

Biography of Russell Sykes

Russell Sykes is currently the Director of the Center for Employment and Economic Well-Being at the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA). APHSA represents appointed state and local Commissioners of Human Services and their senior staff nationwide. Sykes is also a Visiting Fellow at the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute on Government. Sykes has worked in the human services field since 1972 when he started his career in a four-county rural Pennsylvania anti-poverty program, including Adams County, the last county east of the Mississippi to implement the Food Stamp Program (now SNAP). He has worked in government as well as both the non-profit and for profit sectors at the local, state and federal level.

From 1978-1984 after leaving Pennsylvania, Sykes was the Fieldwork Coordinator for the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) in D.C. From 1984-2004 Sykes was the Vice President of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA) a non-profit public policy and research organization in Albany, NY overseeing a broad portfolio of program policy including public benefits, nutrition, child care and low income tax policy. Sykes was the architect of New York State's own Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which began in 1994 and has subsequently expanded multiple times, now reaching well over 1.4 million eligible working households with tax credits of over \$1 billion.

From 2004-2011, Sykes was the Deputy Commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), where he was responsible for overseeing the SNAP, TANF, Welfare to Work, SSI State Supplement, LIHEAP and multiple other programs and benefit systems. Sykes was then a Senior Fellow from 2011-2012 with the Empire Center on Public Policy and the Manhattan Institute in New York. From 2012-2015, Sykes worked as a private consultant for multiple organizations, including America Works of NYS, Abt Associates, SEEDCO, United Way of New York State and the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA).

Sykes was appointed in 2014 as one of ten members of the then newly constituted National Commission on Hunger and was instrumental in authoring its final report in January 2016. Sykes was also the author of "Viewing the Food Stamp Program through a 44 Year Lens" a chapter in a recent book "A Safety Net That Works" released in February 2017 by the American Enterprise Institute.