



ASSOCIATION FOR  
PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS  
& MANAGEMENT

<https://www.appam.org/about-appam/awards/steven-d-gold-award/> (10-21-2020)

## Steven D. Gold Award

### About the Steven D. Gold Award

APPAM approved this award in 1997 when the Policy Council adopted a policy for the creation of awards in recognition or memory of a specific person. That policy states that the association will not use operating funds to support honoraria for such awards. Accordingly, this award does not offer an honorarium. This is the only award offered through APPAM that also is offered by other associations in the public policy and management field.

The Steve Gold Award recognizes a person who has made a significant contribution to public financial management in the field of intergovernmental relations and state and local finance. The award is given annually by APPAM, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Tax Association, in memory of Steve Gold, an active member of all three organizations whose career and life tragically were shortened by illness.



The 2020 Steven D. Gold Award recipient is **Dr. Robert Costrell**, whose career spans decades and success both in academia and state government.

Costrell "is well-deserving of this honor," wrote former U of A doctoral students James Shuls and Collin Hitt in a letter to APPAM nominating Costrell. "He is the rare breed of scholar and public servant. His work has made an indelible mark in public financial management in the field of state and local finance; particularly in the area of school finance and public pensions." The first half of Costrell's career was spent as a professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, where he wrote a series of seminal papers on the economic theory of educational standards.

In 1999, Costrell joined the governor's office in Massachusetts, as the state implemented landmark educational reforms that are now widely credited for producing remarkable gains in reading and math. He served first as director of policy research and development, then chief economist, and, finally, education advisor to the governor. He served in the administration of three Massachusetts governors over seven years. Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, wrote a letter supporting Costrell's nomination. He worked with Costrell for nearly four years while the governor of Massachusetts. "Our state budget was projected to be badly out of balance and his knowledge and judgement were essential to correcting the impending deficit as soon as possible," Romney wrote. "Bob's focus was on our educational system which, as you might imagine, was a large portion of our spending. He was able to find ways to bring our costs and revenues into balance without cutting vital priorities. "Bob is highly sensitive to the need for the highest commitment to quality education — at all levels," Romney wrote.

While working in the government sector, Costrell led the administration's reforms of the state's district and charter funding formulas. His extensive expert testimony in Massachusetts' school finance case (Hancock v. Driscoll) proved critical to the successful defense of that state's education reform program. In 2006, Costrell was appointed as the Endowed Chair in Education Accountability in the College of Education and Health Professions at the U of A. In this role, Costrell's research has focused primarily on public employee pensions.

In addition to highlighting the many ways pension structures distort the education labor market, Costrell has undertaken important work analyzing the funding rules of public pensions. Costrell and collaborators Hitt and Shuls have recently made important discoveries at the intersection of school finance and public pensions.

"In a 2020 piece appearing in Educational Researcher, our team displayed a list of every state that makes public pension payments on behalf of school districts," the nomination letter from Hitt and Shuls noted. "This may not seem like a big deal, but it is. No one had an accurate accounting of these data. Not even the federal government. As we call it, this was a '\$19 billion blind spot.'"

Costrell said it has been a great privilege to have a career in both academia and policy-making. "I believe this award recognizes the value to the academy and the public of such mutually enriching experiences," he said. "My hope is that our department's Ph.D. students will also have the opportunity to contribute in both domains." Dr. Costrell will be recognized at the [2020 Virtual Fall Research Conference](#) during the Awards and Opening Plenary.

Winners of the Steve Gold Award receive a plaque and recognition at the annual conference of the specific organization that chairs the selection committee. The sponsoring organizations rotate in chairing the selection committee. The sponsoring organizations rotate in chairing the selection committee. APPAM is convening the selection committee for the 2020 award. The selection committee may decide not to make an award in any particular year. [NCSL gave the award in 2019](#). Nominations are welcome from any institution. Please send an email to Samantha Oliver Thomason at [soliver@appam.org](mailto:soliver@appam.org) with a CV and a letter of recommendation by July 17, 2020.

## Prior Recipients

(\* denotes an APPAM award year)

- **2019:** David Teal, Alaska Legislative Finance Division
- **2018:** Therese McGuire, Northwestern University
- **2017\*:** John M. Yinger, Syracuse University
- **2016:** Jonathan Ball, Utah Legislative Fiscal Analyst
- **2015:** John Mikesell, Indiana University
- **2014\*:** Ronald C. Fisher, Michigan State University
- **2013:** Stephen Klein, Vermont Joint Fiscal Office
- **2012:** David Sjoquist of Georgia State University
- **2011\*:** Andrew Reschovsky, University of Wisconsin-Madison, La Follette School of Public Affairs
- **2010:** Gary Olson, Director of the Michigan Senate Fiscal Agency
- **2009:** George Zodrow, Rice University
- **2008\*:** Elizabeth Hill, California Legislative Analysts Office
- **2007:** Robert Lang, Director of the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau
- **2006:** Gary Cornia, Brigham Young University
- **2005\*:** Robert Strauss, Carnegie Mellon University
- **2004:** David Crotts, Chief Economist, State of North Carolina Legislature
- **2003:** William Fox, University of Tennessee-Knoxville
- **2002\*:** Helen Ladd, Duke University
- **2001:** Robert Keaton, Chief Budget Analyst and Director of the State Senate Fiscal Office, State of Louisiana
- **2000:** Robert Ebel, World Bank Institute
- **1999\*:** Robert Greenstein and Iris Lav, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- **1998:** Victor Vernon, Chief Legislative Fiscal Officer, State of Alabama
- **1997:** John Shannon, The Urban Institute