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J-PAL

ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL POVERTY ACTION LAB

NORTH AMERICA

NORTH AMERICA
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

October 2025

Good morning,

Homelessness is a growing and more urgent policy issue each year. Following the *Grants Pass* Supreme Court decision in 2024 and proposed cuts to voucher programs and Housing First, countless more people are at risk of experiencing prolonged episodes of homelessness. And with the national conversation around homelessness becoming increasingly politicized, now more than ever, we need rigorous evidence on what works in prevention, crisis response, and housing and services.

Local leaders across the country are testing various strategies to address this crisis. For instance, in Santa Clara, California, organizations like the County's Office of Supportive Housing, Destination:Home, Sacred Heart Community Service, HomeFirst, and Abode are working with J-PAL North America and my colleagues at the [Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities](#) to evaluate a number of different approaches. These include whether [emergency financial assistance](#) can prevent homelessness, if [temporary rental subsidies](#) can have lasting effects even for people experiencing chronic homelessness, or whether [cash transfers](#) can help people bridge from temporary to permanent housing. Findings from these evaluations will inform these organizations' paths forward in supporting their communities. In these partnerships and in my work more broadly, I have the privilege of working with local government agencies and nonprofit organizations who put the well-being of the people they serve first, focusing on pragmatism and evidence, even when support for rigorous evaluation wavers at the federal level.

To help more stakeholders learn about the existing evidence and apply results to their contexts, I am working with J-PAL North America to develop a series of briefs that break down the evidence on promising approaches. The first publication, which is featured in this newsletter, focuses on Housing First, at a time when funding for these programs faces [renewed threats](#). Learn more below about the evidence on Housing First programs and why the approach is considered such an effective strategy to help people exit homelessness.

This publication is the first of many forthcoming resources that will synthesize evidence on other interventions in homelessness prevention and housing stability. We encourage you to share this, and future resources with your network and I invite you to [reach out](#) if you're interested in getting involved.

Sincerely,
David Phillips
Scientific Advisor, Homelessness and Housing Stability | J-PAL North America



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New policy brief: Housing First programs in North America

Traditional housing approaches often require individuals to meet preconditions (e.g., employment, sobriety) prior to being placed in housing. However, Housing First programs seek to move people into housing in the community as rapidly as possible, without any preconditions. A newly released J-PAL brief synthesizes evidence from several randomized evaluations of Housing First, including Pathways to Housing, HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing, At Home Chez Soi, the Denver Social Impact Bond, and more. While additional research is needed on the impacts on downstream outcomes, such as health and employment, the evidence is clear: the Housing First approach consistently gets people into housing quickly and keeps them housed in the long term. [Learn more about the key takeaways »](#)

FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY



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The impact of individualized, holistic case management on economic stability for individuals experiencing poverty in the United States

People experiencing poverty in the United States face substantial barriers to economic security, such as unemployment, housing instability and affordability, health care access, and childcare costs. Many safety net programs address each of these challenges individually and may fall short of addressing the compounding effects of multiple, simultaneous hardships. In response, J-PAL affiliated researchers William Evans (Notre Dame), James Sullivan (Notre Dame), Patrick Turner (Notre Dame), and coauthor Shawna Kolka evaluated the impact of a holistic, individualized, wraparound support program for individuals who have recently experienced a negative economic shock. While, on average, participants in the program did not have better outcomes than the comparison group, exploratory analyses suggest that the program's effect varied depending on participants' individual needs when they entered the program.

[Read more »](#)

FEATURED EVENT



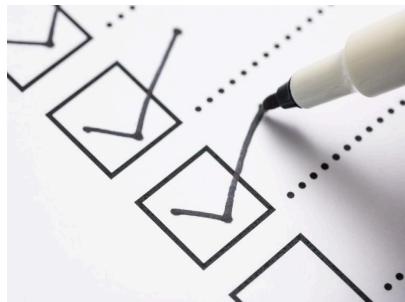
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Crime and racial equity research webinar

Join J-PAL North America on November 5 for a webinar introducing the new [Initiative for Effective US Crime Policy](#) and its inaugural Request for Proposals. The session will deliver logistical and operational guidance on the RFP and feature J-PAL affiliated researchers Bocar Ba (Duke University) and Steven Raphael (UC Berkeley) alongside Alex Chohlas-Wood (New York University). The panelists will unpack how they are using randomized evaluations to advance knowledge in the economics of crime. Attendees will learn about funding opportunities, explore how

randomized evaluations can foster a more effective and fair criminal legal system, and connect with J-PAL staff for next steps. [Register for the webinar »](#)

FEATURED RESEARCH RESOURCE



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 complies with security procedures required by regulatory or ethical standards. The order of steps may vary by project and many steps are interdependent, adding complexity to the process. [This J-PAL research resource](#) provides guidance on these steps, many of which require advanced planning at the beginning of the research process.

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