THOMAS CAFCAS | 847-477-3879 • thomascafcas@gmail.com

EDUCATION

University of Illinois   **Master's in Urban and Regional Planning**   Champaign-Urbana, IL   May 2008
Highly selective accelerated program, economic development and sustainability focus, elected student government

University of Illinois   **Bachelor's in Urban and Regional Planning**   Champaign-Urbana, IL   May 2007
Minor in Sociology, Awarded Freshman and Junior Urban Planner of the Year, Magna Cum Laude

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

USAFacts / The Ballmer Group – *Bellevue, WA; Philanthropic initiative providing data-driven portrait of government*

Senior Data Analyst (2017 – 2019)
- Co-led a team developing an experience of state and local government data compiled from over 80 government sources into a single web application by collaborating with six vendors involved in UX, UI, web design, data scraping, and data management resulting in a new USAFacts state data experience; launched summer 2019
- Developed and implemented strategy through business requirement documentation for next iteration of USAFacts
- Authored original research on government revenue, spending, and outcomes to build public understanding of U.S. government finances and actions; content strategy grew web traffic and social media presence significantly
- Performed complex data integrations that powered the USAFacts data experience
- Led high-level internal communications to present research findings to the President and CEO
- Represented USAFacts at conferences to broaden use of data portal among government officials and advocates
- Analyzed and assessed government datasets to tell policy stories, create new content, and develop policy tools

Good Jobs First – *Washington, DC; Policy think-tank focused on best practices on transparent, effective job creation*

Research Analyst (2009 – 2017)
- Authored 30+ public policy reports utilized by state legislatures to reform economic development programs, cited by other policy think-tanks, and discussed in newspapers of record
- Counseled state and local public officials and policy advocates on economic development and tax policies, strengthening transparency and accountability provisions in legislative bills, many incorporated into law
- Analyzed state and local economic development policies through qualitative survey research; worked with public agencies to acquire critical data, tracked research in databases, and transformed data for use in Excel and Tableau
- Delivered expert testimony in high-pressure situations before public officials, including before a special session of the Illinois State Legislature, the Governor of Maryland, and Washington's Legislative Audit and Review Commission
- Drafted laws and policy best practices culminating in dozens of policy changes throughout the U.S.

Communications Specialist (2013 – 2017) *in addition to research analyst role*
- Developed and implemented external communications strategy to influence public debate on economic development; drafted press releases, newspaper editorials, testimonies, reports, etc.
- Represented Good Jobs First in media requests from reporters at state and national level
- Developed strategic messaging to key influencers and pitched policy reports to state and national reporters
- Monitored media footprint through media tracking tools; developed and grew social media presence from scratch

Economic Stewardship – *Wisconsin; consulting firm providing economic development planning services*

Research Associate (2008 – 2009)
- Analyzed economic and demographic data for local government stakeholders to support decision-making
- Collaborated with stakeholders via public hearings to strategize new approaches to local economic development
- Assisted in researching and developing new policy recommendations for local economic development plans

Kendig Keast Collaborative – *Chicago, IL; consulting firm providing municipal government planning services*

Planning Intern (summer 2006 and 2007)
- Demonstrated land use planning concepts using 3D computer visualizations, charts, graphics, and maps

SKILLS

Data visualization and analysis	Qualitative survey research	Data extraction and transformation
Excel	Power BI	ArcGIS/QGIS mapping
Adobe Creative Suite	SQL queries	Python scripting
Project management	Tableau	R scripting (Tidyverse)