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NORTH AMERICA
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
August 2022

Good afternoon,

Larkin Street Youth Services is proud to be one of J-PAL North America's Bay Area Evaluation (BAE) Incubator [partners](#). With the launch of two new J-PAL North America evaluation incubators this month, I want to share more about our own experience and what this opportunity can provide to other organizations interested in evaluating program impact. As a national leader in the work to end youth homelessness for nearly forty years, [Larkin Street Youth Services](#) provides a continuum of services designed to inspire young adults for a life beyond living on the streets. Our client-centered approach aims to create community with young people and positions them as stakeholders and decision-makers when it comes to how we deliver services.

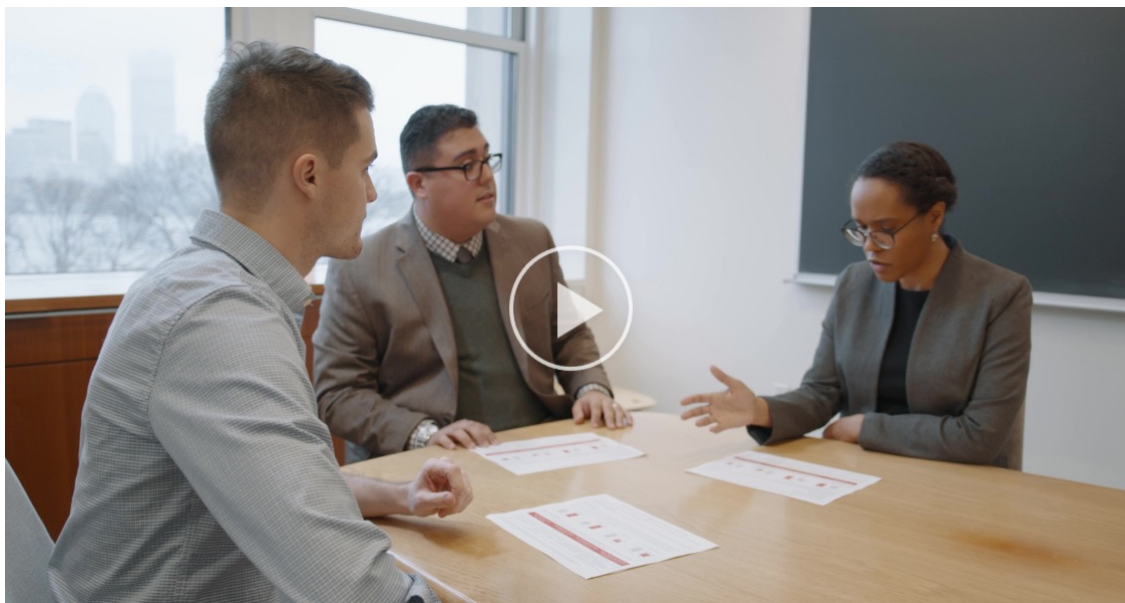
Larkin Street's [2021 Policy Brief](#) highlighted emerging evidence on cash transfers as an innovative model that can contribute to ending youth homelessness while trusting young adults as experts in their own lives. We were in the middle of discussing cash as an addition to Larkin's existing programming when we learned about the BAE Incubator and its goal of [evaluating cash transfers](#).

Our engagement with J-PAL North America began by identifying research questions, such as who would benefit from cash transfers, how they would benefit, and where in our service model we would generate evidence of impact. These questions informed the entirety of our collaboration. Trainings led by J-PAL staff helped our team better understand evaluation design concepts and considerations. Lessons about measurement, from validity to precision, rippled through our evaluation team and extended to our internal evaluation frameworks. Early on, we at times felt randomization would conflict with our mission of supporting all who engage in services, but J-PAL North America staff helped us understand different forms of randomization that aligned with our goals. Through technical assistance, data benchmarking, and discussions with program staff, Larkin Street became confident in our ability to support a cash transfer pilot with a randomized evaluation.

With further support from Google.org, J-PAL affiliated researcher Mike Cassidy, and in partnership with Chapin Hall, Point Source Youth, and young people with lived experience of homelessness, Larkin Street is now in the pre-implementation phase to launch and rigorously evaluate a Cash Plus (i.e., cash with optional services) program. Through this project, we hope to ultimately expand the available housing-relief options for young adults in San Francisco and beyond. I encourage anyone who's pursuing similar goals—in housing

stability or other social policy areas—to check out J-PAL’s upcoming Evaluation Incubators and [ongoing blog series](#) featuring BAE Incubator partners.

Noah Halton,
Director of Impact, Larkin Street Youth Services



J-PAL North America announces two evaluation partnership opportunities for implementing organizations and government agencies

This month, J-PAL North America launched the [Housing Stability Evaluation Incubator](#) and the [State and Local Evaluation Incubator](#). Organizations and government agencies seeking to expand the evidence base on pressing policy questions through rigorous program evaluation are invited to [submit letters of interest](#) by **October 17, 2022**. Both incubators will provide selected partners with technical assistance, evaluation training, flexible funding, and connections to expert researchers to build their capacity to generate evidence through randomized evaluations and utilize data to drive decision making. For more information, read our [press release](#), view our recent [information session video](#), and sign up for the Homelessness and State and Local [mailing lists](#) for updates.

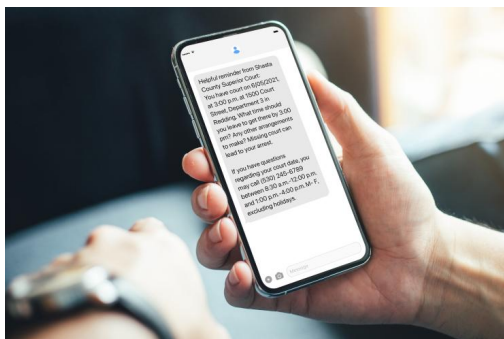


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Building research partnerships: Addressing failures to appear for court in Shasta County

In a [new post](#) on the J-PAL blog, Shawn Watts from the Shasta County Superior Court in California shares takeaways from his agency's experience in a previous State and Local Evaluation Incubator, highlighting J-PAL's support for his agency's work to design a randomized evaluation to test strategies to reduce missed court appearances. "Before this project, we had no idea that funding and high caliber training was available to small, local government jurisdictions," Shawn shared. He also reflects on being matched with experienced researchers from J-PAL's network, the value of using administrative data, and the chance for governments to harness data for public good through evaluations.



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Evaluating the impact of cash transfers on housing stability

With ongoing [support from Google.org](#), the Bay Area Evaluation (BAE) Incubator is supporting a cohort of California Bay Area homelessness service providers with implementing and evaluating cash transfer programs to assess their impact on homelessness and housing stability. In the BAE Incubator blog series we explore [existing evidence on cash transfers](#), and have a conversation with two of our partners, [Compass Family Services](#) and [Abode](#) about their experiences in the incubator.

FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY

FEATURED RESEARCH RESOURCE

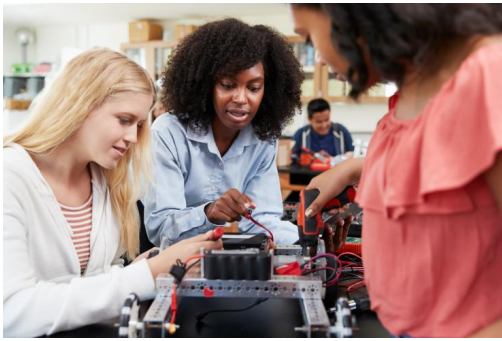


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The effects of STEM pipeline programs

Black and Hispanic workers are underrepresented in the well-paying fields of STEM, contributing to income and wealth inequality. J-PAL-affiliated researchers Sarah Cohodes (Columbia), Helen Ho (Harvard), and Silvia Robles (Michigan) [evaluated three STEM-focused summer pipeline programs](#) for high school students. Students offered seats in the summer programs were more likely to enroll in a highly-ranked university and persist through and graduate from college. The programs also increased the likelihood that students graduate with a degree in a STEM field. Learn more about this evaluation in a [recent interview](#) with the study's authors.



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Preparing data for publication + exploring the J-PAL Dataverse

Increasing the availability of research data benefits researchers, policy partners, and students. [This research resource](#) provides guidance on cleaning and preparing data for publication, sample informed consent language, and other considerations during project planning and before publication. The resource also describes trusted digital repositories that can host data, including the [J-PAL Dataverse](#).

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

NYC officials promised a summer youth jobs program would make the city safer. Does it work?

The Gothamist

Biden-Harris Tutoring Initiative: What You Need to Know

Tech & Learning

Have an idea of content you would like to see in this newsletter? We want to hear from you! Please send your feedback to J-PAL North America Policy and Communications Manager, [Erin Graeber](#).



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