Launching Randomized Evaluations in Government

Emma Rackstraw
J-PAL North America
We have more than 940 ongoing and completed randomized evaluations across 10 sectors in 81 countries.
J-PAL's network of affiliated researchers

Amanda Agan
Rutgers University

Marcella Alsan
Stanford University

Saurabh Bhargava
Carnegie Mellon University

Peter Bergman
Columbia University

Scott Carrell
UC Davis

Sarah Cohodes
Columbia University

David Deming
Harvard University

Will Dobbie
Princeton University

Greg Duncan
UC Irvine

Lisa Gennetian
New York University

Kirabo Jackson
Northwestern University

Damon Jones
University of Chicago

Day Manoli
University of Texas, Austin

Alexandre Mas
Princeton University

Adam Sacarny
Columbia University

Wesley Yin
UCLA
J-PAL North America’s role

• Institutionalize partnerships between government and J-PAL’s research network
• Share evidence and best practices with other jurisdictions
• Build the capacity of governments to create and use rigorous evidence
What is the impact of this program?
Selecting the counterfactual or comparison group

**Idea:** Select a group that is *exactly like* the group of participants in all ways except one—their exposure to the program being evaluated.

**Goal:** To be able to *attribute differences* in outcomes to the program (and not to other factors).
Common question/comment from governments

• How would we do a randomized evaluation of a program/policy given X logistical constraints, Y fiscal constraints, and Z different vendors/contractors?
When might a randomized evaluation be the right approach?

- Opportunities:
  - Being piloted
  - Expanding to a new location or population
  - Adding a new component
  - Oversubscribed
Learn more

www.povertyactionlab.org/na
Questions?

Contact: Emma Rackstraw at erackstraw@povertyactionlab.org