

**Amanda Kass**  
412 S. Peoria St. (MC 349)  
324B  
Chicago, IL 60607  
312-996-8587 (office)  
Akass6@uic.edu

## **EDUCATION**

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### **PhD, Urban Planning and Policy**

Graduation: August 2021

The University of Illinois at Chicago — Chicago, IL

Dissertation: *Profit and Precarity: Real Estate Investing After the Global Financial Crisis*

Committee: Brenda Parker (Chair and Advisor), Janet Smith, Phil Ashton, Cedric Johnson, and Rachel Weber

### **MA, Geography**

Graduation: December 2011

The University of Colorado at Boulder — Boulder, CO

Master's Thesis: *Rebuilding Houses or Rebuilding Haiti? Post-Earthquake Reconstruction Efforts and the Reinscription of Inequality*

### **BA, Geography and International Studies**

Graduation: June 2008

The Ohio State University — Columbus, OH

Graduation with Distinction: Completed undergraduate honors thesis in Geography

## **EMPLOYMENT**

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### **Full-Time Positions**

*Government Finance Research Center, College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs, University of Illinois at Chicago*

Associate Director, July 2018 - Current

*Center for Municipal Finance, Harris Public Policy, University of Chicago*

Assistant Director, August 2016 - June 2018

- 2017-2018 Dean's Excellence Award recipient

*Center for Tax and Budget Accountability*

Research Director, September 2014 - August 2016

Budget Director and Pension Specialist, September 2013 - August 2014

Research and Policy Specialist, Pensions & Local Government, November 2011 - August 2013

### **Affiliations and Visiting Appointments**

*Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois System*

Affiliate, February 2021 – Current

## **SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH**

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### **ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS**

#### ***ARTICLES (PEER-REVIEW)***

1. Rogers, D., Herbert, M., Whitzman, C., McCann, E., Maginn, P.J., Watts, B., Alam, A., Pill, M., Keil, R., Dreher, T., Novacevski, M., Byrne, J., Osborne, N., Büdenbender, M., Alizadeh, T., Murray, K., Dombroski, K., Prasad, D., Connolly, C., **Kass, A.**, Dale, E., Murray, C. and Caldis, S. 2020. “The City Under COVID-19: Podcasting As Digital Methodology” *Tijds. voor econ. en Soc. Geog.*, 111: 434-450. doi:10.1111/tesg.12426
2. **Kass, Amanda.** 2020. “Working with Financial Data as a Critical Geographer” *Geographical Review* 110 (1-2): 104-116.
3. **Kass, Amanda\***, Martin J. Luby\*, and Rachel Weber\*. 2019. “Taking a Risk: Explaining the Use of Complex Debt Finance by the Chicago Public Schools” *Urban Affairs Review* 55(4): 1035-1069. doi:10.1177/1078087417748782  
\*Authors contributed equally to this paper

#### ***BOOK CHAPTERS***

1. Weber, Rachel, **Amanda Kass** and Sara Hinkley, “Devolution and Debt: Financing Public Facilities in an Age of Austerity” in *Private Metropolis: The Eclipse of Local Democratic Governance*. Edited by Dennis R. Judd, Evan McKenzie, and Alba Alexander. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021.

#### ***BOOK REVIEWS***

1. **Kass, Amanda.** *Forthcoming.* “Review of *Neoliberal Cities: The Remaking of Postwar Urban America*” *Journal of Planning History*

### **MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION**

1. August, Martine\*, Dan Cohen\*, Martin Danyluk\*, **Amanda Kass\***, Sage Ponder\*, and Emily Rosenman\*. “Reimagining Geographies of Public Finance.” Revise & Resubmit (minor revisions); Submitted to *Progress in Human Geography*. \*Authors contributed equally to this paper
2. **Kass, Amanda**, Andrew Crosby, and Brenda Parker. “A Vicious Cycle: Fiscal Intervention, Pension Underfunding, and Instability in (Re)Making Racialized Geographies.” Revise & Resubmit; Submitted to *Environment and Planning A*, under review.

## **POLICY BRIEFS AND RESEARCH REPORTS (SELECTED)**

1. **Kass, Amanda**, Philip Rocco, and Isabella Romano. (2021). Strengthening Local Government Finances: State and Federal Aid Policies for a Crisis Era. April. Government Finance Research Center, Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago. [https://gfrc.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/188/2021/04/GFRC\\_Strengthening-Local-Government-Finances.pdf](https://gfrc.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/188/2021/04/GFRC_Strengthening-Local-Government-Finances.pdf)
2. **Kass, Amanda**. (2020). “How Many Illinois Public Safety Pension Systems Risk Running Out of Assets?” *Illinois Municipal Policy Journal* 5(1): 131-140. <https://www.iml.org/file.cfm?key=20326>
3. **Kass, Amanda**, Mike Pagano, and Farhad Kaab Omeyr. (2020). How States Provide Cities with General Revenue: An Analysis of Unrestricted State Aid. September. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/working-papers/how-states-provide-cities-general-revenue>
4. Merriman, David, Kenneth Kriz, and **Amanda Kass** (2020). What Policymakers Should Know About the Fiscal Impact of COVID-19 on Illinois. April 9. Institute of Government and Public Affairs, Springfield: University of Illinois System. <https://igpa.uillinois.edu/report/what-policymakers-should-know-about-fiscal-impact-covid-19-illinois>
5. **Kass, Amanda** and Andy Crosby. (2019). Life Preservers or Anchors? An Examination of State Intervention in Municipal Pension Funding in Illinois. July. Government Finance Research Center, Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago.
6. Bruno, Robert, **Amanda Kass**, and David Merriman. (2019). A “Pension Crisis” Mentality Won’t Help: Thinking Differently About Illinois’ Retirement Systems. February 19. Government Finance Research Center, Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago.
7. **Kass, Amanda** and Jared Reynolds. (2017). From High to Low: Understanding How the Pennsylvania Public School Employees’ Retirement System Became Underfunded. July. Center for Municipal Finance. Chicago: The University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy.
8. **Kass, Amanda**. (2016). More Questions than Answers: Illinois Transportation Taxes and Fees Lockbox Amendment. October. Center for Municipal Finance. Chicago: The University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy.
9. Martire, Ralph, Bobby Otter, **Amanda Kass**, Vasyl Markus and Deborah Olaleye. (2015). It Is All About the Revenue: Why Both Current FY2016 General Fund Budget Proposals Fall Short. August. Chicago: Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.
10. Martire, Ralph, **Amanda Kass**, and Bobby Otter. (2014). A Fiscal Review of the Chicago Housing Authority. July. Chicago: Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.
11. Martire, Ralph, **Amanda Kass**, Bobby Otter, and Jennifer Lozano. (2013). Analysis of the FY2014 Illinois General Fund Budget. October. Chicago: Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.
12. **Kass, Amanda**. (2012). Analysis of the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget’s *Pension Stabilization Summary*. August. Chicago: Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.

## **AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS AND HONORS**

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### **EXTERNAL FUNDING AND GRANTS**

- 2020-2021     *Collaborator* (with Michael Pagano, PI; Robert Chirinko, collaborator; and Yonghong Wu, collaborator). *Strategic Thinking: State Fiscal Policy Possibilities in the Covid-19 Era*, Joyce Foundation (\$75,000)
- 2020            *Collaborator* (with Michael Pagano, PI). *State Revenue Sharing to Municipalities*, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (\$30,000)

### **AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND HONORS**

*Delegate, 2020 Summer Institute in Economic Geography in Montreal (SIEG)*, postponed due to COVID-19

*Evelyn L. Pruitt National Fellowship for Dissertation Research*, 2018-2019, Society of Women Geographers (\$9,200).

*Urban Planning and Policy Scholar Award*, tuition and stipend, 2014-2016, University of Illinois at Chicago.

### **SELECTED PRESENTATIONS**

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#### **ACADEMIC CONFERENCES**

1. “When is a Crisis a Crisis? An Examination of Pension Underfunding and State Intervention in Suburban Communities.” Paper co-authored with Andrew Crosby at American Association of Geographers Annual Conference, Washington DC, 2019.
2. “When is a Crisis a Crisis? An Examination of Pension Underfunding and State Intervention in Suburban Communities.” Paper co-authored with Andrew Crosby at Urban Affairs Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, 2019.
3. “Life Preservers or Anchors? An Examination of State Intervention in Municipal Pension Funding in Illinois.” Paper co-authored with Andrew Crosby at Association for Budgeting & Financial Management Annual Conference, Denver, CO, 2018.
4. “The Politics of Public Housing Policy Devolution: Critical Perspectives on HUD’s Moving to Work Demonstration.” Paper co-authored with Amy Khare at Urban Affairs Association Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, 2016.
5. “Innovation Districts: Economic Development Innovation or Shiny New Bottle?” Paper presented with Josh Drucker at Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning Annual Meeting, Houston, TX.
6. “What’s Being Valued? Understanding the Policy Decisions of the Chicago Housing Authority.” Paper presented at American Association of Geographers Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, 2015.

## INVITED PANELS AND TALKS

1. “Life Preservers or Anchors? Illinois Pension Intercept.” Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois, Bloomington, IL - October 2019.
2. “A “Pension Crisis” Mentality Won’t Help: Thinking Differently About Illinois’ Retirement Systems.” State Universities Annuitants Association, Springfield, IL - June 2019.
3. “Who is Really Going to Pay the State’s Debt?” Illinois Humanities Council, Chicago, IL - March 2015.
4. Panelist, Information Management Network Midwest Public Funds Summit, Chicago, IL - June 2013.
5. “Public Pensions - Status and Solutions.” League of Women Voters-Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area - October 2012.

## SELECTED MEDIA

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### BLOGS, COLUMNS, AND EDITORIALS (AUTHORED)

1. **Kass, Amanda** and Philip Rocco. “Will recovery funds really allow state and local governments to build back better?” *Notes on the Crises* (guest commentary), June 25, 2021. [Link](#).
2. **Kass, Amanda** and Philip Rocco. “The Myth of ‘Unnecessary’ Federal Aid to State and Local Governments.” Opinion. *Governing*, March 3, 2021. [Link](#).
3. **Kass, Amanda**. “What Might Happen To Public Pensions In The Wake Of Covid-19?” Blog. *Government Finance Research Center*, May 11, 2020. [Link](#).
4. **Kass, Amanda**. “COVID-19’s Implications for State and Local Governments’ Revenue Collections” Blog. *Government Finance Research Center*, April 6, 2020. [Link](#).
5. Merriman, David and **Amanda Kass**. “Do states with graduated structures change tax rates more frequently than states with a flat structure?” Blog. *Government Finance Research Center*, April 6, 2020. [Link](#).
6. **Kass, Amanda**. “Is consolidating the assets of Illinois’ public pension funds a good idea?” Opinion. *Crain’s Business Chicago*, October 16, 2019. [Link](#).
7. **Kass, Amanda**. “Hasty, shortsighted reforms make for more pension pain later.” Opinion. *Crain’s Business Chicago Forum*, June 20, 2019. [Link](#).
8. **Kass, Amanda**. “Thorny Property Politics: Cook County’s 2018 Democratic Primary for Assessor.” *Urban Affairs Forum*, October 30, 2018. [Link](#).
9. **Kass, Amanda**. “Memo to the next mayor: Chicago’s pension pain is about to get sharper.” Opinion. *Crain’s Business Chicago*, September 10, 2018. [Link](#).

10. **Kass, Amanda.** “Why Illinois’s Non-Budget Is Actually the Worst Budget Ever.” *Chicago Magazine*, May 30, 2017. [Link](#). \*Finalist for the City and Regional Magazine Association’s 2018 Civic Journalism award.
11. Martire, Ralph and **Amanda Kass.** “Bad news, Illinois: Pension deal didn't actually solve anything.” Opinion. *Crain's Business Chicago*, December 6, 2013. [Link](#).

### **NEWSPAPERS, RADIO, AND TELEVISION (QUOTED AND CITED)**

LexisNexis lists over 100 articles in media outlets quoting me and/or citing my work in print/internet outlets, including the *Associated Press*, *Bond Buyer*, *Bloomberg*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *New York Times*. In addition, I have been interviewed on and/or had my work cited in television and radio. Examples since 2013 include:

- “The Recession Is About to Slam Cities. Not Just the Blue-State Ones,” *New York Times*, August 17, 2020.
- “Pension vise tightens on Illinois towns,” *Crain’s Chicago Business*, October 30, 2019.
- “Gov. J.B. Pritzker proposes consolidation of suburban and downstate police and firefighter pension funds,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 10, 2019.
- “Chicago research center wants to make a mark on government finance policy,” *The Bond Buyer*, July 24, 2018.
- “Why Illinois Is Closing in on 700 Days Without a Budget?” *Chicago Magazine*, May 26, 2017.
- “News Analysis: Massive State and Local Pension Debt Often Means Higher Taxes,” *Tax Analysts*, September 20, 2016.
- “Rauner Inherits Illinois Downgraded by Bond Market: Muni Credit,” *Bloomberg*, November 13, 2014.
- “Testy Illinois governor race holds no cure for state finances,” *Reuters*, October 31, 2014.
- “Illinois pension battle could create deeper fiscal hole,” *Associated Press*, December 1, 2013.

### **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND SKILLS**

Ad hoc manuscript reviewer: *Housing Policy and Debate*; *Urban Affairs Review*

### **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

American Association of Geographers (AAG)  
 Association for Budgeting & Financial Management (ABFM)  
 American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)  
 Scholars Strategy Network (SSN)  
 Urban Affairs Association (UAA)