



Dear County Managers and Administrators,

It was a pleasure having the opportunity to meet with you at NACO's Business of Counties forum in Phoenix. As a research organization, we believe facts spark solutions and we seek to help change-makers address multidimensional problems by providing sound, actionable recommendations and offering new, promising ideas for addressing anticipated barriers to opportunity. And, we continue to be excited about the opportunity to find ways the Urban Institute can partner with local communities to address the many pressing challenges you face.

Below you will find a collection of resources and tools focused on a few of the issues you covered in your wide-ranging discussions. We hope this information is helpful and we look forward to continuing the conversation with many of you.

Please don't hesitate to reach out.

Warmly,

Sarah Rosen Wartell and Donnie Charleston
Urban Institute

SEGREGATION

During the Q&A session following Sarah's presentation, several of you expressed an interest in learning more about Urban's research and tools focused on the issue of segregation. Urban's signature report – [The Consequences of Segregation](#) - is linked below along with a tool you can use to analyze segregation in your county.

- On our website we feature a [visual graphic](#) showing the level of racial and economic segregation for the 100 most populous regions in the country. This graphic shows the level of economic segregation for most [if not all] of your communities. It also shows your community's black-white segregation, and Latino-white segregation.
- Here you will find a [research report](#) that examines the negative impacts of segregation on lower income residents, racial/ethnic minorities, and the impacts on the region as a whole. The report includes analysis for the 100 most populous commuting zones. It analyzes the following outcomes: median household income, per capita income, proportion of residents ages 25 and older with bachelor's degrees, life expectancy, and homicide rate.
- For a quick read, here is a short [blog post](#) summarizing the above research and graphic, and pointing out how more economically and racially inclusive regions fare better than segregated communities.

- As part of Urban’s work on mobility, we pulled together insights from a group of top tier professionals and researchers. This [paper](#) lays out a set of actionable strategies aimed at removing historical and persistent barriers to opportunity in metropolitan regions nationwide.
- Each of these resources touches on suburban as well as urban segregation. But, [this article](#) in particular focuses a great deal on suburban segregation.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

This was a hot topic that came up in both the collaborative session and the dinner conversation. This is one of Urban’s strongest focus areas. The organization is regularly called to Congress to weigh in on the topic for committee hearings and to inform law makers.

- The link below will take you to Urban’s digital map that estimates the affordable rental housing gap for extremely low-income (ELI) renter households [at the county level] for every county in the United States. [This tool](#) will show you the number of affordable housing units available per every 100 ELI renters in your community.
- Recently, the Urban Institute worked with the people of Detroit and JP Morgan Chase to find solutions to the city’s housing affordability crisis. [This report](#) discusses innovative practices that local leaders from across sectors can apply to cities with dynamic and diverse neighborhood conditions. It is a must read for large urban centers undergoing rapid change.
- This article draws upon insights from Urban researchers and highlights communities that are [pioneering some innovations](#) in affordable housing.
- Additionally, [land banks](#) are an interesting strategy thought counties can use to reposition land for development. Formally called county land reutilization corporations, they provide counties with much-needed ability to quickly acquire foreclosed and vacant property. In more economically distressed areas, these land banks can safely hold a distressed property, clean its title and prepare it for a better day.

- Similarly, counties can look at preserving the [affordability of manufactured housing](#). Communities can re-examine the role manufactured housing can play in easing the affordability crisis. Done well, manufactured housing can be a viable solution that not only addresses housing, but has been demonstrated to be a housing asset that can appreciate in value.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EVALUATION

In each of your communities you are wrestling with the challenge of funding and implementing effective early childhood education programs. A key dimension of that effort is determining how well those programs are doing. Urban's research provides some key insights into the issues you should be looking at as you design your evaluation protocols.

- Although emerging from Urban's focus on Path for Success, this tool provides some great strategies for communities seeking to develop or strengthen any early childhood evaluation design. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/pfs-ece-evaluation-design>
- These articles highlight a range of issues to consider in evaluating an early childhood program. They are a must read for anyone who is in the process of developing an evaluation protocol:
 - [Assessing Quality across the Center-Based Early Care and Education Workforce](#)
 - [Are Higher Subsidy Payment Rates and Provider-Friendly Payment Policies Associated with Child Care Quality? \(A Methods Brief\)](#)
 - [Does Attendance in Early Education Predict Attendance in Elementary School? An Analysis of DCPS's Early Education Program](#)

JAIL OVERCROWDING

Each of you is wrestling with the challenge of implanting local criminal justice reforms, whether by consent decree or because of budget constraints. A big part of jail overcrowding is a function of the sheer number of admissions. The other dimension is the revolving door. And that's where counties can play the biggest role in reducing jail admissions and costs. Below you will find links to resources that focus on what counties can do as they plan out their initiatives.

- The Urban Institute worked with 10 counties and two cities for the Transition from Jail to Community project. This project focused on broad systems improvement strategies. It shows how county leaders can leverage human service system strengths by providing pre-release services (like case management, mental health, and public health) to jail detainees. These services can improve the reintegration and the stability of offenders. The [Transition from Jail to Community Online Learning Toolkit](#) is designed for Local Leaders in particular. It's a step by step guide that covers a range of issues you will encounter.
- Beginning in 2017, the Safety and [Justice Innovation Fund](#) (in which NACO participates as a strategic ally, was launched. The Urban Institute provides technical assistance to 32 sites (20 initial + 12 second cohort), and documents and disseminates lessons learned in reducing the overuse of jails, and racial and ethnic disparity in jail populations. The above link will take you to a web portal to access learning insights from each of the program sites.
- This [tool is a guidebook](#) for anyone serious about utilizing the best insights from your community as your address your jail reform initiatives. County leaders should invest in data system integration. Ensuring that transition measures are captured by data platforms, and are both retrievable and can be shared across the entire system is critically important. All community partners need to be a part of an integrated data sharing and assessment process to ensure adequate oversight and evaluation.

If you have any questions about the research, or any of Urban's many areas of focus please don't hesitate to reach out. We can connect you to the resources, professionals, and researchers who are associated with the work outlined above. Thank you all for the work that you do, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

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