Public policies work best when they are rooted in facts. The Urban Institute brings data-driven expertise and objective analysis to today’s critical social and economic policy debates. Our scholars conduct research and offer evidence-based solutions that improve lives, strengthen communities, and increase the effectiveness of public policy across a rapidly urbanizing world.
Policymakers, practitioners, and the public rely on the Urban Institute for evidence, not ideology. Our researchers are empowered to explore today’s challenges, uncover new facts and findings, and offer recommendations shaped by years of scholarship and real-time analysis.

“The Urban Institute prides itself on maintaining the highest standards and producing insightful, nonpartisan research that can be totally relied upon. For policymakers at any level, the availability of research of this quality is invaluable.”

—ERSKINE BOWLES
President emeritus, University of North Carolina, and Urban Institute trustee
Urban researchers were the first to size up the floods of prisoners returning to their communities and to use hard evidence to identify practical solutions for a safer return. Today our work includes a data-driven initiative for cooperation between jails and community partners, designed to increase public safety and reentry success and, ultimately, to foster system-wide change.

After playing a crucial role in Massachusetts and federal health reform legislation, Urban scholars are studying the Affordable Care Act’s implementation, analyzing many data sources to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Medicaid expansion, health insurance Marketplaces, and subsidies.

Urban researchers were among the first to analyze data to strengthen local and state policy. Today we help local decisionmakers effect change on issues from crime rates to foreclosures to school performance. We also lead the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, a network of local organizations in 35 cities enabling open data and data-based decisions that strengthen communities.

As the federal government replaced severely distressed Chicago public housing projects with new, mixed-income communities, Urban assessed the outcomes for the deeply poor families living there. Our findings changed how public housing agencies support people who might fall through the cracks. We also developed innovative models for coordinating services in public and mixed-income housing, now being tested in five cities.

Our scholars blend academic rigor with on-the-ground collaboration, teaming with policymakers, community leaders, practitioners, and the private sector to diagnose problems and spark solutions in communities across the country and around the globe.

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Urban research has supported efforts to improve the city’s public schools, protect homeowners from unnecessary foreclosures, prevent gun violence, and expand opportunities for work and earnings. Recently, our experts served on the DC Tax Revision Commission and its staff and provided a forum for public debate of its recommendations, now largely in law.
“I know that I can call on the Urban Institute for always-accurate, always-relevant research about the most important issues of the day. Whether it’s a question about health or tax policies, the well-being of families and neighborhoods, the social safety net, or trends in work and earnings, Urban’s information is credible, nonpartisan, and remarkably accessible.”

—JUDY WOODRUFF
Coanchor and managing editor, PBS NewsHour, and Urban Institute trustee

Visit www.urban.org to learn more about recent research, upcoming events and programs, and opportunities to connect with our experts.

“As a founding donor of the Urban Institute, the Ford Foundation continues to turn to this vital partner to help solve complex challenges and influence social change.”

—DARREN WALKER
President, Ford Foundation

“The Urban Institute has a proud 20th-century history of data-rich, timely policy analysis. It now has 21st-century accessibility to accompany those efforts.”

—DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN
President, American Action Forum, and former director, Congressional Budget Office