Robert Arons, Ph.D.

Managing Economist, Freshwater Prestige Economics
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PROFILE

Dr. Arons is an applied microeconomist with more than a decade of experience in economic analysis for antitrust enforcement, litigation, and public policy. His expertise encompasses the econometric and theoretical analyses needed to define markets, measure prices, predict choices, and assess the effects of mergers and alleged anticompetitive conduct, with industry experience in healthcare, manufacturing, media, technology, and agriculture. He leads teams of highly skilled technical staff and delivers on stakeholder deadlines. Federal and state government officials and private corporations have used his work to inform decisions and support their positions in court.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, **University of Rochester**, 2014
M.A., Economics, **University of Rochester**, 2010
B.A., Economics, *cum laude*, **Case Western Reserve University**, 2006
Graduate in Leadership, **Virginia Executive Institute**, 2024

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Freshwater Prestige Economics Feb. 2023 – present
Managing Economist

- Lead economic consulting engagements: economic modeling, empirical data analysis, expert and technical report writing, and presentations.
- Advise clients on policy-relevant economic questions.

Virginia Department of Social Services, Richmond, VA Nov. 2023 – present
Director of Research and Planning and Chief Data Officer

- Oversee three teams—Research, Data Warehouse, and Data Governance—comprising 27 staff.
- Reorganized the research function to streamline research and evaluation requests, clearly define roles and deadlines, and consistently deliver on tighter legislative and executive timelines.
- Lead the modernization of the agency data warehouse, including the upgrade to Cognos 12.0 and the design of a cloud data-integration, data-quality, and cataloging layer to make agency data trustworthy and AI-ready.
- Lead the agency data governance program in alignment with Commonwealth (VITA) security and data standards; negotiate multi-agency data-sharing agreements, including a VEC–SCHEV–VDSS agreement linking workforce and benefits data.
- Develop the agency's legislative budget proposals on economic mobility and data, including Virginia EITC expansion, Virginia Well-Being Scores, the Pathways to Potential pilot, and data governance.

Secretariat International (formerly Economists Inc.) Feb. 2020 – Feb. 2023
Associate Director (Jul. 2022 – Feb. 2023); Senior Economist (Feb. 2020 – Jun. 2022)

- Led economic analysis for client engagements, including financial and economic modeling in Stata and Excel, evaluation of opposing models, technical report writing, and oral presentations.
- Managed project teams and budgets; identified, recruited, and evaluated candidates for hire.
- Used data and economic theory to establish metrics for evaluating programs and to conduct event studies of product and labor markets; answered policy-relevant questions for clients.
- Conducted peer-reviewed economic research.

U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, Washington, DC 2014 – 2020

Staff Economist, Economic Analysis Group

- Conducted economic analysis of mergers and conduct investigations, including market definition and statistical analysis of economic models; managed teams of economists and research assistants.
- Served as ArcGIS liaison and economic-knowledge liaison; reviewed outside studies and disseminated findings; answered policy-relevant questions for senior U.S. Government management.
- Established and applied best practices in data management and collection; conducted peer-reviewed economic research.
- Recipient of three Assistant Attorney General Awards (2015; 2017, Anthem/Cigna team; 2019) and the Economic Analysis Group's Best Empirical Project award (2015).

Earlier positions

- Data Analyst, Aetna, 2008
- Research Assistant (Medicare), Stanford University, 2006 – 2008

SELECTED MATTERS

Competition Commission of India v. ACC Limited and Ambuja Cements Limited, Suo Moto Case No. 2 of 2019 (Competition Commission of India)

- Signed expert report submitted to the CCI.

Colucci, et al. v. Health First (class action)

In re Broiler Chicken Antitrust Litigation

In re Broiler Chicken Grower Litigation

Gilbert and Jn-Marie v. Spartan Concrete Products, LLC and Heavy Materials, LLC

North American Soccer League, LLC v. United States Soccer Federation, Inc. and Major League Soccer, LLC

T-Mobile/Sprint

Google/Looker

Slack/Atlassian

U.S. v. Custom Wristbands, Inc.; U.S. v. Christopher Angeles; U.S. v. Netbrands; and U.S. v. Yeh Fei Chu (a/k/a Jim Chu) and G Nova Corporation

AT&T/Time Warner

Anthem/Cigna (Assistant Attorney General Award, 2017)

Aetna/Humana

United States and State of North Carolina v. Carolinas HealthCare System (Now Atrium Health)

Comcast/Time Warner Cable

Scripps/Nexstar

National Beef/Iowa Premium

Iron Mountain/Recall

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Working papers

"Do Bigger Firms Get Better Terms? Evidence from Pay TV," with Alexander Raskovich. *Revisions requested, AEJ: Microeconomics.*

"Cost Sharing and Price Competition in MRI Services," with Mark Votruba.

"The Impact of HMOs on Preventative Care and Undiagnosed Conditions along the Life-Cycle." *Revisions requested, International Journal of Healthcare Management.*

"The Effect of Race-Based Achievement Goals on the Achievement Gap." *Revisions requested, Economics Letters.*

Other publications

Review of *Controlling Mergers and Market Power: A Program for Reviving Antitrust in America*.

Kessler, Daniel, and Christopher Afendulis, "Vertical Integration and Optimal Reimbursement Policy," *International Journal of Health Care Finance and Economics*, 2011 (research assistant).

PRESENTATIONS AND PANELS

Panelist, "Vertically Challenged: An AT&T/TWX Retrospective."

European Association for Research in Industrial Economics (EARIE), Barcelona GSE, Barcelona, Spain, 2019.

Stockman Conference, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY, 2018.

DC Industrial Organization Day, Compass Lexecon and the Maryland Center for Economics and Policy, Washington, DC, 2017.

14th Annual International Industrial Organization Conference, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA, 2016.

TEACHING

Georgetown University — Adjunct Instructor, IO 562 (master's level), 2019.

University of Rochester — Instructor, Principles of Economics (Summer 2011). Teaching Assistant: Pricing Policy (graduate, 2010–2012); Econometrics (Fall 2010, Spring 2012); Economic Statistics (Fall 2012); Principles of Economics (Spring 2011).

Case Western Reserve University — Teaching Assistant: Public Finance (Spring 2006); Healthcare Economics (Fall 2005, Spring 2006).

BOARDS, APPOINTMENTS, AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Commonwealth of Virginia Executive Data Board, Richmond, VA 2024 – present
Member (VDSS Designee), Office of Data Governance and Analytics

- Represent the Department of Social Services on the statutory, CDO-chaired board that sets and approves KPIs for data-governance initiatives, reviews the cross-agency data and analytics project portfolio for prioritization and funding, and promotes data sharing among executive-branch agencies.

ABA Media and Technology News e-Bulletin 2021 – present
Economics Editor

HONORS AND AWARDS

Assistant Attorney General Award, Antitrust Division, U.S. Department of Justice — 2015; 2017 (Anthem/Cigna team); 2019.

Best Empirical Project, Economic Analysis Group, U.S. Department of Justice, 2015.

Graduate Fellowship and Tuition Scholarship, University of Rochester, 2008–2014.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

R, Python, Stata, SAS, SQL, ArcGIS, Unix, Excel; machine-learning methods for text analysis.