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STATE AND LOCAL POLICY AND RESEARCH PRIORITIES: A BLUEPRINT FOR FUTURE EVALUATIONS ON MOBILITY FROM POVERTY[1]

Updated May 2021

Across the United States, approximately 11.7 percent of the population lives in poverty.[2] Aside from measures of income, poverty also encompasses the experiences of the many individuals disempowered by the political and economic system and subjected to social isolation and stigma. A large body of research highlights that compared to their more well-off peers, children who grow up living in poverty are much less likely to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.[3] Limited economic mobility is also exacerbated by other trends across the United States, such as rising residential segregation by income, increased levels of incarceration, and a rapidly shifting labor market.[4] National trends also obscure significant disparities in upward mobility by race and geography, among other factors.[5]

J-PAL North America aims to answer key policy questions related to reducing poverty and promoting upward mobility. Over the past five years, state and local governments submitted 137 research proposals detailing their priorities for addressing policy questions using rigorous evidence. These proposals have led to 19 randomized evaluations and helped establish a network of state and local partners and researchers. Insights from the repository of past proposals have been integrated with discussions that J-PAL staff have conducted with state and local governments and J-PAL affiliated researchers to create a blueprint for future evaluations of policies and programs aimed at alleviating poverty and promoting upward mobility.

This report lays out key areas where new or additional research is best positioned to address barriers to mobility from poverty, by summarizing the core research priorities from state and local governments, discussing ongoing or completed evaluations, and outlining opportunities for future research.

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[2] Meyer, Bruce D. and James X Sullivan. 2021. "Near Real Time COVID-19 Income and Poverty Dashboard." Accessed May 6, 2021. http://povertymeasurement.org/covid-19-poverty-dashboard/

[3] Magmiller, Robert L. and Robert M. Adelman. 2009. "Childhood and Intergenerational Poverty: The Long-Term Consequences of Growing Up Poor." National Center for Children in Poverty. Accessed September 4, 2019. http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_909.html.

[4] Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, Maggie R. Jones, and Sonya R. Porter. 2020. "Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States: An Intergenerational Perspective." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 135(2): 711–783. doi: https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjz042.

[5] Ibid.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS REPORT

Jurisdictions, researchers, and funders can use this learning agenda to explore evaluation opportunities on the most urgent questions and facilitate new government-researcher partnerships to generate rigorous evidence in these key areas.

- State and local governments interested in where and how to generate new evidence on promising social programs.
- Researchers interested in exploring new evaluation opportunities with government partners and understanding governments' research priorities.
- Funders interested in understanding which evaluation opportunities are worth considering for investment.

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MOTIVATION

State and local governments can play a central role in building more rigorous evidence on strategies for reducing poverty and promoting upward mobility: they exercise significant regulatory, financial, and programmatic discretion to create supportive conditions that foster the economic mobility of residents. In addition, they raise revenue to fund public schools and community colleges, health care for low-income residents, and public assistance programs. City and county agencies provide direct assistance with housing, education, jobs programs, and transportation, while local court systems may experiment with new practices to address disparities in the criminal justice system. State agencies, county authorities, and city offices can act as laboratories of innovation by testing new policy approaches to foster upward mobility and then scaling up those approaches that have demonstrable impact.

The J-PAL North America State and Local Innovation Initiative amplifies the impact of state and local governments. We aim to generate rigorous evidence for alleviating poverty and promoting upward mobility by partnering with these governments to mitigate obstacles in the development and implementation of randomized evaluations.

While many state and local governments face similar challenges, coordination across jurisdictions is hampered by limited capacity among agencies, regulatory barriers, and challenges with data sharing and research collaboration. There are few organizing entities to coordinate efforts across all relevant stakeholders, resulting in a collective knowledge gap among state and local actors on how to best advance economic mobility for their residents.

Furthermore, practitioners and researchers frequently evaluate individual programs in isolation. Research needs are often identified and prioritized in an environment that fails to account for the broader work being done across jurisdictions, agencies, and specific programs. While one-off program evaluations are helpful, they are most valuable when conducted as part of a broader research agenda focused on understanding how best to promote economic mobility across jurisdictions. By centering the needs identified by a wide range of local actors, we have a tremendous opportunity to synthesize cross-cutting research priorities and to take a coordinated approach to learning how to best reduce poverty.

THE ROLE OF RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS IN PROMOTING MOBILITY FROM POVERTY

In a world with limited resources, decision-makers in government and other organizations must decide which social programs to invest in. A good place to start is by measuring impact: how well do these programs work? Randomized evaluations make it possible to understand the causal impact of an intervention. In other words, what specific changes to participants' lives can be directly attributed to the program itself? They also allow researchers and policymakers to tailor their research designs to answer specific questions about the effectiveness of a program and its underlying economic theory. In recent years, randomized evaluations, also called randomized controlled trials (RCTs), have gained global prominence as a tool for measuring impact in policy research. The 2019 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics was awarded to J-PAL co-founders Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, and longtime J-PAL affiliate Michael Kremer, in recognition of how this research method has transformed the field of social policy and economic development.

An important advantage of randomized evaluations is that they help ensure that systematic differences between groups do not drive differences in outcomes. In other words, we can more confidently attribute the difference in outcomes to the intervention rather than to other factors. Another important benefit is that the intervention and data collection can be designed to answer specific questions. For example, it may be important to understand the individual impact of different components of a program and the channels through which they work.

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DEFINITIONS

The US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and hosted by the Urban Institute, proposes that any definition of mobility from poverty encompasses three core principles: **economic success**, **power and autonomy**, and **being valued in the community**.[6]

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6   Acs, Gregory, Amrita Maitreyi, Alana L. Conner, Hazel Rose Markus, Nisha G. Patel, Sarah Lyons-Padilla, and Jennifer L. Eberhardt. 2018. "Measuring Mobility from Poverty." The US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty. Accessed November 9, 2020.
    https://www.mobilitypartnership.org/publications/measuring-mobility-poverty.

Economic Success: Economic success captures factors that directly contribute to individuals' and families' material well-being. Those factors fall into four broad categories: income, assets, and income adequacy; employment; skills (human capital); and family demographic circumstances.[7]

Power and Autonomy: Power is a person's ability to influence their environment, other people, and their own outcomes, and autonomy is a person's ability to act according to their own decisions rather than according to others' decisions.

Being Valued in Community: Being valued in community is a person's sense that they belong and are included among family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, other communities, and society. A related concept is social capital, which is a web of relationships that has economic benefits.

We use these core principles to guide our thinking about what policies can support mobility from poverty, also referred to in this report as upward mobility. For the purposes of this report, upward mobility takes on a broader meaning beyond traditional measures of economic mobility as measured, say, by income, employment, and educational attainment. Mobility under this definition encompasses an individual's connectivity and agency within their community.

Some policy areas and interventions below may not traditionally be viewed as being directly linked to upward mobility, but they serve as preconditions for mobility and opportunity under this expansive definition. For example, we might anticipate job training and placement programs being directly linked to upward mobility—these programs may directly and immediately offer participants an opportunity to earn a higher wage, build connections in the labor market, and determine their own career path. In contrast, addressing challenges such as substance use disorder or housing instability may not directly lead to upward mobility but may be necessary (but not sufficient) for eventual empowerment and economic success. These types of policy areas may therefore be considered "preconditions for mobility," as they are critical for promoting upward mobility in the long run.

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[7] Ibid.

Photo: Shutterstock.com

METHODOLOGY

We use multiple inputs to determine some of the most pressing state and local policy priorities that can benefit from rigorous evidence.

1. A retrospective analysis of past research funding proposals J-PAL North America received from state and local governments: Through these proposals, public organizations around the country identified critical knowledge gaps, in essence sketching out a "demand map" of where research needs can be targeted to policy challenges. Because each proposal requires a time-intensive process of choosing an evaluation topic to prioritize and getting the buy-in and sign-off of executive leadership, these proposals reveal the policy priorities and preferences of a wide range of stakeholders across the United States.

2. Interviews with state and local policymakers: To expand on the retrospective analysis, we interviewed state and local governments to solicit forward-looking policy priorities, how rigorous evidence from randomized evaluations would help them answer critical research questions, and obstacles they encounter when developing a randomized evaluation. For examples of the types of questions we asked, please see appendix two.

3. Interviews with J-PAL affiliated researchers: We interviewed J-PAL affiliates who have done past work with state and local governments to determine (1) policy areas they see as being high priority, (2) the feasibility of randomized evaluations around these priorities, and (3) obstacles they encounter when partnering or attempting to partner with a state and local government. For examples of the types of questions we asked, please see appendix two.

SAMPLE

Our retrospective analysis reviewed 124 proposals from 90 jurisdictions in 27 states and one district, outlining evaluation ideas for 142 promising interventions across a range of different policy areas. The vast majority of proposals are sourced from J-PAL North America's State and Local Innovation Initiative, but we have also included proposals from public entities that were submitted to J-PAL North America's other research initiatives, including initiatives on health care delivery, work of the future, and education technology.

DEFINING STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS JURISDICTION TYPES

The State and Local Innovation Initiative takes a broad definition of state and local government, and consequently this analysis reflects that broad scope. For the purposes of this learning agenda, we have included entities where employees of the entity are public, the organization works in partnership with a public entity, or the implementing organization is a public organization. Additionally, we classify each jurisdiction in the following categories:

COUNTY	CITY	STATE
Executive (e.g., office of a county executive or manager)	Executive (e.g., office of policy, mayor's office)	Executive (e.g., office of governor)
Agency (e.g., county housing authority)	Agency (e.g., program- or policy-specific offices at city level)	Agency (e.g., department of health and human services)
		Legislative (e.g., legislative research office)

Through our interviews, we spoke to 20 unique jurisdictions including policymakers representing 12 states and 8 cities. While some jurisdictions had previous relationships with J-PAL, we reached out to agencies we had no previous contact with to broaden the scope of input we received. Representatives came from a variety of offices, some with a focus on evaluation and others from government agencies with a broader or operations focus. We reached out to a geographically diverse set of jurisdictions in 17 states to better understand the policy priorities from different communities across the United States. However, it is important to note that our sample is not fully representative of all US state and local governments, and there are many views that may be missing in this report.

FIGURE 1. MAP OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS[8]

Improving Criminal Justice Outcomes for the Extremely Disadvantages
Emily Owens, CarlyWill Sloan
Shasta County, California

Bridges to Success: Mobility Mentoring
Bill Evans, David Phillips
Rochester, NY

Principals Academy
Gustavo Bubonis
Puerto Rico
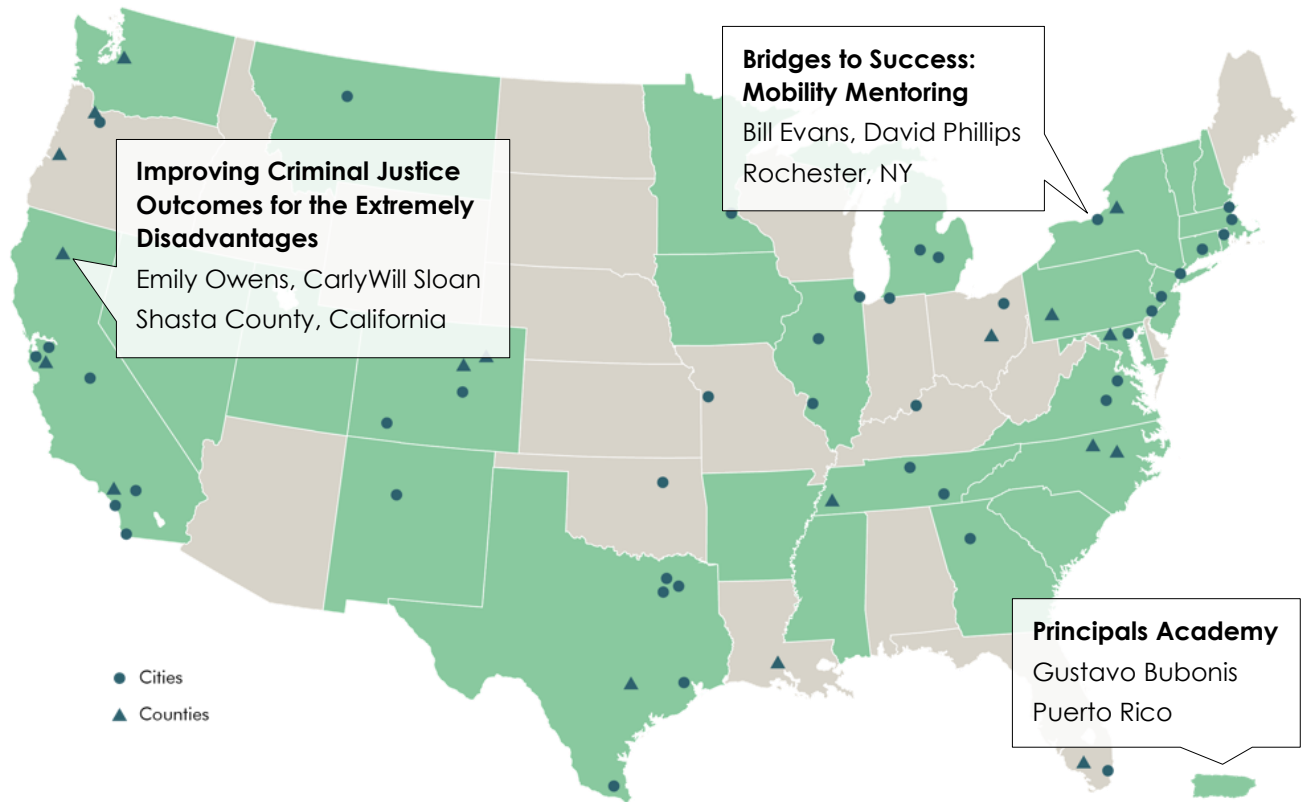
• Cities
▲ Counties

In addition to reviewing proposals from and engaging in conversations with state and local governments, we also leveraged J-PAL's network of affiliated researchers to determine their research priorities. We see their input as serving a crucial role in matching state and local priorities with researcher priorities to spur the development and implementation of randomized evaluations. We spoke to 25 researchers with a variety of research specialties and interests in areas such as health care delivery, education technology, housing and homelessness, and criminal justice. This learning agenda illustrates where there is currently interest to generate evidence using randomized evaluations.[9,10]

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[8] Please see appendix one for a list of jurisdictions.

[9] Though we are providing a list of the offices and agencies, we will not directly refer to any of them in the sections where we discuss the policy and research priorities but instead provide general geographic and jurisdictional information. This anonymity allowed us to have more candid conversations on the opportunities and obstacles state and local policymakers face.

[10] The bulk of this agenda is sourced directly from J-PAL North America's collection of research proposals and interviews. Given that these resources are not publicly released, we have not created citations for information drawn directly from these proposals and interviews. In instances in which we draw from prior research and external sources, we have included a citation.

Photo: Shutterstock.com

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Covid-19 pandemic has made existing research questions more salient while leading to a fresh set of pressing policy priorities. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and economic crisis have not only exacerbated existing barriers to economic mobility but also created additional barriers. The effects of the pandemic have led to a fresh set of research questions while lending renewed urgency to a number of established questions, including ones around the impact of direct cash transfers, effective service delivery mechanisms, increasing take-up of preventive health care, and reducing disparities in educational outcomes across sociodemographic factors.

The pandemic ushered in a new wave of research questions on how to effectively target and disburse stimulus payments and other assistance from federal and state legislation, how to encourage take-up of Covid-19 testing and vaccines, and how to address learning losses from Covid-19-related disruptions for school-aged children across the country. At the same time, there is growing recognition that many of these questions are the ones that state and local governments and researchers were already focused on addressing. Viewed in the new context of the pandemic, these questions point to fundamental issues where more rigorous evidence is needed in social policy research: cost-effective social program delivery mechanisms and infrastructures, take-up of preventative healthcare, and reduction of disparities in students' learning outcomes across sociodemographic groups.

These new priorities are highlighted in the discussion below. State and local governments and researchers can use this resource to develop evidence to help address these critical policy problems.

State and local governments have an opportunity to utilize a substantial portion of funding from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) to support a wide range of programs and policies aimed at helping local communities recover from Covid-19.11 As states and localities determine which programs and policies to deploy, they can use this opportunity to build in rigorous evaluation to figure out which approaches truly work. One of the goals of ARP funding is to help states and localities respond to public health needs and economic damage from the pandemic.12 Under this umbrella, recipient governments have flexibility to help disproportionately impacted populations and communities.13 Given this flexibility, states and localities have the opportunity to pilot new and innovative programs to address long-standing challenges that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. This is an opportunity to learn which new innovations in social policy hold promise to create meaningful and sustainable improvements for our communities. Pairing these innovations with rigorous evaluation will be key to generating a new body of evidence for how states and localities can build the long-term resilience of our communities in this post-pandemic era. For more information on how state and local governments can use these funds, please refer to the Department of Treasury's Interim Final Rule.

State and local policymakers continue to grapple with many of the same questions, and there remains a need to build rigorous evidence in those areas. The priorities outlined in past proposals and in our conversations with state and local governments and researchers are complex and wide-reaching. Still, several common themes emerge. First, many policy needs are highly localized. Most jurisdictions measured their challenges in reference to other parts of the United States. To frame the problem in a comparative light, with a focus on local conditions, underscores that solutions tailored to local needs are necessary. Indeed, this is what gives local government a comparative advantage: it is more attuned to the specific needs of residents and as a result can provide a more immediate and customized response.

However, across different jurisdictions, from all corners of the country and varying levels of government, an outline of similar needs emerges. While revealing the extent of poverty and inequality across the United States, the universality of these challenges also reveals a common pathway toward solving them. By coordinating across localities, agencies, and levels of government to synthesize research needs and prioritize evaluations, the lessons learned from an evaluation in one jurisdiction can guide policy changes in countless others.

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11 "U.S. Department of the Treasury." Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds | U.S. Department of the Treasury. Accessed May 20, 2021. https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.

Our subsequent outreach further solidified the commonalities that began to emerge in our analysis of past proposals. In our prospective outreach, we found that state and local governments continued to prioritize many of the same policies and interventions identified in the retrospective analysis. The foundation for many of the items we discuss below come from our initial analysis of the past proposals from state and local governments and are supplemented with conversations with additional state and local governments.

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CREATING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING: THE J-PAL GENERALIZABILITY FRAMEWORK

In the policy sections below, we highlight ongoing and completed randomized evaluations. Existing evidence can be a powerful tool in helping governments decide which policies to implement or scale up in service of their communities. In using evidence, governments need to determine how to apply lessons from elsewhere to policymaking in their own local context. State and local governments can learn how to apply evaluation results in their own jurisdiction using J-PAL's Generalizability Framework. As one example, many states and localities are considering tutoring as a strategy to help students recover from learning loss, in light of the robust evidence base underlying high-dosage tutoring from multiple evaluations. Please see the J-PAL North America Tutoring page for more information.

The Generalizability Framework provides a step-by-step structure for assessing whether an evidence-based intervention will be effective in a new context. It helps decision makers utilize different types of evidence, including results from the increasing number of randomized evaluations of social programs.

For more details on each step of the Generalizability Framework, please see appendix five

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State and local governments have broad policy priorities but are flexible about ways to address them. While our analysis of past proposals synthesizes research priorities from various state and local governments involved in the evidence-based policy space, our further outreach was not limited to governments that are necessarily prepared to develop or implement a randomized evaluation. Policymakers that did not have evaluation top of mind had broad policy priorities, but did not necessarily have specific interventions to address these priorities. The bulk of the specific interventions came from past proposals and J-PAL North America staff suggestions to address state and local priorities. This creates an opportunity for partnerships between state and local governments and researchers to be innovative in developing and implementing interventions.

Policymakers and researchers continue to face obstacles to generating and using evidence. It is clear from our interviews with both state and local policymakers and researchers that a number of obstacles remain to generating and using evidence. We have detailed some of these obstacles below, with data accessibility and usability of data infrastructures proving to be a key obstacle for multiple jurisdictions. Nearly every policymaker and researcher mentioned a lack of adequate data access as one of the biggest barriers to commissioning and successfully completing evaluations. Data needed for certain evaluations can be confidential by law, held by an agency unwilling to share, or not collected to begin with. Even when data is collected, it may be stored in a format that does not lend itself to data analysis or linkage to other agencies' datasets. Many jurisdictions also lack personnel with the specialized knowledge necessary to work with the data. In order for state and local governments to collect and use data to generate evidence, it will be critical for state and local governments to build up and better use their data infrastructure. Moreover, data access and infrastructure can help state and local governments respond to the needs of individuals in their jurisdictions from a process standpoint. Access to high-quality, real-time data has served as a valuable tool for some states in responding to the Covid-19 public health and economic crises.[14]

One of the State and Local Innovation Initiative's goals is to mitigate these obstacles for policymakers and researchers. Please see our publication *Building Capacity, Overcoming Obstacles, and Creating Evidence: An Evaluation Guide for State and Local Policymakers* for more information on implementing randomized evaluations in state and local governments.

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[14] Gubb, Jesse and Amanda Lee. 2020. "How Data Governments Already Have Can Guide the Pandemic Response." *Governing*. Accessed November 4, 2020. https://www.governing.com/now/How-Data-Governments-Already-Have-Can-Guide-the-Pandemic-Response.html.

OBSTACLES HIGHLIGHTED BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND RESEARCHERS

Data access and availability	A lack of adequate access to data is one of the most cited barriers to successfully completing evaluations. Data needed for certain evaluations can be confidential by law, held by an agency unwilling to share, or not collected to begin with. Even when data is collected, it may be stored in a format that does not lend itself to data analysis or linkage to other agencies' datasets. **Potential solution:** State and local governments can draw on existing administrative data, and researchers can help governments understand which administrative data sources are most valuable for evaluations and help secure buy-in from data holders. See J-PAL's resource on using administrative data for randomized evaluations for more information.
Agency buy-in	Multiple agencies expressed an issue with agency buy-in. When state and local governments do not have a dedicated office or system for running evaluations of their programs, it becomes challenging to plan and receive approval for an evaluation. One city agency mentioned that evaluating programs can be seen as questioning the integrity of the program rather than aiming to provide the most effective solutions for policy issues. Additionally, one state agency noted that it can be difficult to get programs and staff involved with the administration of the program to step back and look at the effectiveness of the program. **Potential solution:** J-PAL North America's State and Local Innovation Initiative can work with agency staff and leadership to demonstrate the value of randomized evaluations.
Funding and budget shortfalls	A lack of funding prevents many state and local governments from conducting evaluations. Multiple government agencies we spoke to discussed significant budget cuts and budget shortfalls that limit their ability to implement evaluations and/or fund new programs and interventions. One jurisdiction noted that many times it may cost more to evaluate the program than the resources in the program. This is not a problem unique to the jurisdictions we spoke to. Researchers estimate that the decrease in tax revenues from the Covid-19 pandemic and economic downturn will result in large budget shortfalls in states. If state and local agencies do not prioritize evaluations, they are left out of the budget entirely. In the coming years, evaluation could be easily deprioritized given the limited resources state and local governments can draw on. When governments have a lack of funding, it is natural for them to maintain the status quo with programs that are already running rather than spend money to evaluate new programs. **Potential solution:** J-PAL offers funding and technical support to selected governments to offset upfront costs and to help governments overcome obstacles that might normally make research more difficult and expensive.

OBSTACLES HIGHLIGHTED BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND RESEARCHERS

Ethical considerations	State and local government officials noted the important ethical considerations when conducting randomized evaluations. When a program is not oversubscribed or naturally offered in a random lottery, it can be difficult to design a randomized evaluation in an ethical manner. One way states have addressed this barrier has been to offer tiers of service so that people in the control group still receive some form of the program or service. **Potential Solution:** When there are more eligible participants than program slots, random assignment, often referred to as a lottery, provides a fair way to enroll participants because all who are eligible have an equal chance of receiving services. J-PAL's resource on real-world challenges to randomization and their solutions offers guidance on how evaluations can be designed to meet the ethical and logistical needs of different programs.
Connection to partners	Many jurisdictions and researchers noted the difficulty in connecting with partners to develop and implement randomized evaluations in state and local governments. Additionally, researchers noted that even when a connection is made, researchers and state and local governments may have different priorities for the research process. Jurisdictions and researchers note two major misalignments that make it difficult to build viable research partnerships. One, the misalignment of incentives. Jurisdictions may have limited budgetary discretion to alter a program significantly and therefore are limited by the changes or aspects they can randomize for an impact evaluation. These changes may not necessarily result in questions of interest for researchers who are often looking for research opportunities that will significantly push the field forward. Two, the misalignment of timelines. Budget decisions are usually made on an annual basis and officials are elected on a set timeline, while research studies may take years to reach completion, particularly with regard to long-term outcomes. Staff turnover at jurisdictions may lead to loss of momentum to get projects across the finish line or reluctance in executing data use agreements signed by predecessors. **Potential Solution:** J-PAL's State and Local Innovation Initiative aims to connect affiliated researchers with state and local governments to develop mutually beneficial partnerships.
Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic	Since our conversations took place in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, most jurisdictions expressed unique barriers to evaluation brought on by the pandemic. One example of this is the diversion of resources from evaluation to addressing the pandemic. Many jurisdictions expressed how taxing the pandemic has been on

city and state agencies, and as a result they have had to put evaluation or plans for evaluation on hold.

One jurisdiction noted the challenge of conducting fieldwork during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many in-person activities are on hold or discouraged, which makes it difficult to conduct randomized evaluations that require in-person surveying or other work.

Similarly, one researcher underscored the difficulty in evaluating programs in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic when policies and programs are evolving quickly and state and local agencies are wary of doing evaluations for fear of negative results and potential funding cuts.

Potential Solution: State and local governments can prioritize evaluations that generate timely evidence to help governments respond to an immediate Covid-19 need. For instance, randomized evaluations can be used to identify ways to improve vaccine testing and take-up, as with an ongoing evaluation in Minnesota.

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POLICY AND RESEARCH PRIORITIES

In this section, we will discuss policy priorities and interventions in six broad policy areas relating to mobility from poverty:

- Economic Security
- Human Capital
- Health and Wellness
- Housing, Place, and Mobility
- Race, Gender, and Inclusion
- Safety and Justice

We have sorted policy priorities based on the common themes that emerged across government proposals and outreach to governments and researchers. Though policy areas may not perfectly capture priorities and/or interventions, we think they accurately capture the general policy categories of state and local governments. Additionally, each category is an important factor in promoting mobility from poverty. We will detail how each category intersects with mobility from poverty below.

For each policy area, we detail the following:

1. 3–5 key policy priorities from state and local policymakers and researchers synthesized from our retrospective analysis of past proposals and our interviews.

2. Policy interventions that state and local policymakers and researchers highlighted that can address their policy priorities.

3. Ongoing or completed randomized evaluations that address the listed policy priorities. State and local policymakers can consider implementing similar policy interventions in their own jurisdictions. Please see J-PAL's Generalizability Framework in the box above and Evidence to Policy stories for how policies evaluated by J-PAL affiliates have resulted in the scale-up of proven programs.

4. Opportunities for future evaluation from both policymakers' and researchers' perspective. Each example includes a discussion of what a randomized evaluation could look like.

The examples of policy priorities and interventions do not comprise an exhaustive list, nor do they capture every policy priority or intervention idea discussed by state and local policymakers and researchers. Rather, they form a select list of policy priorities and interventions that rose to the top for both policymakers and researchers. For a more detailed list of interventions, please see appendix three.

MOVING THE NEEDLE: SETTING STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS PRIORITIES WITH METRICS AND DATA

Overwhelmingly, state and local governments we spoke to cited the use of metrics in determining their policy and research priorities. As we aim to develop and implement evaluations in key areas, we need to also focus on the capacity of state and local governments to collect data and use it to inform their priorities. One jurisdiction highlighted building a dataset to conduct a needs assessment of their population. The dataset includes information on outcomes like program enrollment and income to better determine how current programs are serving the population and to determine gaps in services. Understanding the needs of the jurisdiction can help determine state and local priorities and outcomes for interventions.

The Urban Institute developed Metrics for Mobility from Poverty to help communities motivate and shape state and local policy action. The metrics are key predictors that state and local governments can influence to move the needle on three key drivers that promote upward mobility: strong and healthy families, supportive communities, and opportunities to learn and earn. For more information, please see the full report here.[15]

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[15] Turner, Margery A., Gregory Acs, Steven Brown, Claudia D. Solari, and Keith Fudge. 2020. "Boosting Upward Mobility: Metrics to Inform Local Action." Urban Institute. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102342/boosting-upward-mobility-metrics-to-inform-local-action_1.pdf.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Topics classified under economic security address how to foster upward mobility by providing individuals with resources to have a stable income and to increase their standard of living. Each of the policies below has been highlighted by state and local governments and J-PAL affiliated researchers as a priority in promoting upward mobility. Although economic security is largely shaped by an individual's income, it can also cover social protection programs, reduction of job search barriers, and matching skills training to available jobs.

- **Improving Take-Up of Social Protection Programs.** Social protection programs provide resources or insurance to protect the physical and financial welfare of individuals who are experiencing, or are at imminent risk of experiencing, poverty. In the United States, these programs include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; previously and colloquially known as "food stamps"), Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF; colloquially known as "welfare"), unemployment insurance (UI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Most of these provide financial resources that directly increase income and reduce poverty. Many researchers and jurisdictions continue to prioritize the need to better understand low take-up of various social protection programs despite the large number of eligible populations and how to increase the take-up of these programs. One city agency in the Midwest expressed interest in determining how better communication of program information can increase the use of programs like financial navigators, which attempt to connect individuals with financial services and social protection programs.

  Social protection programs are an important precondition to upward mobility for those who would be able to work under the right conditions and a critical support to allow independence and autonomy for those who cannot work. For those whose income would otherwise fall below a threshold needed for survival in the US economy, these programs provide critical support to allow individuals to maintain their physical well-being and to develop the skills and knowledge needed to find gainful employment. One researcher noted the need to examine social protection programs more holistically to look beyond the immediate outcomes and to consider long-term outcomes in health and education for all members of a household.

- **Promoting Economic Self-Sufficiency.** Many anti-poverty programs seek to ensure that families have the resources they need to achieve economic self-sufficiency, meaning they have an income that can meet their basic needs. Barriers to self-sufficiency range from limited employment opportunities to informational barriers.[16] Multiple jurisdictions highlighted the priority of moving people to higher paying jobs to become economically self-sufficient. The Minneapolis Housing Authority and the Metropolitan Council Housing and Redevelopment Authority partnered with J-PAL researchers to explore options for helping low-income families move to high-opportunity

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[16] Moore, Stephanie, Michael Gordon, Elise Gahan, and Julie Gowda. "Barrier Busters: Unconditional Cash Transfers as a Strategy to Promote Economic Self-Sufficiency." Working Paper, April 2019. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://poverty.umich.edu/working-paper/barrier-busters-unconditional-cash-transfers-as-a-strategy-to-promote-economic-self-sufficiency/.

neighborhoods. A state agency in the Southeast noted a gap between losing eligibility for social protection programs and the point at which people reach economic self-sufficiency. Addressing the benefit cliff could help incentivize individuals or households to move up the income ladder.

- **Improving coordination and delivery of social services.** Federal relief packages allocated billions of dollars to state and local jurisdictions, but increased demand for these services highlighted the need for infrastructure improvements to better target and deliver aid. The pandemic is putting strain on existing programs such as Unemployment Insurance and Medicaid as jurisdictions scramble to distribute pandemic-specific emergency assistance. This suggests that existing infrastructure was not well positioned to greatly expand provision of services. Several researchers also highlighted the importance of understanding who is using what set of programs, in order to better understand more holistic, less siloed ways to address social issues.

- **Reducing Unemployment and Underemployment.** A reliable source of income is a critical component of upward mobility. The massive layoffs that took place due to the Covid-19 pandemic have most negatively impacted low-income individuals while disparities remain in access to Unemployment Insurance. For instance, 60 percent of Black men earning less than $35,000 annually suffered income or job loss while Black and Latinx workers are less likely to have their UI application approved.[17] Multiple jurisdictions have focused, or are focusing, on improving jobs training programs to be more effective in matching job seekers to available jobs. Additionally, one southern state agency noted their priority to better understand which unemployment claimants have the greatest probability of going back to work and conditions for their success. Access to employment can result in positive outcomes beyond immediate income; for instance, prior research indicates that job programs for low-income individuals may result in positive physical and mental health outcomes.[18] The same southern state agency also highlighted the need to better understand how access to child care impacts job retention and other employment outcomes. Improving the quality of jobs is also a priority, as many of the jobs available to those who need them do not pay living wages, offer sufficient benefits or protections, or provide a path for workers to progress within their industry. One researcher emphasized the need to improve the quality of home health care jobs, such as in-home nurses and aides, given the essential role they will play in the workforce of the future.

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[17] Cumming, Carmen S. and Raksha Kopparam. 2021. "What the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey reveals about the first year of the coronavirus recession, in six charts." *Washington Center for Equitable Growth,* April 1, 2021. https://equitablegrowth.org/what-the-u-s-census-household-pulse-survey-reveals-about-the-first-year-of-the-coronavirus-recession-in-six-charts/.

[18] United States Department of Labor. 2014. "What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/jdt.pdf.

- **Re-skilling workers.** The Covid-19 pandemic led to significant job losses, particularly in sectors like hospitality and leisure that have been hit hardest by the pandemic.[19] One researcher suggested that state and local governments conduct a landscape analysis to determine which sectors have displaced workers and which sectors have grown to determine how to best re-skill workers.

- **Mitigating Job Search Barriers.** Job search barriers are a major impediment to finding employment for many job seekers. Several commonly cited search barriers include a lack of knowledge around where and how to search for jobs efficiently, the effort required in the job search process, and potential skills mismatches between what job seekers can offer and what employers want.[20] A southern state agency noted the importance of determining the most effective types of job training programs and better matching skills development to available jobs. Systematic disparities in the distribution of search barriers in turn has major implications for equity and upward mobility. For example, a proposal from a western state agency highlighted that individuals in rural communities may have to drive hundreds of miles to get to the nearest office and take advantage of the employment services offered. Mitigating the structural inequities in job search barriers by targeting programs toward communities more likely to face greater challenges during the job search process may be an important component in promoting upward mobility. Jurisdictions across the United States have proposed marginal but important changes to existing job search programs to address barriers.

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT PROMOTING ECONOMIC SECURITY	
Unconditional cash transfers and universal basic income	Many jurisdictions and researchers discussed their interest in testing unconditional cash transfers and universal basic income programs to promote economic security. Unconditional cash transfers are programs for a specific group of people that provide money to individuals without requiring them to meet specific conditions (i.e., participating in a specific activity). Universal basic income is a regular, guaranteed income without restrictions or requirements.
Pre-and post-employment services	These services include subsidized employment, apprenticeships, volunteer work, job coaching, job search services, educational programs, and other training services. Job training programs can equip workers with the skills and experience necessary to gain employment and reenter the labor force. One researcher noted the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of adult vocational

[19] Engemann, Kristie M. "How the Covid-19 Pandemic Has Affected the U.S. Labor Market: St. Louis Fed," November 17, 2020. https://www.stlouisfed.org/open-vault/2020/october/how-covid19-pandemic-has-affected-labor-market.

[20] Babcock, Linda, William J. Congdon, Lawrence F. Katz, and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2012. "Notes on Behavioral Economics and Labor Market Policy." *IZA Journal of Labor Policy* 1(2): 1–14. doi: https://doi.org/10.1186/2193-9004-1-2.

	HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT PROMOTING ECONOMIC SECURITY	
	education programs to promote workforce development and economic security.
Information and navigators to increase take-up of existing social protection programs	Policymakers and researchers are interested in determining the effectiveness of providing information on the program, eligibility, and application and/or recertification process through in-person assistance, text messages, postcards, and/or letters.
Mitigating the costs of participating in job search programs	The costs of engaging in a job search program can vary from economic costs, such as transportation costs, to time costs and psychological costs. Jurisdictions are interested in evaluating programs like distance work services appointments, simplifying the processes and requirements to apply to work services, and providing value affirmation exercises as well as personalized, targeted, and motivational support.

EXAMPLES OF ONGOING OR COMPLETED RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS

Improving Take-Up of Tax Benefits in the United States: Researchers found that repeated notifications with simple, highly relevant information improved taxpayers' likelihood of claiming benefits by 32 percent. However, information designed to reduce stigma and to reduce perceptions of the economic costs of filing paperwork had no effect on benefit claims. (California)

Intensive Case Management to Overcome Barriers to Self-Sufficiency in the United States: Rochester and the Rochester Anti-Poverty Task Force are evaluating their Bridges to Success program. This program assigns low-income individuals a navigator/ mentor who helps the individual access a wide range of government services. (Rochester)

Increasing the Take-Up of CalEITC: The California Franchise Tax Board conducted a series of experiments to evaluate the impact of programs that encourage take-up of the EITC among eligible families. (California)

Understanding the Effects of Text Reminders on Reducing SNAP Churn: This study assesses the impact of a texting reminder program in reducing the number of individuals who fail to renew for the snap, leading them to reapply at a later point, which is known as "churn." SNAP churn is costly to the applicants and may leave them without protection before they reapply. (Massachusetts)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE EVALUATIONS

Researchers and jurisdictions are interested in having greater insight into why there is such low take-up of social protection programs so that they can better target their time and resources to promote utilization of these programs.

- A potential randomized evaluation could examine the impact of sending mailings with different messages to eligible individuals who have never enrolled in various social protection programs on the take-up rates of these individuals.

Recently, there has been more recognition of the importance of access to child care for households with all working adults.[21] Future research on job retention and employment outcomes can also focus on the impact of child care programs.

- If a jurisdiction can only afford to offer child care programs to a subset of their constituents and has a long waiting list, it can employ a randomized lottery to determine who can access the programs for that year and examine the program's impact on outcomes such as the job retention rate and household income.

The changing nature of work due to technological advancement and disruptions from Covid-19 suggests a need for expanded adult vocational education programs on developing a workforce of the future instead of focusing on traditional jobs that may become obsolete. For instance, increasing training for health care workers, especially health aides to care for the elderly, can promote career advancement for individuals working entry-level positions in the sector.

- A randomized evaluation could examine the effectiveness of a vocational program in helping health care workers acquire higher certification for promotion and career advancement.

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[21] Gould, Elise, Lea J.E. Austin, and Marcy Whitebook. 2017. "What Does Good Child Care Reform Look Like?" Economic Policy Institute. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://files.epi.org/pdf/123954.pdf.

HUMAN CAPITAL

Human capital policies encompass investments in education, training, and other programs to allow individuals to gain the skills needed for employment and economic self-sufficiency. Policies and programs aimed at increasing opportunity and equity within the education system fall under the umbrella of human capital.

- **Increase K-12 Educational Achievement.** Past research has identified clear links between schooling and long-term life outcomes such as poverty, health, and risk of involvement with the criminal justice system, all critical components of upward mobility.[22,23,24] While these outcomes are inextricably linked to other factors such as race, wealth, and place, access to education remains one of many predictors of mobility. Further, access to education is closely tied to one's identity and economic status, as urban school districts face the lowest graduation rates, the gap in Black-White graduation rates has shown little convergence over the last forty years, and the disparity in test scores between high- and low-income students has increased substantially since 1940.[25] Lack of access to quality education can exacerbate existing inequalities and hinder students' opportunities for economic success. The Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated educational inequalities, and researchers and jurisdictions are prioritizing programs such as individualized tutoring that can support students who are more likely to fall behind during this time.

- **Mitigate impact of "Covid slide."** Researchers predict that school closures due to Covid-19 will lead to learning loss with disparate impacts for different socioeconomic groups. As schools reopen and students return to the classroom, school districts will need to find ways to address a classroom with varying levels of learning loss to ensure students do not fall further behind. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the effects of the digital divide. Many students are losing access to their virtual education due to inadequate access to the internet and appropriate technology. These shortfalls in education accessibility may result in adverse effects on education outcomes and mobility. Multiple jurisdictions, including southwestern and western city agencies, highlighted the need to expand access to and increase affordability of internet and technology services.

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[22] Goldin, Claudia and Lawrence Katz. 2008. *The Race between Education and Technology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[23] Lleras-Muney, Adriana. "The Relationship between Education and Adult Mortality in the United States." *The Review of Economic Studies* 72, no. 1 (2005): 189–221. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3700689.

[24] Lochner, Lance and Enrico Moretti. 2004. "The Effect of Education on Crime: Evidence from Prison Inmates, Arrests, and Self-Reports." *American Economic Review* 94(1): 155–189. doi: https://www.doi.org/10.1257/000282804322970751.

[25] Reardon, Sean. 2011. "The Widening Academic Achievement Gap between the Rich and the Poor." *Community Investments* 24(2): 19–39. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://cepa.stanford.edu/content/widening-academic-achievement-gap-between-rich-and-poor.

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT PROMOTING HUMAN CAPITAL	
Programs to encourage community college retention and completion	These Interventions encourage retention and completion of community college, especially for those in college later in life. Potential interventions include child care programs or subsidies, financial assistance to cover transportation, housing and food costs, and peer and mentor support networks.
Increasing college readiness of high schoolers	To address underpreparedness for college, jurisdictions focus on providing educational services to high schoolers. While programs vary widely, they broadly focus on increasing the academic achievement of high schoolers to help prepare them for college-level coursework.
Virtual tutoring programs	One researcher evinced interest in exploring the effectiveness of virtual tutoring programs to address the potential academic backslide from the Covid-19 pandemic, a priority mentioned by several jurisdictions.
Early childhood development programs	Programs like high-quality child care and preschool and home visiting programs can encourage early childhood development. This can have an impact on near-term schooling outcomes as well as downstream outcomes like employment and adult health.

EXAMPLES OF ONGOING OR COMPLETED RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS
Saga Education Tutoring: Two randomized evaluations found that students who received individualized math tutoring through Saga scored higher on exams, earned better grades, and were more likely to pass high school classes. (Chicago)
Increasing the Take-Up of Cal Grant Awards through Improved Notification Letters: This study investigates whether a simplified letter, in terms of both format and the use of language that behavioral science research suggests would nudge students to take action, will induce higher take-up of the grants and will consider how different letters impact students' decision-making around college choice. (California)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While previous research has shown the effectiveness of individualized in-person tutoring, Covid-19 has increased the need to examine the effectiveness of virtual tutoring programs and their role in mitigating potential learning loss. At the same time, virtual delivery of tutoring services can greatly expand the possible tutor pool, as physical location is no longer a barrier. More research on what components will lead to a successful virtual tutoring program is an important next step in expanding access for low-income households during and beyond the pandemic.

- An evaluation can measure the impact of participating in one-on-one tutoring, group tutoring, or a mix of the two on educational outcomes such as reading and math test scores.

Many jurisdictions have a suite of programs meant to improve college access, retention, and completion, leading to many opportunities for rigorous impact evaluations, as researchers and jurisdictions work together to determine the most cost-effective package of services specific to the local context.

- For states with oversubscribed college access and retention programs, a lottery can randomly select from an eligible applicant pool and jurisdictions can compare educational and employment outcomes of those who participated in the programs and those who did not.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The opioid crisis, mental health care, child health and wellness, and vaccine distribution and take-up fall under the scope of the health and wellness policy area. While it is up to clinicians and public health officials to determine appropriate health interventions, policymakers play a crucial role in ensuring access, take-up, and adherence to these interventions. Access to appropriate health care can diminish financial hardship and impact an individual's economic success.[26]

- **Responding to the Opioid Crisis.** Living with an opioid addiction limits an individual's power, autonomy, and economic success.[27] Due to the increased risk of death and the decreased standard of living, relief from and management of opioid addiction is a necessary, but not sufficient, precondition for upward mobility. One midwestern state agency highlighted the need to respond to the opioid epidemic in their state and to reduce the over prescription of opioids.

- **Increasing Access to Mental Health Care.** Since not all individuals experiencing poverty struggle with mental health conditions, and not all individuals with mental health conditions experience poverty, mental health interventions may not be considered primary tools in improving mobility from poverty. However, mental health affects a number of determinants that directly relate to upward mobility: housing security, employment, education, involvement with the criminal justice system, physical health, and sense of value and belonging in a community.[28] One researcher noted addressing mental health issues is closely related to addressing other public policy problems. A housing authority in the Northwest noted that behavioral health is a significant priority area for them. Access to treatment, especially culturally-relevant services and when navigating complex medical systems, presents unique challenges.

- **Promoting Child Health and Development.** Early childhood health and development can determine the course of one's life.[29] For this reason, disruptions to healthy and safe development can have profound negative consequences on mobility and other life outcomes. A southeastern state agency listed child health as a top priority for future evaluations. Specifically, they are prioritizing prevention programs, like home visiting programs, to target this issue before it creates long-term adverse effects. The impact of childhood maltreatment and abuse has a lasting effect on children beyond the immediate physical and emotional harm.[23]

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[26] The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). n.d. "The Oregon Health Insurance Experiment in the United States: The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab." Accessed November 6, 2020. https://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/oregon-health-insurance-experiment-united-states.

[27] National Institute on Drug Abuse. 2020. "Health Consequences of Drug Misuse." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/health-consequences-drug-misuse/introduction.

[28] Hodgkinson, Stacy, Leandra Godoy, Lee Savio Beers, and Amy Lewin. 2017. "Improving Mental Health Access for Low-Income Children and Families in the Primary Care Setting." *Pediatrics* 139(1): e20151175. doi: https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2015-1175.

[29] Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. 2010. "The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/the-foundations-of-lifelong-health-are-built-in-early-childhood/.

- **Improving Delivery of Telemedicine.** Despite the importance of access to health care in improving mobility from poverty, many barriers to proper access to health care for all individuals still exist. The expansion of telemedicine has great potential for individuals experiencing poverty in its potential for removing geographic distance as a barrier to access, especially for households in rural communities. However, individuals experiencing poverty may often lack the proper devices and internet access to use them. Researchers and jurisdictions are interested in evaluating how to adequately provide telemedicine services, and their impact of these services, during the pandemic and beyond.

- **Increasing Trust and Take-Up of Preventive Health Services, like the Covid-19 Vaccine.** Preventive health services have shown to be effective in reducing the potential physiological and financial burdens of diseases and promoting good health.[30] Low trust in the health care system, particularly among marginalized communities, decreases take-up of health services.[31] Due to the disparate impact poor health can have on individuals experiencing poverty, increasing trust and take-up of preventive health products in low-income communities is critical in increasing one's mobility from poverty. At the same time, researchers and jurisdictions are concerned with the low level of trust and take-up of preventive health products such as vaccines in low-income neighborhoods,[32,33] especially against the backdrop of the Covid-19 vaccine distribution. The distribution and take-up of the Covid-19 vaccine has varied, with Black and Hispanic individuals having received smaller shares of vaccinations compared to their shares of the total population in most states early in the vaccine rollout.[34] Inadequate vaccine take-up in a community reduces the effectiveness of the vaccine, so interventions to increase both the take-up of and the trust in preventive health products are an important focus in addressing mobility from poverty.

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[30] Maciosek, Michael V., Ashley B. Coffield, Thomas J. Flottemesch, Nichol M. Edwards, and Leif I. Solberg. 2010. "Greater Use of Preventive Services in US Health Care Could Save Lives at Little or No Cost." *Health Affairs* 29(9): 1656–1660. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2008.0701.

[31] Laveist, Thomas A., Lydia A. Isaac, and Karen P. Williams. 2009. "Mistrust of Health Care Organizations Is Associated with Underutilization of Health Services." *Health Services Research* 44(6): 2093–2105. doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6773.2009.01017.x.

[32] Alsan, Marcella, Owen Garrick, and Grant Graziani. 2019. "Does Diversity Matter for Health? Experimental Evidence from Oakland." *American Economic Review* 109(12): 4071–4111. doi: https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20181446.

[33] Dupas, Pascaline. 2011. "Health Behavior in Developing Countries." *Annual Reviews of Economics* 3(1): 425–339. doi: https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-111809-125029.

[34] Ndugga, Nambi, Olivia Pham, Latoya Hill, Samantha Artiga, Raisa Alam, and Noah Parker. "Latest Data on COVID-19 Vaccinations Race/Ethnicity." KFF, May 12, 2021. https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/latest-data-on-covid-19-vaccinations-race-ethnicity/.

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Prevention and treatment for addiction	Treatment interventions included a range of programs such as adding case management and supplemental services like transportation, traditional intensive outpatient treatment, inpatient detox services, hospital care setting buprenorphine treatment, and community-based setting buprenorphine treatment. Prevention programs are those aimed at youth not using substances to encourage them to not use drugs. Programs can involve a variety of techniques, such as coping strategies, parent engagement, and belief strengthening.
Integration of medical and behavioral health care	To improve access to behavioral health treatment in traditional medical settings, some systems have sought to embed behavioral health support into various primary and specialty care settings, such as chronic pain disease management and patient-centered medical home settings.
Informational campaigns, financial incentives, and nudging	Financial incentives and nudging programs can increase the take-up of health programs and vaccines and the adoption of healthy practices through financial support, text messages or letters, and other information campaigns.[35]

EXAMPLES OF ONGOING OR COMPLETED RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS

The Impact of Assignment to Different Managed Care Organizations on Medicaid Spending and Health Care Use in the United States: Most low-income households enrolled in Medicaid receive their health care through managed care organizations (MCOs), which vary in terms of their financial and provider network coverage. Researchers are conducting a randomized evaluation to test the relative impact of assignment to different MCOs on health care utilization and expenditure. (South Carolina)

Minnesota Board of Pharmacy: This project looks to increase the use of Minnesota's prescription drug monitoring program (PMP) and to measure the impact of that increased use on prescribers' rate of controlled substance prescriptions and other tertiary outcomes. (Minnesota)

Understanding Covid-19 Testing among Underserved Communities in Minnesota: The Minnesota Department of Public Health, the University of Minnesota, and the Mayo Clinic partnered with J-PAL researchers to study barriers to take-up of Covid-19 testing among communities of color and low-income communities. (Minnesota)

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[35] Banerjee, Abhijit, Marcella Alsan, Emily Breza, Arun Chandrasekhar, Abhijit Chowdhury, Esther Duflo, Paul Goldsmith-Pinkham, and Benjamin Olken. "Messages on COVID-19 Prevention in India Increased Symptoms Reporting and Adherence to Preventive Behaviors Among 25 Million Recipients with Similar Effects on Non-Recipient Members of Their Communities." NBER Working Paper #27496, July 2020. doi: https://doi.org/10.3386/w27496.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As more states have set up a health insurance marketplace, there are opportunities to evaluate the plans available within each state's program and to examine the impact of these programs on individuals' health and their access to quality health care.

- For jurisdictions with a limited budget to provide subsidies for health insurance purchased through the marketplace, tracking the health outcomes of individuals who receive varying subsidy amounts through a random lottery can inform policymakers of the impact of subsidies on the take-up of health insurance.

The ongoing pandemic has underscored the need for adequate access to health care. How can health officials address the unique health needs of those experiencing major barriers to health care, including those who are uninsured, incarcerated, or experiencing homelessness?

- In an effort to maintain social distancing, some jurisdictions have loosened restrictions on telemedicine provision.[36] An intervention can examine the varying availability of telemedicine on health care quality as well as a comparison between telemedicine and in-person health care.

Preventive health visits and management of chronic conditions have been decreasing during the Covid-19 pandemic.[37] Understanding the long-term effects of this decrease will be critical for state and local governments as communities recover from the pandemic.

- An intervention can examine the effect of various outreach strategies on the rates of preventive health visits and follow-ups for chronic conditions.

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[36] Office for Civil Rights (OCR). 2020. "Notification of Enforcement Discretion for Telehealth." US Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/emergency-preparedness/notification-enforcement-discretion-telehealth/index.html.

[37] Wright, Adam, Alejandra Salazar, Maria Mirica, Lynn A. Volk, and Gordon D. Schiff. "The Invisible Epidemic: Neglected Chronic Disease Management During COVID-19." *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 35, no. 9 (2020): 2816–2817. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-020-06025-4.

HOUSING, PLACE, AND MOBILITY

Under this category, we include questions and policies related to ensuring people are housed, their housing and community is safe and healthy, and they can move freely. Climate and energy is an increasingly important part of this policy area, as the effects of climate change are felt disproportionately by lower-income communities.[38] Living unhoused or in an unhealthy environment can negatively impact the well-being of individuals and communities, making it an important aspect of promoting mobility from poverty. This is even more apparent now as Covid-19 has disproportionately affected people experiencing homelessness.[39]

- **Reducing Homelessness.** Many strategies aimed at housing unhoused individuals and preventing homelessness are intended to improve outcomes around housing stability, quality, and affordability. Living unhoused is a disruptive and dehumanizing experience, with significant implications for other measures of well-being, connectedness, and autonomy. For example, descriptive evidence from schools suggests that students who experience homelessness face greater barriers to their education compared to their housed peers.[40] In addition to education and child development, living unhoused can also have severe consequences on health, employment, and involvement with the criminal justice system, among other outcomes.[41] For these reasons, we consider housing stability to be a necessary precondition for upward mobility, and ensuring safe and affordable housing should be an important component of a larger effort to promote upward mobility. Multiple jurisdictions and researchers highlighted the priority of reducing homelessness and evictions and increasing the supply of housing and access to affordable housing. One researcher noted the importance of better understanding how to get landlord buy-in to participate in the federal Housing Choice Voucher program.

- **Increasing Homeownership.** Asset accumulation is a main way for individuals and families to achieve economic prosperity and security and is an important tool in the intergenerational transfer of wealth.[42] A home is a high value asset and for many people is the largest contributor to their net worth.[43] Homeowners can build equity and use this equity to better survive economic shocks.[44]

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[38] USGCRP. 2018. "Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II." US Global Change Research Program. doi: https://doi.org/10.7930/NCA4.2018.

[39] National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. 2021. "Racism, Homelessness, and COVID-19 Fact Sheet." Accessed May 19, 2021. https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Racism-Homelessness-and-COVID-19-Fact-Sheet-_Final_2.pdf

[40] Miller, Peter M. 2011. "A Critical Analysis of the Research on Student Homelessness." *Review of Educational Research* 81, no. 3 (September): 308–337. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23014295.

[41] Wachter, Till von, Marianne Bertrand, Harold Pollack, Janey Rountree, and Brian Blackwell. 2019. "Predicting and Preventing Homelessness in Los Angeles." California Policy Lab. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.capolicylab.org/predicting-preventing-homelessness-la/.

[42] Prosperity Now. 2012. "Why Assets Matter." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://prosperitynow.org/resources/why-assets-matter.

[43] Taylor, Paul, Rakesh Kochhar, Richard Fry, Gabriel Velasco, and Seth Motel. 2011. "Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs between Whites, Blacks and Hispanics." Pew Research Center. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2011/07/SDT-Wealth-Report_7-26-11_FINAL.pdf.

[44] The Pew Charitable Trust. 2013. "Hard Choices: Navigating the Economic Shock of Unemployment." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.pewtrusts.org/~/media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2013/EMPReportHardChoicesNavigatingtheEconomicShockofUnemploymentpdf.pdf.

One western city agency discussed the need to provide financial assistance that covers a down payment to increase homeownership for low- and middle-income individuals and families.

- **Increasing Housing Mobility.** Neighborhoods matter for intergenerational mobility. Long-term results from the flagship Moving to Opportunity evaluation demonstrate that children who move from a high-poverty neighborhood to a lower-poverty area have significantly higher lifetime earnings and college attendance rates.[45] These effects of place are also a question of choice and autonomy; in many cases, families—and in particular Black families—have been excluded from exercising full housing choice due to a long history of public and private discriminatory housing practices.[46] Efforts to promote mobility should account for the impact of place and the legacy of residential segregation.

- **Mitigating Pollution and Environmental Toxins.** Pollution and environmental toxins present threats to human health and disproportionately impact low-income populations.[47] Globally and in North America, structural disparities and discrimination have led to low-income populations and people of color disproportionately experiencing environmental health hazards from sources such as highways, landfills, and toxic indoors materials such as lead paint.[48] These hazards are often related to the location and quality of housing. Airborne pollutants cause disproportionately high rates of health problems for people experiencing poverty.[49] Strategies to mitigate sources of pollution can reduce the health burdens on people in contact with pollutants and toxic materials. Further, strategies that target mitigation and response toward areas and individuals at greatest risk aim to improve the health and well-being of low-income populations in particular.

- **Increasing Climate Resiliency.** The effects of climate change disproportionately impact low-income communities.[50] Programs and policies in climate resiliency can affect people and places along a number of dimensions, including health, household finances, and labor markets.[51] A western city agency is looking into ways to promote both economic mobility and climate resiliency through green jobs training programs. This provides job opportunities while promoting industries addressing climate change. State and local governments are also looking to evaluate programs that

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[45] Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, and Lawrence F. Katz. 2016. "The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment." *American Economic Review* 106(4): 855–902. doi: https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20150572.

[46] US Department of Housing and Urban Development. 2013. "Housing Discrimination against Racial and Ethnic Minorities 2012." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.huduser.gov/portal/Publications/pdf/HUD-514_HDS2012.pdf.

[47] USGCRP. 2018. "Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II." US Global Change Research Program. doi: https://doi.org/10.7930/NCA4.2018.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Neidell, Matthew J. 2004. "Air Pollution, Health, and Socio-Economic Status: The Effect of Outdoor Air Quality on Childhood Asthma." *Journal of Health Economics* 23(6): 1209–1236. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2004.05.002.

[50] USGCRP. 2018. "Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II." US Global Change Research Program. doi: https://doi.org/10.7930/NCA4.2018.

[51] USGCRP. 2018. "Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II." US Global Change Research Program. doi: https://doi.org/10.7930/NCA4.2018.

work to mitigate the impacts of climate change as well as adapt to the reality of our changing environment. One southern city agency noted the importance of adapting city infrastructure to be better prepared for adverse environmental events such as flooding.

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT PROMOTING HOUSING, PLACE, AND MOBILITY	
Permanent supportive housing programs	Broadly, permanent supportive housing, sometimes referred to as a "housing first" approach, prioritizes the provision of long-term housing alongside community-based support services, with no preconditions for obtaining housing. Program details and eligibility vary significantly by organization and jurisdiction.
Financial assistance for housing programs	Many jurisdictions offer one-time financial assistance for households that are at risk of eviction or having their utilities disconnected. Many jurisdictions also offer low- and moderate-income loan programs for down payment assistance to ease the barrier to homeownership. Jurisdictions also provide financial assistance for free or discounted transit fares for low-income individuals.
Rapid rehousing programs	Rapid rehousing provides individuals and families experiencing homelessness with short-term rental assistance and services with no preconditions. Program details and eligibility vary significantly by organization and jurisdiction.
Education about areas of opportunity	This involves providing families with information about the benefits of living in areas of opportunity, highlighting the benefits for children.
Healthy homes programs	Programs focusing on healthy home environments provide consultations, inspections, testing, outreach, and training to protect residents from hazards in the home that can affect health such as lead, mold, radon, pests, carbon monoxide, and indoor air particulate matter.
Residential energy efficiency programs	Residential energy efficiency programs are key components of many energy policies and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A city agency in the Northwest is looking at how nudging campaigns can impact household behavior in terms of water usage and energy.

EXAMPLES OF ONGOING OR COMPLETED RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS [52]

Creating Moves to Opportunity: Researchers and local partners conducted randomized evaluations that promote housing choice among families with Housing Choice Vouchers. (Seattle and King County, Washington)

Youth Homelessness Prevention: Researchers are looking at the impact on housing stability of (1) a combined program of progressive case management and flexible financial assistance relative to (2) only flexible financial assistance. (King County, Washington)

The Impact of Rapid Rehousing on Homelessness: Researchers are examining the impact of providing rapid rehousing to single adults experiencing homelessness on housing stability and health outcomes. (Santa Clara County, California)

Reducing Energy Consumption and Greenhouse Gas Emissions through Energy Efficient Retrofits: Evidence from Low-Income Households: Researchers randomly selected a group of eligible low-income households to receive encouragement and assistance to apply for a fully subsidized residential energy efficiency program. Those who enrolled experienced energy savings equal to about half of the upfront cost of the efficiency improvements they received. (Michigan)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Low- and moderate-income loan programs for down payment assistance can encourage homeownership and asset building.

- A randomized evaluation in this area can provide varying payment assistance amounts and evaluate the difference in homeownership and other economic outcomes.

Many homelessness programs involve multiple components, such as providing both rental assistance and support services. A tenant's success in maintaining housing after housing subsidies end may depend on the types of support received during the housing search process and whether individuals can find and maintain employment. More research can help determine what service bundles work best for different individuals experiencing homelessness so that jurisdictions can better target their limited resources.

- A randomized evaluation could measure the effectiveness of each component of these services in isolation versus when bundled. To measure cost-effectiveness, it is important to know which combination of components is most effective in housing people and preventing further housing instability. For example, rapid rehousing programs typically offer some limited support services in addition to short-term housing, and the types of support services offered through rapid rehousing programs vary dramatically.

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[52] For more examples of evaluation in homelessness, please see our evidence review: Reducing and Preventing Homelessness: Lessons from Randomized Evaluations.

RACE, GENDER, AND INCLUSION

While many policy challenges described in this overall analysis disaggregate data by sex and race, the policy priorities and interventions synthesized in this section consider race, gender, and inclusion as a more central thematic focus. The social and economic effects driven by a lack of equity are varied and can be costly. The national movement for racial justice has brought renewed attention to long-standing and deeply entrenched racial inequities in the United States, prompting many state and local governments to publicly commit to advancing racial equity. Although race, gender, and inclusion within systems are often difficult to disentangle, building equitable systems is an important component of mobility from poverty.

- **Decreasing Employment Discrimination.** Labor market discrimination continues to be a large problem in the United States.[53] There are racial and gender disparities in labor market outcomes despite the implementation of equal employment policies.[54] Equal opportunity to employment is an important factor in achieving economic security and is therefore critical to mobility from poverty. Many researchers and jurisdictions are interested in ways to decrease employment discrimination to achieve racial equity.

- **Decreasing Bias in Public Institutions.** Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training programs are one strategy governments are using to decrease bias. A northwestern city agency expressed the need to evaluate their DEI training program to ensure it effectively addresses employment discrimination. Racial disparities in the criminal justice system contribute to long-term social and economic inequities.[55] Similar gaps in education, health, and labor outcomes also impact mobility from poverty.[56] For example, racial and gender gaps persist in higher education despite progress in reducing racial gaps in high school graduation rates.[57] Randomized evaluations have documented evidence of discrimination against students of color and women, particularly in grading, email responses, and online course discussion response boards.[58,59]

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[53] Economic Policy Institute. 2018. "What Labor Market Changes Have Generated Inequality and Wage Suppression?" Accessed November 9, 2020. https://files.epi.org/pdf/148880.pdf.

[54] Borowczyk-Martins, Daniel, Jake Bradley, and Linas Tarasonis. 2017. "Racial Discrimination in the US Labor Market: Employment and Wage Differentials by Skill." *Labour Economics* 49 (December): 106–127. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2017.09.007.

[55] The Sentencing Project. 2018. "Report to the United Nations on Racial Disparities in the US Criminal Justice System." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/un-report-on-racial-disparities/.

[56] American Psychological Association. 2012. "Ethnic and Racial Disparities in Education: Psychology's Contributions to Understanding and Reducing Disparities." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.apa.org/ed/resources/racial-disparities.pdf.

[57] Musu-Gillette, Lauren, Joel McFarland, Angelina Kewal-Ramani, Anlan Zhang, and Sidney Wilkinson-Flicker. 2016. "Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2016." US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016007.pdf.

[58] Baker, Rachel, Thomas Dee, Brent Evans, and June John. 2018. "Bias in Online Classes: Evidence from a Field Experiment." Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. Working Paper, No. 18-055. Accessed November 9, 2020. http://cepa.stanford.edu/wp18-03.

[59] Milkman, Katherine L., Akinola Modupe, and Dolly Chugh. 2015. "What Happens Before? A Field Experiment Exploring How Pay and Representation Differentially Shape Bias on the Pathway into Organizations." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 100 (6), 1678–1712. doi: https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000022.

⚡ **Generating Wealth and Reinvesting in Black Communities.** As mentioned above, asset accumulation is one of the main channels through which individuals and communities can achieve economic security, a key factor in upward mobility.[60] Discrimination and discriminatory policy against Black communities resulted in large wealth gaps between Black and White individuals and families.[61] Therefore, targeted wealth generation and asset building is a critical component of mobility from poverty for Black communities.

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT ADDRESSING RACE, GENDER, AND INCLUSION	
Targeted baby bonds and asset building	Bonds or savings programs targeted to children in historically underinvested communities can help build wealth and provide savings for things like college. Credit-building loans allow residents to build strong credit through incentives for loan repayment.
Racial equity and implicit bias training	Bias trainings can consist of online or in-person trainings for individuals who work within government systems, such as city government and public higher education.
Objective information sharing	This consists of the provision of information to judges on the risk of pretrial misconduct based on data by race and secondarily, in a feedback loop, providing judges with individualized feedback on their past performance, including their own release and pretrial misconduct rates to inform them of possible bias.

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[60] Prosperity Now. 2012. "Why Assets Matter." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://prosperitynow.org/resources/why-assets-matter.

[61] Patricia Muñoz, Ana, Marlene Kim, Mariko Chang, Regine O. Jackson, Darrick Hamilton, and William A. Darity Jr. 2015. "The Color of Wealth in Boston." Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/one-time-pubs/color-of-wealth.aspx.

EXAMPLES OF ONGOING OR COMPLETED RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS

Addressing Implicit Bias in Higher Education: This study is evaluating the effects of implicit bias training for faculty on closing academic disparities by race and gender in higher education. (Virginia)

Reducing Racial Disparities in Bail Decisions: This project seeks to test the effectiveness of an intervention designed to reduce racial disparities in bail decisions, by providing information and feedback to judges. (Texas)

Discrimination in the Job Market in the United States: Researchers found that resumes with White-sounding names received 50 percent more callbacks than identical ones with Black-sounding names, indicating that considerable racial discrimination exists in the American labor market, with all other things being equal between potential candidates. (Chicago and Boston)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

To promote DEI, many workplaces ask their employees to undergo different training programs or workshops.

- A randomized evaluation can evaluate the effectiveness of different variations of such training on reported instances of workplace discrimination and measures of social cohesion and productivity.

Many jurisdictions have anti-discrimination laws that are enforced to varying degrees, with local businesses potentially unaware of all requirements at all times.

- A randomized evaluation can evaluate the effectiveness of reminding workplaces that may not be in compliance with local anti-discrimination law on discrimination in the local job market.

- Randomized evaluations could also be used to test different enforcement mechanisms, as has been done in other regulatory compliance settings.[62,63]

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[62] Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). 2020. "Increasing Accountability and Reducing Corruption through Government Audits." Last modified August 2020. https://www.povertyactionlab.org/fr/node/1776016.

[63] Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). n.d. "Strengthening Third-Party Audits to Reduce Pollution." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.povertyactionlab.org/case-study/strengthening-third-party-audits-reduce-pollution.

SAFETY AND JUSTICE

Issues of safety and justice are critical in promoting upward mobility, as these issues both directly and indirectly affect individuals' economic successes, power and autonomy, and being valued in the community. Living in constant fear due to the high incidence of violence in one's neighborhood significantly reduces the power and autonomy felt in one's environment. Incidents of crime and acts of discrimination by the judicial system breed distrust and fear in a community.[64] Addressing policies that seek to improve safety and justice are critical in lifting individuals from poverty and increasing their upward mobility.

- **Reducing Crime and Violence.** Violent crime rates have increased substantially in many major cities across the United States over the past year.[65] When a violent crime is committed, there are negative repercussions for the victim, the broader community, and the perpetrators themselves. Exposure to violence can damage children's cognitive development and put them at greater risk for mental, academic, and social challenges while also increasing the likelihood that they will themselves commit violence in the future.[66] One state agency in the southwest is prioritizing evidence-based practices to respond to crime and highlighted the need to collect data to determine the best interventions for the community.

- **Creating More Equitable Courts, Bail, and Sentencing Structures.** Involvement in the criminal justice system in the United States carries significant and enduring economic repercussions.[67] This is particularly true for people experiencing poverty, who are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system.[68] Incarceration not only represents a loss of income while one is incarcerated and unable to work; people who have been incarcerated also work fewer weeks per year, earn less money, and have limited upward mobility upon their release.[69] This affects individuals' families and communities, with economic costs that span generations.[70] Involvement in the criminal justice system can also place an economic burden on individuals who are never convicted of a crime due to fines, fees, and the money bail system. Nearly half a million people who have not been convicted of a crime are in

[64] La Vigne, Nancy, Jocelyn Fontaine, and Anamika Dwivedi. 2017. "How Do People in High-Crime, Low-Income Communities View the Police?" Urban Institute. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/88476/how_do_people_in_high-crime_view_the_police.pdf.

[65] Rosenfeld, Richard, Thomas Abt and Ernesto Lopez. 2021. "Pandemic, Social Unrest, and Crime in U.S. Cities: 2020 Year-End Update." January 31, 2021. Council on Criminal Justice. January 2021 Accessed May 19, 2021. https://covid19.counciloncj.org/2021/01/31/impact-report-covid-19-and-crime-3/.

[66] Buka, Stephen, Theresa Stichick, Isolde Birdthistle, and Felton Earls. 2001. "Youth Exposure to Violence: Prevalence, Risks, and Consequences." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 71(3): 298–310. doi: https://doi.org/10.1037/0002-9432.71.3.298.

[67] The Pew Charitable Trusts. 2010. "Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility." The Pew Charitable Trusts. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.pewtrusts.org/~/media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf.

[68] Sawyer, Wendy and Peter Wagner. 2020. "Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020." Prison Policy Initiative. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html.

[69] The Pew Charitable Trusts. 2010. "Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility." The Pew Charitable Trusts. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.pewtrusts.org/~/media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf.

[70] Ibid.

jail daily because they cannot afford bail.[71] Fines, fees, and money bail within the criminal justice system all combine to keep people in poverty.[72] Efforts to promote social mobility must account for the widespread and damaging impact that the criminal justice system has on low-income communities and seek to identify effective reforms.

- **Decreasing Recidivism.** Upward mobility for formerly incarcerated people is directly tied to their reintegration into society upon release.[73] Often, these individuals reenter their communities with the same complex set of drivers and vulnerabilities that may have led to their prior criminal behavior.[74] Moreover, they may face systemic legal and societal restrictions to full reintegration as a result of their conviction.[75] This creates a revolving door of people who repeatedly pass through the criminal justice system. People experiencing poverty are already disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system,[76] and more than half of individuals released from the US prison system are rearrested within their first year.[77] Among those rearrested, 50 percent end up reincarcerated.[78] Breaking the cycle of recidivism is imperative for released individuals and their dependents to achieve upward mobility.

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[71] Ofer, Udi. 2018. "We Can't End Mass Incarceration Without Ending Money Bail." American Civil Liberties Union. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.aclu.org/blog/smart-justice/we-cant-end-mass-incarceration-without-ending-money-bail?redirect=blog%2Fmass-incarceration%2Fsmart-justice%2Fwe-cant-end-mass-incarceration-without-ending-money-bail.

[72] Human Rights Watch. 2018. "US Criminal Justice System Fuels Poverty Cycle." Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/21/us-criminal-justice-system-fuels-poverty-cycle.

[73] Morenoff, Jeffrey D. and David J. Harding. 2014. "Incarceration, Prisoner Reentry, and Communities." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40(1): 411–429. doi: https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145511.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Li, Melissa. 2018. "From Prisons to Communities: Confronting Re-Entry Challenges and Social Inequality." American Psychological Association. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2018/03/prisons-to-communities.

[76] Sawyer, Wendy and Peter Wagner. 2020. "Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020." Prison Policy Initiative. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html.

[77] Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. 2019. "Incarceration & Reentry." US Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://aspe.hhs.gov/incarceration-reentry.

[78] Ibid.

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT ADDRESSING SAFETY AND JUSTICE	
Community-based policing and alternatives to traditional policing	Community-based policing involves high-level community involvement in police activities and multiple touch points between police officers and community residents, e.g., foot patrols, neighborhood outreach programs, and police monitoring. Researchers and jurisdictions also expressed interest in developing alternatives to traditional policing, including having social workers respond to certain 911 calls.
Restorative justice programming	These programs focus on violence prevention through multiple strategies (street outreach, community building, community self-empowerment) beyond incapacitation of the perpetrator. After an act of violence has occurred, participants are involved in a restorative justice program that includes violence interruption, trauma intervention, family circles, peace circles, and formal conferencing.
Court reforms	Court reforms include money bail reform, pretrial diversion, and bias reduction methods for judges. Money bail reform includes expanding access to charitable bail or switching to the use of an actuarial tool to reduce bias in the bail process, as individuals in low-income households are less likely to have immediate access to cash. Instead of going through the traditional court, pretrial diversion can redirect individuals toward resources such as inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment to address contributing factors that led to their involvement in the justice system. Bias reduction provides judges with 1) information on the actual risk of pretrial misconduct based on demographics and previous records and 2) individualized feedback on judges' past performance, including their own release and pretrial misconduct rates by race.
Prisoner reentry programs	Generally, these programs follow up with offenders after release and include intensive case management and comprehensive wraparound social services, such as employment preparation, education and skills training, mental health and substance use treatments, and housing assistance. The specifics of services offered and the method and timing of service delivery and case management differ across jurisdictions.

EXAMPLES OF ONGOING OR COMPLETED RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS

Summer Youth Employment Programs: Short-term summer employment programs are an increasingly popular strategy for reducing violence among low-income youth and young adults. Participating in Chicago's One Summer Chicago Plus (OSC+) nearly halved the number of violent crime arrests among program participants. Participating in New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program reduced the likelihood that youth would be incarcerated in a New York State prison or would die prematurely, with large declines in violent crime even up to a year after the end of the program. (Chicago, New York)

Becoming a Man: Youth Guidance, a non-profit organization, delivers a program inspired by cognitive behavioral therapy, Becoming a Man, to students in low-income public schools. They collaborated with researchers to conduct a randomized evaluation and found that arrests per student decreased by 12 percent by the end of the program, and participants were 9 percent more likely to graduate high school on time. (Chicago)

Text Message Reminders Decreased Failure to Appear in Court in New York City: Researchers partnered with policymakers in New York City to evaluate the impacts of a redesigned court summons form and text message reminders on failures to appear (FTA) in court. The text messages reminders were able to reduce FTA by up to 26 percent, translating to 3,700 fewer arrest warrants per year. (New York City)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Calls for major police reforms have increased across the United States as several high-profile cases of police violence have captured the nation's attention.[79] Many jurisdictions and researchers noted the importance of generating rigorous evidence on policy proposals and using the evidence to inform decisions taken.

- Randomized evaluations could examine the impacts of a variety of alternatives to policing on criminal justice outcomes, such as arrest rates, recidivism, trust in the justice system, and incidents of law enforcement brutality.

The amount of exposure an individual gets to the jail and prison system can greatly vary from case to case. For instance, a police officer can decide to issue a citation or place an individual under arrest at first encounter, or a judge can decide whether or not to deny bail as an individual awaits trial. More research can be done to examine the impact of varying exposure to the jail and prison system on health, employment, and criminal justice outcomes.

- A randomized evaluation can examine the employment and case outcomes for individuals who receive assistance from a limited cash bail fund.

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[79] Lozano, Alicia V. and Daniella Silva. 2020. "'Who Else Needs to Die?': Calls for Police Reform Intensify amid George Floyd Protests." *NBC News*, June 11, 2020. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/who-else-needs-die-calls-police-reform-intensify-amid-george-n1229556.

Photo: Shutterstock.com

CONCLUSION

The policy priorities outlined above are critical to addressing the three components of mobility from poverty—economic success, power and autonomy, and being valued in the community—and reducing poverty across the United States. These policy issues and questions are not new and have become even more salient during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is now critical for state and local policymakers and researchers to work together to answer these key questions, and the State and Local Innovation Initiative is excited to facilitate more of these relationships. J-PAL North America has provided a map for how we can address such questions through our technical assistance, funding, and resources like the Research Toolkit and Building Capacity, Overcoming Obstacles, and Creating Evidence: An Evaluation Guide for State and Local Policymakers. This learning agenda will help guide J-PAL North America and state and local governments' research-generation efforts to launch new randomized evaluations to produce rigorous evidence that fosters greater mobility from poverty.

ABOUT J-PAL

The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) is a network of more than 220 affiliated professors from over 70 universities. Our mission is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. We engage with hundreds of partners around the world to conduct rigorous research, build capacity, share policy lessons, and scale up effective programs. J-PAL was launched at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and now has regional offices in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, North America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

APPENDIX I

Breakdown of Jurisdictions by City, County, and State: Retrospective Analysis

CITIES	COUNTIES	STATES, DISTRICTS, AND TERRITORIES
Akron, OH	Adams County, CO	Arkansas
Albuquerque, NM	Collier County, FL	California
Allegheny, PA	Denver County, CO	Colorado
Arlington, TX	Franklin County, OH	Connecticut
Atlanta, GA	King County, WA	District of Columbia
Baltimore, MD	Lane County, OR	Georgia
Boston, MA	Los Angeles County, CA	Illinois
Brockton, MA	Montgomery County, MD	Iowa
Chattanooga, TN	Multnomah County, OR	Maryland
Chicago, IL	Orange County, NC	Massachusetts
Colorado Springs, CO	Oswego County, NY	Michigan
Dallas, TX	Shasta County, CA	Minnesota
Denver, CO	Shelby County, TN	Montana
Detroit, MI	Wake County, NC	Nevada
Durango, CO	Williamson County, TX	New Hampshire
East St. Louis, IL		New Mexico
Fort Worth, TX		New York
Fresno, CA		North Carolina
Great Falls, MT		Pennsylvania
Kansas City, MO		Puerto Rico
Lafayette Parish, LA		Rhode Island
Lansing, MI		South Carolina
Los Angeles, CA		Tennessee
Louisville, KY		Texas
Miami Beach, FL		Utah
Minneapolis, MN		Vermont
Nashville, TN		Virginia
New Haven, CT		Washington
New York, NY		
Oakland, CA		
Oakland, MI		
Peoria, IL		
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo, TX		
Philadelphia, PA		

CITIES	COUNTIES	STATES, DISTRICTS, AND TERRITORIES
Providence, RI Richmond, VA Riverside, CA Rochester, NY San Diego, CA San Francisco, CA Santa Clara, CA Seattle, WA South Bend, IN Torrance, CA Trenton, NJ Tulsa, OK		

Breakdown of Jurisdictions by City, County, and State: Interviews

CITIES	COUNTIES	STATES, DISTRICTS, AND TERRITORIES
Dallas, TX - Mayor's Office	King County, WA	California Department of State Hospitals
Houston Solutions Lab	Santa Clara County, CA	California Franchise Tax Board
Los Angeles Budget and Innovation		District of Columbia, The Lab @ DC
Minneapolis, MN Housing Authority		Minnesota Board of Pharmacy
Philadelphia - Mayor's Office		Minnesota Judicial Branch, State Court Administrator's Office
Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability		Minnesota Management and Budget
Rochester, NY		Mississippi Legislature - PEER Committee
Seattle, WA Housing Authority		New Jersey Office of Innovation
Tulsa Office of Performance Strategy and Innovation		New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee
		Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration - Office of Evidence and Impact
		Texas Workforce Commission
		Virginia Department of Social Services

APPENDIX II

Example outreach scripts for policymakers and researchers.

STATE AND LOCAL POLICYMAKER OUTREACH SCRIPT

During our conversations, we asked jurisdictions the following questions:

- What policy areas is your office/agency/department prioritizing to increase mobility and improve the lives of your constituents?

- What kinds of interventions are you interested in potentially evaluating (i.e., behavioral nudges, providing services, modifying service delivery)?

- What are your biggest barriers to evaluation?

- How have your policy priorities changed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic?

RESEARCHER OUTREACH SCRIPT

During our conversations, we asked researchers the following questions:

- What policy areas to increase mobility are you most interested in conducting randomized evaluations in?

- What kinds of interventions are you interested in potentially evaluating (i.e., behavioral nudges, providing services, modifying service delivery)?

- What are your biggest barriers to developing and implementing evaluations with state and local governments?

- How have your policy priorities changed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic?

APPENDIX III

Complete list of proposed interventions by policy area.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT PROMOTING ECONOMIC SECURITY	
Unconditional cash transfers and universal basic income	Many jurisdictions and researchers discussed their interest in testing unconditional cash transfers and universal basic income programs to promote economic security. Unconditional cash transfers are programs for a specific group of people that provide money to individuals without requiring them to meet specific conditions (i.e., participating in a specific activity). Universal basic income is a regular, guaranteed income without restrictions or requirements.
Pre- and post-employment services	These services include subsidized employment, apprenticeships, volunteer work, job coaching, job search services, educational programs, and other training services. Job training programs can equip workers with the skills and experience necessary to gain employment and reenter the labor force. One researcher noted the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of adult vocational education programs to promote workforce development and economic security.
Information and navigators to increase take-up of existing social protection programs	Policymakers and researchers are interested in determining the effectiveness of providing information on the program, eligibility, and application and/or recertification process through in-person assistance, text messages, postcards, and/or letters.
Mitigating the costs of participating in job search programs	The costs of engaging in a job search program can vary from economic costs, such as transportation costs, to time costs and psychological costs. Jurisdictions are interested in evaluating programs like distance work services appointments, simplifying the processes and requirements to apply to work services, and providing value affirmation exercises as well as personalized, targeted, and motivational support.
Providing information and resources to ease the transition off of SSI for children	An intervention that would provide information on SSI eligibility or likelihood of removal at age 18 to families of children receiving SSI, and connection with a counselor to explain resources available to help children graduate high school and find employment.
Baby bonds or labeled transfers for children	Bonds or savings programs for children to help pay for postsecondary education.

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS	
Programs to encourage community college retention and completion	These Interventions encourage retention and completion of community college, especially for those in college later in life. Potential interventions include child care programs or subsidies, financial assistance to cover transportation, housing and food costs, and peer and mentor support networks.
Increasing college readiness of high schoolers	To address underpreparedness for college, jurisdictions focus on providing services to high schoolers. While programs vary widely, they broadly focus on increasing the academic achievement of high schoolers to help prepare them for college-level coursework.
Virtual tutoring programs	One researcher evinced interest in exploring the effectiveness of virtual tutoring programs to address the potential academic backslide from the Covid-19 pandemic, a priority mentioned by several jurisdictions.
Early childhood development programs	Programs like high-quality child care and preschool and home visiting programs can encourage early childhood development. This can have an impact on near-term schooling outcomes as well as downstream outcomes like employment and adult health.
Increasing adult engagement in student learning	Adult engagement includes interventions that seek to strengthen parent-teacher relationships, mobilize students' adult support networks, or support parental involvement through text messaging.
Tutoring during the school day	Tutoring during school seeks to address the "mismatch" problem by providing students with intensive, two-on-one tutoring during school hours.
Education technology programs	These programs support student learning through virtual activities and instruction and include expanding access to internet connection and technology to bridge the digital divide.
Information about the college application process	Many students are unfamiliar with the college application process and financial aid. Several jurisdictions are providing relevant information to students through a website, mailings, and in-person counseling.
Place-based scholarship to pursue a postsecondary degree	This intervention provides direct tuition assistance to students who pursue a degree at a local institution.

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS	
Comprehensive, personalized support	Comprehensive, personalized support in the form of mentoring, advising, tutoring, and service referrals help students stay on track to graduate once enrolled. Program details vary and address a broad range of issues related to academic and nonacademic obstacles.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS	
Prevention and treatment for addiction	Treatment interventions included a range of programs such as adding case management and supplemental services like transportation, traditional intensive outpatient treatment, inpatient detox services, hospital care setting buprenorphine treatment, and community-based setting buprenorphine treatment. Prevention programs are those aimed at youth not using substances to encourage them to not use drugs. Programs can include a variety of techniques, such as coping strategies, parent engagement, and belief strengthening.
Integration of medical and behavioral health care	To improve access to behavioral health treatment in traditional medical settings, some systems have sought to embed behavioral health support into various primary and specialty care settings, such as chronic pain disease management and patient-centered medical home settings.
Informational campaigns, financial incentives, and nudging	Financial incentives and nudging programs can increase the take-up of current health programs and vaccines and the adoption of healthy practices through financial support, text messages or letters, and other information campaigns.
Prescription monitoring program	A prescription monitoring program is a system that keeps records of prescriptions of certain types of substances (e.g., opioids) and can be set up to notify prescribers of their prescribing habits (e.g., reports that show levels of prescriptions compared to other prescribers or alerts when prescribing at or above a certain threshold).
Screening	Screening for substance use is a procedure to identify those who may be at risk or are already using substances. Screening programs can be tailored to specific populations, such as adolescents.
Parent support programs	Parent support programs attempt to improve child health outcomes by providing health resources, education, and information to parents. Proposals explored interventions to increase outreach and

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS	
	participation in these programs. Some programs focus on mothers prior to birth, while others focus on children later in their development.
Financial incentives	One intervention involved financial incentives for breastfeeding to encourage higher breastfeeding rates among low-income mothers to improve child health outcomes.
Text messaging for young parents	Text message interventions targeted at parents aim to encourage the adoption of healthy practices among parents and children.

HOUSING, PLACE, AND MOBILITY

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS	
Permanent supportive housing programs	Broadly, permanent supportive housing, sometimes referred to as a "housing first" approach, prioritizes the provision of permanent housing alongside community-based support services with no preconditions for obtaining housing. Program details and eligibility vary significantly by organization and jurisdiction.
Financial assistance for housing programs	Many jurisdictions offer one-time financial assistance for households that are at risk of eviction or having their utilities disconnected. Many jurisdictions also offer low- and moderate-income loan programs for down payment assistance to ease the barrier to homeownership. Jurisdictions also provide financial assistance for free or discounted transit fares for low-income individuals.
Rapid rehousing programs	Rapid rehousing provides individuals and families experiencing homelessness with short-term rental assistance and services with no preconditions. Program details and eligibility vary significantly by organization and jurisdiction.
Education about areas of opportunity	This involves providing families with information about the benefits of living in areas of opportunity, highlighting the benefits for children.
Healthy homes programs	Programs focusing on healthy home environments provide consultations, inspections, testing, outreach, and training to protect residents from hazards in the home that can affect health such as lead, mold, radon, pests, carbon monoxide, indoor air particulate matter.
Residential energy efficiency program	Residential energy efficiency programs are key components of many energy policies and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A city agency in the Northwest is looking at how nudging campaigns can impact household behavior in terms of water usage and energy.

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS

Informational nudges to reduce property violations	Broadly, these interventions aim to increase the proportion of individuals who address violations following a housing standard citation through evidence-based notification or engagement tactics.
Financial counseling and repayment programs	Programs to address property tax delinquency vary by jurisdiction but may include financial counseling or coaching and installment payment options based on an individual's ability to pay.
Campaigns to increase take-up of grant, loan, or property tax repayment services	Many jurisdictions already offer services to support low-income homeowners who have received a housing standard violation or are struggling to pay their property taxes. Informational and outreach campaigns can help to increase the use of these programs among eligible individuals in the cases when these programs are underused.
Housing search and stability assistance	This assistance includes premove counseling that provides listings of rental units to families and postmove counseling that focuses on maintaining stability and ensuring that the family feels comfortable in their new neighborhood so that it will want to continue living there.
Coaching services	Coaching services provide guidance on presenting oneself to potential landlords and assistance with both credit repair and rental history repair.
Expanding and subsidizing available modes of transit	Jurisdictions plan to expand bike routes, bike sharing, and scooters.
Testing for blood poisoning	Often conducted as partnerships between hospitals, schools, and other branches of local government, programs such as the Lead Safe KC Program provide free blood lead testing for children and pregnant women. This testing provides information on where health interventions and remediation of hazards are needed.
Compliance with regulations	Keeping commercial facilities, residential building owners, transportation companies, and other actors in compliance with hazard regulations is key to limiting harms to health. Strategies to increase compliance can include tools for individuals and agencies to detect noncompliance, targeted notifications of noncompliance, and training on why and how to comply.

RACE, GENDER, AND INCLUSION

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS	
Targeted baby bonds and asset building	Bonds or savings programs targeted to children in historically underinvested communities can help build wealth and provide savings for things like college. Credit-building loans allow residents to build strong credit through incentives for loan repayment.
Objective information sharing	This consists of the provision of information to judges on the risk of pretrial misconduct based on data by race and secondarily, in a feedback loop, providing judges with individualized feedback on their past performance, including their own release and pretrial misconduct rates to inform them of possible bias.
Racial equity and implicit bias training	Bias trainings can consist of online or in-person trainings for individuals who work within government systems, such as city government and public higher education.

SAFETY AND JUSTICE

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS	
Community-based policing and alternatives to traditional policing	Community-based policing involves high-level community involvement in police activities and multiple touch points between police officers and community residents, e.g., foot patrols, neighborhood outreach programs, and police monitoring. Researchers and jurisdictions also expressed interest in developing alternatives to traditional policing, including having social workers respond to certain 911 calls.
Restorative justice programming	These programs focus on violence prevention through multiple strategies (street outreach, community building, community self-empowerment) beyond incapacitation of the perpetrator. After an act of violence has occurred, participants are involved in a restorative justice program that includes violence interruption, trauma intervention, family circles, peace circles, and formal conferencing.
Court reforms	Court reforms include money bail reform, pretrial diversion, and bias reduction methods for judges. Money bail reform includes expanding access to charitable bail or switching to the use of an actuarial tool to reduce bias in the bail process, as individuals in low-income households are less likely to have immediate access to cash. Instead of going through the traditional court, pretrial diversion can redirect individuals toward resources such as inpatient and outpatient

	substance abuse treatment to address contributing factors that led to their involvement in the justice system. Bias reduction provides judges with 1) information on the actual risk of pretrial misconduct based on demographics and previous record and 2) individualized feedback on judges' past performance, including their own release and pretrial misconduct rates by race.
Prisoner reentry programs	Generally, these programs follow up with offenders after release and include intensive case management and comprehensive wraparound social services, such as employment preparation, education and skills training, mental health and substance use treatments, and housing assistance. The specifics of services offered and the method and timing of service delivery and case management differ across jurisdictions.
Collective sourcing of illegal firearm possession	This involves crowdsourcing information from community members about illegal firearm possession and providing cash incentives to individual citizens to become confidential informants.
Real-time response to incidents via video feed	This intervention entails placing surveillance videos at local gas stations and having other businesses stream video live after 10pm to police monitors.
Subsidized, short-term employment for low-income youth	This intervention involves the provision of short-term summer employment through community-based organizations along with an intensive mentoring component.
In-school meditation program	The program teaches meditation twice a day to students in public schools in neighborhoods with higher rates of crime. Meditation has been shown to improve readiness to learn and prevent escalation of negative behaviors.
Multipronged violence prevention strategy	This strategy is an amalgamation of approaches from prevention, intervention, enforcement, and reentry to reduce and prevent crime while providing support to victims.
Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)	This intervention provides CBT to current inmates in a game-based format.
Low-cost nudges to reduce failures to appear	This involves sending individuals text and letter reminders to appear for their court dates, thereby avoiding arrest warrants and subsequent fees.

HIGHLIGHTED INTERVENTIONS	
Improved access to representation	This intervention includes the provision of legal representation for individuals throughout a removal proceeding as well as the provision of representation earlier in the arraignment process.
Holistic defense approach	This involves incorporating social workers on the public defense team to address the broader social problems that contribute to criminal behavior in ways that lawyers may not necessarily have the training to do so.
Auto-enrollment in SNAP for released inmates	Inmates will be provided with assistance with SNAP enrollment with the goal of being able to access the benefits immediately after release.
Postconviction drug courts	Drug courts provide greater facetime with judges, immediate and graduate sanctioning, drug testing, and drug treatment compared to traditional community supervision, which can be beneficial for defendants with substance abuse disorders.

APPENDIX IV

Additional resources including sector-specific evidence reviews and research resources.

Building Capacity, Overcoming Obstacles, and Creating Evidence: An Evaluation Guide for State and Local Policymakers

The guide provides practical direction on how to identify good opportunities for randomized evaluations, embed randomized evaluations into program or policy implementation, and how to overcome some of the common challenges in designing and carrying out randomized evaluations.

Research Resources

Incorporating lessons learned through our own experience and through guidance from researchers and research organizations, we provide practical advice for designing, implementing, and communicating about evaluations.

Reducing and Preventing Homelessness: A Review of the Evidence and Charting a Research Agenda

Homelessness represents both a cause of and one of the more extreme outcomes of poverty and inequality. This literature review highlights key research findings on policies to help people access and maintain stable, affordable housing and identifies research questions that remain to be answered.

The Transformative Potential of Tutoring for Pre K-12 Learning Outcomes: Lessons from Randomized Evaluations

Tutoring is a proven and agreed upon strategy that education leaders can be sure works. J-PAL's Tutoring Evidence Review aims to serve as a resource as education leaders, policymakers, and funders work to combat the Covid-19 learning loss, improve student learning outcomes, and minimize the growth of academic disparities.

Will Technology Transform Education for the Better?

In recent years, there has been widespread excitement around the transformative potential of technology in education. The hype around education technology is rapidly outpacing evaluation of ed tech programs. J-PAL's Education Technology Evidence Review aims to help education leaders understand which uses of education technology go beyond the hype and truly improve student learning.

Preparing for the Work of the Future

Breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and robotics are rapidly changing the terms of comparative advantage between humans and machines in the workplace, with potentially profound implications for labor market operation and for the opportunities available to human workers of different skill and education levels. This overview paper discusses four areas where research is needed to identify strategies for managing these changes in ways that benefit workers, firms, and the broader economy: (1) skills training, (2) postsecondary education, (3) alternative work arrangements and the "gig economy," and (4) management practices.

Results from J-PAL North America Supported Randomized Controlled Trials to Improve US Health Care Delivery

This publication highlights several examples of studies J-PAL North America's Health Care Delivery Initiative has supported that demonstrate the rigor and value of randomized evaluations for improving health care delivery and people's lives in the United States. We hope that it serves as an inspiration for governments, insurers, employers, health care providers, and more to identify opportunities to use RCTs in this field.

Generalizability Framework

This blog and video walk through J-PAL's Generalizability Framework.

APPENDIX V

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO WALK THROUGH THE GENERALIZABILITY FRAMEWORK

Step 1: What is the disaggregated theory behind the program?

First, consider the theory of change behind the original program and articulate the key assumptions for why it worked. Answer the following questions:

- What are the needs of the population that the program is designed to serve?
- What activities and/or inputs are done as part of the program?
- What tangible products or services are produced as a result of the program?
- What are the behavioral changes that result from successful program delivery?
- What change is induced in the outcomes of interest by the program?

Step 2: Do the local conditions hold for that theory to apply?

Knowledge of local conditions is important in establishing what basic conditions prevail, and publicly available data is useful in determining if the local conditions are similar enough for the theory behind the program to hold. This local information is funneled back into the generalizability framework to determine if the program is a good fit. Answer the following questions:

- Does the problem the original intervention aimed to solve also exist in your community? To what extent is this problem prevalent?
- Is there evidence that the underlying causes are the same or similar?
- Are the same conditions that were important for the intervention to be implemented in the original context also present in your context?

Step 3: How strong is the evidence for the required general behavioral change?

Next, assess the strength of the evidence for the mechanisms that made the program effective in the original context and whether the key assumptions are likely to hold in your context. For instance, the broader framework within which to think of incentives to induce take-up of preventative health products is as part of a disaggregated theory of how individuals procrastinate around tasks that are beneficial for their well-being. Answer the following questions:

- What evidence exists that the theory of change for the original program is valid? What is the quality of the evidence?
- What are the underlying reasons for why this theory is generally effective?
- What assumptions are required and do they hold in your context?

Step 4: What is the evidence that the implementation process can be carried out well?

Assess whether there is an organization (or organizations) capable of successfully implementing the intervention with fidelity to the original model. Answer the following questions:

- What are the critical implementation assumptions that must be met for the program to be implemented with fidelity?

- In this new context, who would implement the program and do they have the capacity?
- What are potentially enabling or hindering factors?

Generalizability Framework: Interpreting your analysis

ISSUE
Are you trying to address a problem similar to what the original program aimed to address?

N → **No match.** While this program is promising in other context, current research doesn't indicate it would be a good fit for your time, but consider reviewing other evidence-based programs to see if another fits.

Y ↓

LOCAL CONDITIONS
Did the important local conditional hold true in your contexts?

N

Y ↓

IMPLEMENTATION
Can you implement the program with the critical implementation elements in place?

N → **Potential match.** This program may be a good fit for your context, but some capacity-building work and/or partnership development is needed to successfully implement the program. We suggest brainstorming potential local implementation partners (local non-profits serving similar populations, local experts) and looking for open-source resources to develop an implementation plan you're confident can be successful.

Y ↓

IMPLEMENTATION
Does your organization have the capacity to implement the program with fidelity?

N → **Potential match**
This program may help address the issue you hope to solve, but doesn't fully meet all the criteria to be reasonably confident. Consider implementing this program with a robust evaluation to ensure it has the intended impact.

Y ↓

EVIDENCE STRENTH
How strong was the evidence rated on this research?

MED

HIGH → **Good match!**
It seems like this program is a good match for your context. See our guide for piloting and implementing evidence-based programs