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NORTH AMERICA
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
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Good morning,

While many policymakers and practitioners are interested in understanding the impact of their programs, the tools to design rigorous evaluations—as well as to interpret and use the results—are not readily available. How can we advance evidence-based policymaking by empowering these individuals to become better producers and users of scientific evidence?

Over the past four years, J-PAL North America’s training team has focused on equipping our partners with the skills and resources to generate and apply the results of randomized evaluations. Training participants have gone on to support new evaluations and catalyze the use of evidence in their own work. J-PAL’s trainings also provide a unique opportunity for government and non-profit organizations to share their current evaluation efforts and policy priorities. Understanding those priorities allows us to build connections and relationships based on common values. In this way, our training activities are fundamental to J-PAL North America’s mission of building a community of practice around evidence-based poverty alleviation.

J-PAL’s flagship executive education course, [Evaluating Social Programs](#), teaches practitioners how to generate and use impact evaluations. More recently, we have also expanded our work to offer tailored workshops to state, local, and federal government agencies. An exciting example of these custom trainings took place last fall, when we worked with the Chief Data Officer for California and the CalData team, which is increasing the capacity of state offices to use data, to run a joint training to multiple state departments.

Read on to learn more about [CalData’s work](#) and [how to apply](#) for this year’s virtual Evaluating Social Programs course, held from June 13-17. If you have any further questions about our training activities, I invite you to email [me](#) or our training lead, [Toby Chaiken](#).

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



Photo: Matthieu Alexandre | J-PAL

Applications now open for virtual course on Evaluating Social Programs

J-PAL's Executive Education course, [Evaluating Social Programs](#), equips participants with resources and knowledge to design, use, and interpret evidence from impact evaluations of social programs. This year, the program will be held live over Zoom in the form of a five-day training workshop from June 13 - 17. The interactive course provides an in-depth understanding of how randomized evaluations can measure social impact, considerations for their design and implementation, and how findings can inform evidence-based programs. Interested participants can learn about the experiences of past participants [on the J-PAL blog](#) and [in our course video](#). [Apply today](#).



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Training partnership builds use of evidence in California



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Behind the scenes with researchers from the Baby's First Years study

State governments have access to many forms of data, often stored in very different structures managed by different agencies and people with varying goals and resources. How can state leaders build infrastructure and capacity to unlock better use of that data across such a wide range of needs? Joy Bonaguro, California Statewide Chief Data Officer, and Jason Lally, Deputy Chief Data Officer, [reflect on providing a training in partnership with J-PAL](#) on designing rigorous evaluations for teams from across California state government, advancing multiple data and evaluation projects and fostering future learning and communities of practice among stakeholders statewide.

In an [interview](#) with J-PAL North America, J-PAL affiliate Lisa Gennetian (Duke University) and researcher Kimberly Noble discuss [recent results](#) from Baby's First Years, the first study to show a causal link between poverty reduction and infant brain activity. Together, they reflect on the interdisciplinary nature of the study, policy implications of the early findings, and potential results to come from the study. Additional J-PAL blog posts explore how qualitative research has strengthened the Baby's First Years study, including by providing a deeper understanding of [mothers' experiences](#) and [household compositions](#).

FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY



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The impacts of gender norms and women's relationship status on career ambitions in the United States

Women may face lower career success due to avoiding career-enhancing actions that would harm them in the marriage market. In [this randomized evaluation](#), researchers evaluate

FEATURED RESEARCH RESOURCE



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Administrative steps for launching a randomized evaluation in the United States

There are a number of logistical and administrative steps that researchers must take to launch a randomized evaluation that adheres to legal regulations, follows the transparency guidelines of academic journals, and

whether single women exhibit these tendencies in an elite US MBA program by testing whether students reported different ambitions privately and publicly, or if their responses varied when the audience was largely male. Researchers found substantial evidence that single women reduced their career ambitions and assertiveness when these traits were visible to men.

complies with security procedures required by regulatory or ethical standards. [This resource](#) provides guidance on these steps, many of which required advanced planning at the beginning of the research process. The order of completion may vary by project; this list is not necessarily chronological, and many steps are interdependent.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES

Job Opening: [Associate Director of Research - J-PAL North America](#)

Job Opening: [Associate Director of Policy - J-PAL North America](#)

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