



Lessons Learned Oral History Project

Claudia Sahm

The Yale Program on Financial Stability (YPFS) contacted Claudia Sahm by email to request an interview regarding her time at the Federal Reserve Board as a Principal Economist in the Division of Research and Statistics.¹ Sahm joined the Fed in 2007, where her work focused on macro forecasting; she also researched household behavior and responses to fiscal stimulus.

While at the Fed, Sahm proposed the Sahm Rule, a gauge to call the start of recession, based on an average of the unemployment rate. The rule is part of Sahm's work on the use of automatic stabilizers to improve fiscal policy response in times of economic crisis.

Sahm became section chief for the Consumer & Community Development section in the Division of Consumer and Community Affairs at the Federal Reserve Board in 2017. In 2019, Sahm left the Fed and advised Congress on fiscal policy. In 2021, she became a senior fellow at the Jain Family Institute, where she now serves as director of macroeconomic research.

[Full Interview Transcript](#)

[Lesson Learned Summary](#)

¹ A stylized summary of the key observations and insights gleaned from this interview with Ms. Sahm is available in the Yale Program on Financial Stability's *Journal of Financial Crises*.