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NORTH AMERICA
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
January 2026

Good morning,

At J-PAL North America, we strive to strengthen the capacity of policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to produce rigorous research on effective poverty reduction strategies and use existing evidence in key decision-making.

One of the primary ways we do this is through our [suite of training offerings](#). We deliver customized trainings and cohort-based skills building programming to government agencies and nonprofits that establish communities of practice in specific focus areas. In recent years, J-PAL North America has supported [cohort-based learning](#) in evidence and evaluation across several policy areas. We've found that building community and facilitating peer learning can enhance the quality of our training offerings and the participant experience.

In this newsletter edition, we share updates from J-PAL North America's cohort-based offerings, including the launch of the AprendeLab in Puerto Rico, a call for applications to our next Climate Action Learning Lab cohort, and a new webpage featuring our work in the Learning Engineering Virtual Institute—a cohort of organizations designing and evaluating AI-driven tutoring to improve middle school math achievement.

We are energized by the engagement and enthusiasm our partners bring to our trainings, fueled by their dedication to support their communities and the people they serve. We welcome you to [reach out about J-PAL's training opportunities](#), and we look forward to partnering together.

Sincerely,

Bridget Mercier | Senior Policy and Training Manager, J-PAL North America



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Applications open: J-PAL North America is recruiting a new Climate Action Learning Lab cohort

US climate leaders are currently enacting a broad range of policies and programs to support the transition to a low-carbon economy and support communities in adapting to climate-related hazards. But how do we know which approaches are most effective, and for whom? The Climate Action Learning Lab is recruiting a dedicated cohort of leaders from local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and industries in the United States to identify and scale effective and equitable climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. From May–August 2026, the Learning Lab will provide selected participants with a suite of free customized evaluation training, peer learning opportunities, and connections to academic researchers to leverage data and evaluation to advance climate solutions that work. [Learn more and apply by March 27 »](#)



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AprendeLab launch: Advancing evidence-based policymaking in Puerto Rico

This past November, J-PAL North America launched the AprendeLab in Puerto Rico, a new offering designed to support organizations on the island in embedding data and evaluation into their programming for workforce development, economic mobility, and health care. The AprendeLab provides



How can AI be leveraged to improve student achievement? J-PAL North America is seeking answers to this critical question through a partnership with LEVI, an ambitious initiative working to improve middle school math learning through AI-driven education tools. Through technical assistance, tailored guidance, LEVI-wide workshops, and connections with researchers within J-PAL's network, J-PAL is supporting six teams in designing and implementing high-quality randomized evaluations that assess program effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and scalability. A new J-PAL webpage features LEVI evaluations, the cohort of teams developing AI-driven education tools, and the J-PAL project team and funders supporting this work.

[Explore the LEVI partnership »](#)

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British Columbia), Meredith Fowlie (University of California Berkeley), and Catherine Wolfram (MIT) investigated the effect of automatically enrolling households in time-variant pricing structures on opt-out rates and electricity consumption. They found that default enrollment into more efficient pricing plans offers a powerful means to reduce electricity consumption through people's tendency to remain in default enrollments. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED RESEARCH RESOURCE



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Assessing viability and building relationships

Whether you work in government, program implementation, or research, building strong partnerships is key to conducting successful evaluations. Early discussions with partners interested in randomized evaluations serve to gather enough information to assess the practical and statistical feasibility of a randomized evaluation and establish strong working relationships with key stakeholders. A J-PAL research resource shares guidelines for researchers leading these early discussions with program implementers who have expressed interest in a randomized evaluation and with whom a partnership seems potentially viable. [Read the guidance »](#)

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