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**NORTH AMERICA**  
**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

September 2025

Good afternoon,

In the wake of a warming climate, decision makers across the country are implementing innovative programs and policies to promote a low-carbon future. But how do we know which approaches are working, and who is benefitting—or being left behind—in the process? While the dominant research in environment, energy, and climate focuses on emissions projections and models, randomized evaluations can be leveraged to test built-in assumptions on behavior change and answer important policy questions, such as: What incentives and messaging encourages the take up of public transit? What motivates households to switch to more energy efficient appliances? Or what is the impact of increasing e-bike access, as a complement to public transit, to reduce single occupancy trips?

Over the past three years, J-PAL North America has cultivated a network of researchers and state and local government leaders who are interested in rigorously evaluating promising decarbonization programs in order to advance solutions that work. We first launched the Economics of Decarbonization Working Group in 2023 to bring together economists using randomized evaluations to evaluate the impact of decarbonization programs and policies. We also engaged state and local climate leaders interested in undertaking rigorous evaluation and began designing a new J-PAL offering to better meet the needs of our government partners.

Our inaugural Climate Action Learning Lab—launched in May of this year—was the culmination of these past several years of work. We were thrilled to welcome more than 25 participants from state agencies and cities, including the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and the cities of Lincoln, Newport News, Orlando, and Philadelphia. You can learn more about this program, along with new evaluation summaries in climate and health, in the newsletter below.

At J-PAL North America, we are grateful to have the opportunity to support these champions of evidence who are driving US climate efforts during such an important time for local climate leadership. And we're excited to continue building on this momentum together.

Sincerely,

Erin Graeber, Environment, Energy, and Climate Change Sector Lead



Photo credit: J-PAL North America

## Celebrating our inaugural Climate Action Learning Lab cohort

This spring, J-PAL North America launched its inaugural Learning Lab, focused on climate action, to support more than 25 state and local climate leaders in leveraging data and evaluation to advance climate solutions that work. Throughout three months of programming, participants built skills and knowledge in evidence generation and use and applied research insights to their own programmatic areas. In collaboration with researchers in the J-PAL network, they identified priority research questions to guide evidence-building and decision making practices. The next phase of programming will focus on exploring the design and launch of randomized evaluations with J-PAL researchers, along with strengthening the community among current cohort members.

[Learn more »](#)

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### FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY



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## The effect of incentive-based pay in the Weatherization Assistance Program on energy efficiency in Illinois

Retrofitting has emerged as a critical approach to improving energy efficiency in the US building sector, which accounts for approximately 30 percent of national greenhouse gas emissions. Researchers conducted a randomized evaluation testing the impact of performance-based pay for contractors implementing air sealing retrofits as part of the Illinois Weatherization Assistance Program. The introduction of performance bonuses led to increased air-tightness in homes, reduced the likelihood of contractors being called back due to deficiencies, and resulted in overall reductions in household energy use. [Read more »](#)

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## New research results: The impact of outreach and assistance from navigators on Medicaid renewals in the United States

A [new working paper](#) by J-PAL invited researchers Rebecca Myerson (University of Wisconsin) and Laura Dague (Texas A&M), with coauthor Allison Espeseth, evaluated the effect of providing simplified information and assistance on Medicaid renewal. The randomized evaluation found that pre-recorded calls offering free one-on-one help from health insurance navigators increased Medicaid renewal by 1 percentage point (a 1.5 percent increase). The impact was largest for children, Tribal community members, people with chronic conditions, and adults with low incomes. [Read the evaluation summary »](#)

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### FEATURED RESEARCH RESOURCE



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## Evaluating technology-based interventions

Technology-based interventions can offer many benefits, including the ability to standardize treatment across participants and sites, which makes it easier to replicate the interventions with fidelity across communities. Examples of technology-based interventions might include automated alerts embedded into a smart home thermostat, a text messaging platform between teachers and parents, or computer-assisted learning tools. This [research resource](#) provides guidance for evaluations using technology as a key part of the intervention, discusses challenges that J-PAL North America has observed across several studies, and offers steps that may help mitigate them.

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### MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

[Shocked](#), featuring Michael Greenstone  
UChicago Institute for Climate and Sustainable Growth  
Listen on [Spotify](#), [Youtube](#), or [Apple Podcasts](#)

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