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**NORTH AMERICA  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

January 2025

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Good morning,

This month, across every level of US government, newly elected officials are taking office. These leaders are now tasked with addressing the pressing challenges facing their communities and allocating taxpayer dollars effectively.

Evidence from randomized evaluations—which has had bipartisan appeal at federal, state, and local levels—is an invaluable tool for determining which ideas are effective in achieving policy goals, from how to reduce food insecurity to how to improve job opportunities for low-income workers.

Building on [over a decade of work](#) to ensure that policy is informed by evidence, J-PAL North America remains committed to collaborating with leaders across the country—at all levels of governments and across the political spectrum—to generate and use evidence. Together, we can create a playbook of effective policy ideas that transcend political ideology and are proven to improve outcomes for Americans.

In this newsletter edition, we feature exciting new policy ideas for government leaders looking to implement evidence-based solutions as they enter new terms. I encourage you to explore the pieces in our newsletter and reach out if you're interested in collaborating.

Sincerely,  
Vincent Quan  
Co-Executive Director, J-PAL North America



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## How the federal government can create competitive career pathways by establishing a federal sector-focused employment training initiative

[Rigorous evidence](#) shows that sectoral employment programs—which train people for high-quality jobs in industries with high demand and opportunities for career growth—create substantial and lasting earnings gains for low-income job seekers. In a memo for the Federation of American Scientists’ [Day One Project](#), J-PAL North America staff call upon the federal government to establish an inter-agency initiative to coordinate and scale evidence-based sectoral employment programs. [Read about the authors’ recommendations on how to make this a reality »](#)



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### Advancing economic opportunity through Results for America’s Economic Mobility Catalog

Results for America’s (RFA) [Economic Mobility Catalog](#) is a valuable resource for policymakers looking for evidence-based solutions to strengthen economic opportunities in their communities. It compiles research, identifies implementation best practices, and

presents relevant case studies on proven programs. In a recent post on the J-PAL blog, Cole Ware (Manager of the Economic Mobility Catalog) and Ross Tilchin (Director of the Economic Mobility Catalog) discuss the Catalog and RFA's other resources for policymakers. [Read more »](#)



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## J-PAL North America launches new Climate Action Learning Lab for state and local governments

The United States is currently enacting a broad range of policies and programs to support the transition to a low-carbon economy. But how do we know which approaches are most effective, and for whom? The Climate Action Learning Lab is recruiting a dedicated cohort of US state and local government leaders to identify and scale effective and equitable climate mitigation strategies. From May–July 2025, the Learning Lab will provide selected state and local jurisdictions with a suite of free customized evaluation trainings, peer learning opportunities, and connections to academic researchers to leverage data and evaluation to advance climate solutions that work.

[Learn more and apply by March 31 »](#)

## FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY



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## The impact of unconditional cash transfers on health outcomes in Chelsea, Massachusetts

There is limited evidence on the impact of cash transfers on health outcomes. A randomized evaluation conducted by Sumit Agarwal (University of Michigan), Benjamin Lê Cook (Harvard), and J-PAL affiliated professor Jeffrey Liebman (Harvard) found that monthly US\$400 payments to qualifying households for nine months reduced the number of emergency department visits, especially visits related to substance use. There were no significant

differences in visits to primary care, Covid-19 vaccination, or biomarker measures of health. [Read the evaluation summary »](#)

### FEATURED RESEARCH RESOURCE



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## An evaluation guide for state and local policymakers

Drawing upon the experience of our state and local government research partners, this resource provides practical guidance on how to identify good opportunities for randomized evaluations, how randomized evaluations can be feasibly embedded into the implementation of a program or policy, and how to overcome some of the common challenges in designing and carrying out randomized evaluations. [Visit our online guide to learn more »](#)

### MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Lawrence Katz on [How Research and Evidence Drive Social Change](#)  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

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