

**JOHN BOUMAN**  
Director of Advocacy  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Contact: 312.263.3830 ext. 250



**Biography:**



John Bouman is the Shriver Center's Advocacy Director. He joined SSNCPL in May 1996 after twenty-one years at the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago, where he supervised public benefits advocacy from 1985. John also worked in several Chicago neighborhoods and held a position as a specialist in the Foundation's Elderly Law Project, where he worked on numerous law reform efforts involving social security, SSI, Medicaid, senior housing and long-term care issues.

He is recognized for being one of the most effective and thoughtful public benefits advocates in the country. Many legislators, administrators, providers, and other advocates credit him for his leadership in the design and implementation of Illinois's new welfare law in 1997. In January 1998 he was honored with the John Minor Wisdom Award given by the Litigation Section of the American Bar Association. In May 1998, he was awarded the National Legal Aid and Defender Association's Kutak-Dodds award, one of the highest honors given in the legal services community.

John is looked to nationally for creating a new approach to the options available to states for assisting low-income populations in both national and local welfare policy implementation schemes. John has led the Shriver Center to help Illinois build the nation's strongest track record in development of model policies, programs and litigation on poverty issues. These include new ways to approach work supports. He has earned a national reputation for thinking through a coordinated state approach to the expansion of unemployment insurance, health coverage and well baby care, food supports, childcare and asset-building opportunities as the right ways to help people permanently exit the cycle of poverty.

Most notable of John Bouman's recent work in health care has been his dedication and relentless efforts to ensure low-income children have access to quality well baby care. This work is exemplified by John's work in a case filed in 1992, *Memisovski v. Maram*. The case was named for the children of the Memisovski family who, although covered by Medicaid, could not find doctors willing to serve them at the low reimbursement rate provided by the state of Illinois. Because the case highlighted ways in which justice and needed services were denied many families, John spearheaded the fight to make the case finally secure access to quality early healthcare for the state's most vulnerable youngsters. After filing the class action lawsuit representing over 600,000 children in Cook County, John and other partners worked on the complex case for 13 years.

John is one of the nation's leading policy advocates on welfare and economic security, exhibiting a remarkable style that has won major but often unheralded victories for the poor in the era of dramatic welfare reform. His creative ideas on how government policy should assist people reach their highest aspirations has allowed thousands of poor and low-income people move into the workforce and escape poverty.