complementary set of qualitative and quantitative methods to address key evaluation questions.

Quantitative Analyst: Support social media and news data collection and analysis and report findings to client.

RWJF Build Healthy Places Network (BHPN) (2019-2021). BHPN promoted cross-sector collaboration to advance equity and improve the health and well-being of neighborhoods across the country. This one-year formative evaluation provided an in-depth picture of BHPN's reach and highlighted opportunities to strengthen its influence; captured how BHPN advanced change in a complex system and strengthened the broader field's capacity to support meaningful change; and identified external factors that facilitated or impeded BHPN's progress.

Mixed-Methods Analyst: Support a social media and quantitative analysis to enhance BHPN's understanding of its influence via social media; administer stakeholder surveys to collect high-level feedback on BHPN resources; and conduct stakeholder interviews to understand stakeholders' experience in the network.

Human Services

AARP SNAP Policy Options to Increase Access for Older Adults (2022). SPR examined available evidence and consulted with policy experts to recommend policy options that could be successfully adopted at the federal level to improve older adult SNAP enrollment outcomes, such as greater caseloads, reduced churn, and increased benefit amounts. Our starting point was the set of recommendations we issued in our previous report (Levin et al., 2020). We produced an internal white paper and draft external white paper for AARP to publish in preparation for education around the 2023 Farm Bill.

Policy Analyst: Support research of various policy options and develop sections of the white paper.

Best Practices in SNAP Employment and Training Programs: 2016-2020 (2020-2021). This project built on the first SNAP E&T Best Practices Project (completed by SPR in 2015) that assessed literature and studies from the beginning of the SNAP E&T program through 2015. This second iteration of the project also involved an extensive review of the relevant research literature on participant outcomes from the SNAP E&T program and other workforce development programs that serve individuals from low-income households. The project included an annotated literature review and final report that provided recommendations about the components that FNS should promote and includes information about the research material that led to these recommendations.

Literature Review Analyst: Conduct literature review on promising strategies in workforce development for low-income populations and communities of color, and present findings to FNS.

Building Equity in Food and Nutrition Research (2023-2025). The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) commissioned this study to identify opportunities to embed equitable practices into FNS research processes, with a focus on stakeholder engagement. SPR will assess the agency's current research practices, identify and assess best practices for equitable research through stakeholder engagement, and develop a roadmap for incorporating an equity lens in FNS research.

Assessing Current FNS Research Practices Lead: Oversee document review of FNS research practices, identify research frameworks grounded in equity-focused practices, and oversee interviews with federal staff.

California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Racial Equity and Implicit Bias (REIB) Evaluation (2023-2024). California Assembly Bill 135 – Section 44 mandates a statewide training and resources to execute and support the intentional shift to a trauma-informed, anti-racist, anti-stigma, and implicit bias-aware culture in the CalWORKs and CalFresh programs. SPR has been hired as a subcontractor by Anavo Solutions to evaluate this REIB Statewide Initiative and has documented and reviewed the initiative's progress to date, participated in statewide workgroup efforts, identified administrative data useful for the evaluation, assessed REIB trainings, identified and collected feedback from both training participants (county staff) and program participants (participants of the CalFresh and CalWORKs programs), and developed an evaluation design and impact feasibility study report.

Project Manager and Mixed-Methods Data Collection Lead: Oversee all activities associated with the project, including management, design, data collection and analysis, and production of written deliverables.

National Council on Aging (NCOA): Study of Public Benefits and Older Adults' Well-Being (2019-2020). NCOA engaged SPR to study the effects of enrollment in public benefit programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicare Savings Programs-MSP, Low Income Subsidy-LIS, and Medicaid, on older adults' well-being. Study participants were recruited from a select number of Benefit Enrollment Centers (BECs) across the United States. The study captured differences in outcomes between the moment of applying for one of these benefit programs and during a six-month follow-up period using several validated measures of well-being, including measurements of physical, medical, mental, and financial well-being.

Quantitative Data Analyst and Site Liaison: Support data collection, management, and analysis; serve as liaison for Benefit Enrollment Centers participating in recruitment efforts.

Understanding States' SNAP Customer Service Strategies (2022-2025)*.* This FNS study increases knowledge of existing SNAP customer service strategies and approaches to monitoring them. By reviewing current literature on customer service, profiling varied approaches used in case study States, and highlighting lessons learned and promising practices, this study provides a greater understanding of how States approach customer service in SNAP and how such efforts could be strengthened further. The study utilizes four main research methods: a comprehensive literature review; a document and data systems review; interviews with SNAP staff and stakeholders in 9 States; and observations of staff interactions with customer service systems.

Literature Review Lead and Site Liaison: Oversee literature review and support evaluation design, data collection and analysis, and dissemination and reporting.

Community College and Career Technical Education

Bay Area K-16 Collaborative (2022-2023). The Bay Area K-16 Collaborative was awarded a Planning Grant from the California Regional K-16 Education Collaborative Grant Program and submitted a full implementation proposal in Fall 2023. The partners met regularly since March 2022 to create the foundation for this collaboration. As the backbone organization, SPR supported leadership, governance, strategy and implementation planning for the larger region, as

well as more in-depth support in the three subregions (San Francisco/San Mateo, East Bay, and San Jose). SPR supported the Co-PI Council for the initiative to facilitate planning, maintain momentum, and support a learning agenda.

> *TA Provider for the San Jose Region.* Supported sub-regional planning team with facilitation, agenda development, notetaking, documentation, and further identification of goals and metrics.

Disability Research

Evaluation of Transition Supports for Youth with Disabilities (2019-2025). SPR is partnering with AIR to assess the effectiveness of transition strategies for in-school you with disabilities. The strategies were to be tested using a random assignment design. The project contract was terminated pursuant to President Trump's Executive Order, just as implementation training was beginning. SPR's slated role encompassed site recruitment, including site visits to recruit schools and development of recruitment materials; implementation training, including communication with selected school sites to ensure understanding of and adherence to study procedures; and administrative data collection, specifically accessing administrative data sources related to employment, earnings, and receipt of federal benefits.

> *Senior Recruiter.* Conduct district outreach, screen calls, and support recruitment site visits and the MOU negotiation process.

Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities (LEAD Center), ODEP (2019-present). The LEAD Center is a project of the U.S. Department of Labor (US DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), that provides policy research and recommendations, training, and technical assistance, as well as demonstration projects, designed to break down silos in existing systems, processes, and practices, and foster wider understanding, adoption, and integration of next-generation employment practices in both the public and private sector for all people with disabilities.

> *Community of Practice Lead:* Oversee a Community of Practice to support workforce development agencies identify Community Reinvestment Act strategies for low- and moderate-income populations.

Preventing Justice Involvement

Evaluation of the San José Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (SJ BEST) Program (2020-2023). SJ BEST supports non-profit operated youth violence and gang-prevention, intervention and suppression programs in San José, CA, operated by the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department. SPR conducted an annual program evaluation of SJ BEST for the 2018 to 2022 program years. The study explored program implementation and outcomes through analysis of qualitative data, participant surveys, and program administrative data.

> *Qualitative Data Lead:* Oversee qualitative data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Evaluation of the San José Youth Intervention Services (2020-2022). Youth Intervention Services is a group of seven programs, operated by San Jose Parks Recreation and Neighborhood Services, which provides a variety of services to address and prevent youth violence and gang-related activity in San José, CA, under the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. SPR conducted a formative evaluation, developed a theory of change, assessed and analyzed program data,

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piloted a participant survey, and produced a report detailing the current evaluation capacity and recommendations for future evaluation.

Qualitative Data Lead: Oversee qualitative data collection, analysis, and reporting.

SELECTED REPORTS

Improving SNAP Uptake Among Eligible Oder Adults: Federal Policy Options to Simplify and Streamline Administrative Processes, 2023. https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/health/food-insecurity/federal-policy-improve-snap-uptake-eligible-adults/

Maintaining Access to Opportunity During Uncertain Times: English Language Learner Workforce Navigator Pilot Programs—Final Evaluation Report, 2021. https://calworkforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Final-Evaluation-Report-CoEnrollment-Pilot-Projects_Final.pdf

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) Best Practices Study 2016-2020: Final Report, 2022. https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/best-practices-et-program-2016-2020

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