

NYU MCSILVER INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES 2024 FELLOWS-IN-RESIDENCE

Award-winning public official and soft power strategist Penny Abeywardena and nationally recognized education innovator Jeffrey Ginsburg join returning fellows

NEW YORK – Government leader and international affairs expert **Penny Abeywardena**, and **Jeffrey Ginsburg**, who is the incoming President & CEO of Volunteers of America Greater New York in March, are joining the McSilver Institute of Poverty Policy and Research as the 2024 Fellows-in-Residence, adding their considerable insight and experience to the Institute’s roster of industry-leading thought leadership, technical know-how, and policy expertise.

The McSilver Institute Fellowship-in-Residence engages nationally recognized social justice scholars and thought leaders across disciplines to conduct research projects, publish books and policy papers, conduct courses, and participate in seminars, conferences, and workshops.

“We welcome Penny and Jeffrey as our 2024 McSilver Fellows-in-Residence. They are nationally and internationally renowned change agents and are at the forefront of thought leadership in their fields, with extensive track records of accomplishment,” said McSilver Executive Director **Rose Pierre-Louis**.

Penny Abeywardena has held executive leadership roles in philanthropy, non-profit, government, and multilateral institutions for more than 20 years. Her contributions have been recognized and celebrated by the United Nations, the World Economic Forum, and the French American Foundation, among others. She was recently appointed to the rank of Knight in France’s National Order of Merit by President Emmanuel Macron for her global leadership on diplomacy, human rights, and sustainability.

Penny is a contributing columnist at Forbes on leadership strategies. Her writing is focused on identifying strategies of influence and persuasion when there is little or no perceived power. She writes on issues ranging from AI to food security and climate change. She previously served as the Commissioner for International Affairs for the City of New York for eight years, where she led the agency serving the largest diplomatic corps in the world. Prior to her role in government, Penny was the Director of the Women’s program at the Clinton Global Initiative. A graduate of the University of Southern California, she completed her Master of International Affairs at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

“I’m thrilled to join NYU’s McSilver community to align soft power strategies with issues focused on eradicating poverty both domestically and internationally,” Penny said. “Having NYU’s institutional support over the coming year will create many opportunities for impact and I am grateful.”

Jeffrey Ginsburg is the incoming President & CEO of Volunteers of America Greater New York, among the largest and most effective organizations addressing the housing, homelessness, and mental health crises facing the region. Previously, Jeffrey was the longtime CEO of renowned educator East Harlem Tutorial Program (EHTP), as well as the CEO and Co-Founder of East Harlem Scholars Academies. In partnership with EHTP & Hunter College’s School of Education, Jeffrey also co-founded the East Harlem Teaching Residency. Jeff remains on the Leadership Council to EHTP’s Board.

Before joining EHTP, Jeffrey was the founding director of United Way's Math, Science & Technology initiative, held management positions in telecommunication, and spent various periods as a working musician. Jeffrey is a graduate of Trinity College and Harvard's Kennedy School and expects to complete his Doctorate from Fordham University in 2024. He is a member of the Trinity College Board of Fellows, the Dean's Council at Columbia University's School of Social Work, and the New York Theological Seminary Board of Trustees. Jeff's family founded and supports the Tanger Hillel at CUNY's Brooklyn College. Jeff is a recipient of Crain's "40 Under 40", New York Theological Seminary's "Urban Angel" Award, and the McSilver Award from New York University.

"NYU's McSilver Institute is a key voice and resource on some of the most pressing issues facing our country and our neighbors right now," Jeffrey said. "I'm excited and grateful to partner with Rose Pierre-Louis and her brilliant team to address critical issues such as the severe inequities in our mental health systems and the impact of AI on underrepresented communities."

Penny and Jeffrey will be joined by the returning group of 2023 Fellows, who will continue their ongoing efforts and projects for another year:

- **Chris Hemphill** focuses on how data science can help us understand and improve the human condition. Chris is Director of Commercial Intelligence at Woebot Health, a role that combines data science with AI strategy for health systems and insurers. This work at the intersection of tech and strategy has a broader theme: working with healthcare leaders to drive ethical and effective decisions with AI and algorithms.
- **Ifeoma Ike, Esq.** is an award-winning advocate, writer and policy advisor focused on designing solutions to address disparities. Her first book, "The Equity Mindset: Designing Human Spaces Through Journeys, Reflections and Practices," was published in Fall 2023. She is the visionary behind the annual Black Policy Lab, a project birthed in response to racial uprisings, centering visioning, joy and collaborative policy creation, and the founder of the social impact firm Pink Cornrows.
- **Cathy Nonas, MS, CDN** is an advocate for policies and practices that address health equity and nutrition. Since 2018, Cathy has been the CEO of Meals For Good Inc, a New York-based 501c3 public charity that supports underfunded food pantries with grants for fresh produce and works with community based organizations around the City to provide vouchers for local supermarkets, giving families agency over their own food while supporting small businesses as well.

The McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research at New York University is committed to creating new knowledge about the root causes of poverty, developing evidence-based interventions to address its consequences, and rapidly translating research findings into action through policy and best practices. It is the home of the [AI Hub at McSilver](#), which investigates how artificial intelligence-driven systems can be used to equitably address poverty and challenges relating to race and public health. Learn more at mcsilver.nyu.edu and [sign up](#) for updates.

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