

To view this email as a web page, go [here](#).



NORTH AMERICA
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
January 2022

Good morning,

Over the next few weeks, the annual [Point-in-Time count](#) of the individuals and families experiencing homelessness is taking place across the country. Just before the pandemic, this count was [over 580,000](#)— a number that has been steadily increasing since 2016. Even more individuals are in unstable housing situations or facing eviction. The scale of this issue puts housing policy at the forefront of nationwide priorities and rigorous research can play a crucial role in determining highly effective solutions.

At J-PAL North America, we are committed to leveraging evidence to reduce homelessness and promote housing stability. To that end, we are [partnering with six organizations](#) to assess the impact of innovative programs to support our unhoused neighbors. Findings from these evaluations will build on a [growing body of evidence](#) on reducing and preventing homelessness.

As part of our housing stability work, our team is also partnering with J-PAL affiliated researchers and public housing authorities to [test programs](#) designed to help families who receive Housing Choice Vouchers move to neighborhoods with higher opportunity. This month, we feature a [new case study](#) highlighting how rigorous research established the importance of information in housing and school choice, leading to the scale up of more accessible school information during the housing search for low-income parents. We also share [new research results](#) from the Baby's First Years study, a randomized evaluation assessing the impact of poverty reduction on families and infants. And finally, we highlight a [new op-ed](#) in The Hill by my colleague Kim Dadisman arguing for investing in evidence-based education policies to improve student outcomes.

Increasing housing stability through evidence-based policy represents just one of our key priorities in 2022. I welcome you to [view our annual report](#) to learn more about what our team has planned for this year. And if you have a spare minute to spend on our blog, I invite you to [get to know](#) me and my Co-Executive Director Vincent Quan and learn about our shared vision for the organization.

Laura Feeney
Co-Executive Director, J-PAL North America





Photo: Shutterstock.com

Case Study: Scaling up access to school information with AffordableHousing.com

High quality schools are critical to the short- and long-term success of children, yet low-income families often face information barriers to accessing these schools. In a [new case study](#), we share the story of how researchers in the J-PAL network engaged [GreatSchools](#) and [AffordableHousing.com](#)—the largest provider of housing listings for families receiving rental assistance—to assess whether including school quality information alongside housing listings changed the neighborhood choices of US Housing Choice Voucher recipients. After the randomized evaluation demonstrated that this information led to more parents prioritizing school quality when making housing choices, AffordableHousing.com scaled access to school quality information for the housing search website’s 60,000 daily users.



Photo: Shutterstock.com

Groundbreaking study finds poverty reduction



Photo: Shutterstock.com

Research should guide spending for K-12 Covid



intervention linked to changed brain activity in infants

Baby's First Years, a J-PAL-funded randomized evaluation assessing the impact of poverty reduction on families and children, released [new results](#) showing that after a year of monthly cash support, infants were more likely to show brain activity patterns associated with the development of thinking and learning. This study is the first to demonstrate the causal link between poverty reduction and infant brain activity. The effect found was similar in size to large-scale education interventions such as reductions in class size. Learn more about the qualitative research contributing to the *Baby's First Years* study results on the [J-PAL blog](#).

relief funds

In an [op-ed in The Hill](#), J-PAL North America's education lead Kim Dadisman encourages policymakers to leverage the unique opportunity offered by the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. The \$122.8 billion allocated to the fund can be used to invest in evidence to address educational challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Top priorities include funding evidence-based programs like [tutoring](#) and [parental engagement platforms](#) and evaluating new, innovative programs to better understand what works. By building and utilizing evidence, Kim concludes that policymakers can complement the critical work states are doing to put ESSER funds where they are needed most.

FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY



Photo: Shutterstock.com

Rapid re-housing to reduce homelessness in the United States

Rapid re-housing programs, which quickly provide short term rental assistance and services to unhoused individuals and families, represent an

FEATURED RESEARCH RESOURCE

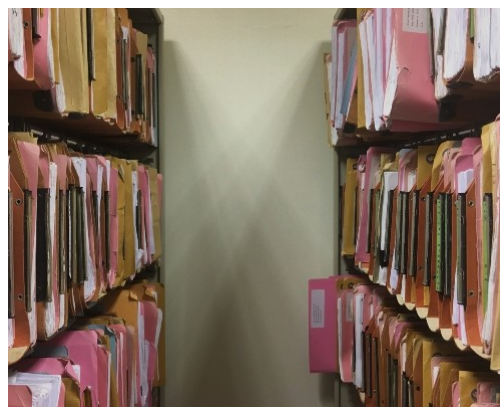


Photo: Shutterstock.com

Using administrative data for randomized evaluations

Administrative data are information collected, used, and stored primarily for administrative (i.e., operational) rather than research purposes. This can be an excellent source of information for use



increasingly popular short-term housing intervention for people who are experiencing homelessness. In an ongoing study in Santa Clara County, California, researchers are evaluating the impact of rapid re-housing on housing stability, health, criminal justice system involvement, and public benefit usage.

in a randomized evaluation, with low cost, reduced participant burden, and high accuracy. This research resource provides practical guidance on how to obtain and use nonpublic administrative data for a randomized evaluation, focusing on nonpublic administrative data that may be used in an individual-level randomized evaluation.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Cash Aid to Poor Mothers Increases Brain Activity in Babies, Study Finds
The New York Times

California Takes Next Major Step for Data System to Improve Supports for Students and Families
California Office of Governor

Support Us

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.



This email was sent by: J-PAL
400 Main Street, Cambridge, MA, 02142 US

[About J-PAL](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Update Profile](#) [Unsubscribe](#)

