



Studies in the News

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Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Report: jails “warehousing” people too poor to pay court costs

EDUCATION

Congress requires in-state tuition for veterans by July 1, 2015

Developing reading habits early builds frequent readers

EMPLOYMENT

More married fathers providing child care after Great Recession

ENERGY

Energy efficiency is a tough sell

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Census survey of state and local public pensions

HEALTH

Health concerns associated with e-cigarettes

Family planning can improve children’s quality of life

HUMAN SERVICES

Four out of every ten children live in low-income families

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Report: car-sharing programs in underserved communities

Internet of Things and possible future threat to security, privacy

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Incarceration’s Front Door: The Misuse of Jails in America. By Ram Subramanian, et al.
Vera Institute of Justice. Feb. 2015. 56 p.

<http://www.vera.org/pubs/special/incarcerations-front-door-misuse-jails-america>

“Jails across the country have become vast warehouses made up primarily of people too poor to post bail or too ill with mental health or drug problems to adequately care for themselves.... [T]he majority of those incarcerated in local and county jails are there for minor violations, including driving with suspended licenses, shoplifting or evading subway fares, and have been jailed for longer periods of time over the past 30 years because they are unable to pay court-imposed costs.... The number of people housed in jails on any given day in this country has increased from 224,000 in 1983 to 731,000 in 2013—nearly equal to the population of Charlotte, N.C.—even as violent crime has fallen by nearly 50% and property crime has dropped by more than 40% from its peak.” (*New York Times*, Feb. 11, 2015).

EDUCATION

In-State Tuition Policies Under the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act.
By Mary Fulton, et al. Education Commission of the States. Feb. 2015. 8 p.
<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/17/42/11742.pdf>

By July 1, 2015, states must offer in-state tuition to veterans. States that fail to do so will not be able to receive GI Bill payments. Dependent spouses and children of veterans will also receive the same benefits. Although California's veteran population has decreased significantly in the past decade, the state is still home to the largest number of veterans in the country.

Kids and Family Reading Report, 5th Edition. By Richard Robinson. Scholastic. Jan. 2015. 108 p.
<http://www.scholastic.com/readingreport/Scholastic-KidsAndFamilyReadingReport-5thEdition.pdf?v=100>

A survey of 2,558 parents and children finds that there are three key predictors that children aged 6-17 will be frequent readers: rating themselves as "really enjoying reading," a "strong belief that reading is fun and important," and having parents who are frequent readers. Other predictors are opportunities to read aloud or be read to, and spending less time on computers. Parents are advised to take steps to read to their children in their earliest months; however, only 47% of parents in low-income households received this advice vs. 74% in high-income households.

EMPLOYMENT

After Great Recession, More Married Fathers Providing Child Care. By Kristin Smith.
The Carsey School of Public Policy. Feb. 2015. 7 p.
<https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/after-great-recession-more-married-fathers-providing-child-care>

"As more wives enter the labor force and earn wages comparable to those of their husbands, gender roles can change. Research on the division of child care among married parents suggests that time available to care is an important factor ... whether fathers care for their children during the time that the mother works for pay. In addition, increases in father care are often in conjunction with economic constriction and job loss. The decline in fathers' employment during the Great Recession may have created conditions where families forego paid child care and instead rely on fathers to care for children ... [t]his brief adds to our understanding about men's changing roles that resulted from their job losses during the Great Recession."

ENERGY

Are the Non-Monetary Costs of Energy Efficiency Investments Large? Understanding Low Take-up of a Free Energy Efficiency Program. By Meredith Fowlie, et al. E2e Project Working Paper Series. Jan. 2015. 10 p.
<http://e2e-new.haas.berkeley.edu/pdf/workingpapers/WP016.pdf>

"This paper finds striking evidence that individuals and households bypass opportunities to improve energy efficiency that require zero out-of-pocket expenditures and are widely believed to be privately beneficial.... [R]esults from a large-scale randomized control trial that significantly reduced barriers to participation in the Federal Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).... [O]ur randomized encouragement intervention affected program participation.... Even after the extensive efforts to encourage participation, only 15% of the households in the treated group, less than one-quarter of those to whom our team spoke, submitted an application and fewer than 6% of them actually received a weatherization.... This study documents that households take up an energy efficiency retrofit ... at a very low rate."

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Survey of Public Pensions: State- and Locally-Administered Defined Benefit Data Summary Report: 2013. U.S. Census Bureau. Feb. 3, 2015. 7 p.

<http://www.census.gov/govs/retire/>

This survey “provides revenues, expenditures, financial assets, and membership information for the defined benefit public pension systems. Data are shown for individual pension systems as well as at the nation, state, and local level. There were 231 state-administered and 3,761 locally-administered defined benefit public pension systems, all of which are represented.... The 2013 survey covered fiscal years that ended between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013 and does not reflect data for the entire calendar year of 2013.” In addition to the full report, the site provides access to a variety of downloadable data at the state and local level.

HEALTH

State Health Officer’s Report on E-Cigarettes: A Community Health Threat. By Ron Chapman, et al. California Department of Public Health. Jan. 2015. 32 p.

<http://cdph.ca.gov/programs/tobacco/Documents/Media/State%20Health-e-cig%20report.pdf>

“Electronic cigarettes contain at least 10 chemicals known to cause cancer or birth defects, according to the report the California Department of Public Health released Wednesday. And while they are widely marketed as smoking cessation devices, ‘there is no scientific evidence that e-cigarettes help smokers successfully quit traditional cigarettes,’ the report says. Instead, the report says, e-cigarettes are addicting a new generation to nicotine with many of the same marketing techniques that have been banned for tobacco products.” (*Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 28, 2015).

Improving Children’s Life Chances through Better Family Planning. By Isabel Sawhill, et al. Brookings. Jan. 23, 2015. 9 p.

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2015/01/improving-life-chances-better-family-planning-sawhill>

Among births to single women under the age of 30, 60% are unplanned. “In this brief, we trace the effects of reducing unintended childbearing on children’s success later in life by using the Social Genome Model (SGM) to simulate the effect on children’s life chances of aligning women’s fertility behavior with their intentions. Though the impacts of improving women’s control over their fertility are small for the population as a whole, there are significant and important improvements in the lives of children who would have otherwise been ‘born too soon.’ These findings suggest that increasing access to and awareness of high-quality, easy-to-use contraception and improving the educational and labor market prospects of low-income women are important steps in improving children’s life chances.”

HUMAN SERVICES

Basic Facts About Low-Income Children. By Yang Jiang, et al. National Center for Children in Poverty. Jan. 2015. 8 p.

http://www.nccp.org/publications/index_date_2015.html

“Published annually since 2009, Basic Facts about Low-Income Children offers demographic and socioeconomic profiles of poor and low-income children in different age groups, from infants and toddlers to adolescents.” The finding from the 2015 edition shows “44% of children under age 18 lived in low-income families in 2013, and 22% lived in poor families. Low-income families are defined as those with incomes less than two times the Federal Poverty Threshold (about \$47,000 for a family of four with two

children) and poor families are defined as those with incomes below the threshold (about \$24,000 for a family of four with two children).”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Electric Carsharing in Underserved Communities: Considerations for Program Success.

By Joel Espino, et al. The Greenlining Institute. Jan. 2015. 11 p.

<http://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Electric-Carsharing-in-Underserved-Communities-spreads.pdf>

“The U.S. has seen tremendous growth in shared-use mobility services over the past decade. This expansion, however, has not yet reached underserved communities. Low-income households could greatly benefit from the cost-savings of sharing otherwise underused assets, as these communities lack sufficient access to public transit and “first-last mile” solutions.... The Transportation Sustainability Research Center (TSRC) interviewed carsharing company experts with experience serving low-income communities, an insurance industry expert with substantial experience working with carsharing companies, and leaders of community-based organizations (CBOs). These entities brought unique insight in identifying best practices that can be encouraged through government regulations.”

Internet of Things: Privacy & Security in a Connected World: Staff Report. U.S. Federal Trade Commission. Jan. 2015. 71 p.

<http://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/reports/federal-trade-commission-staff-report-november-2013-workshop-entitled-internet-things-privacy/150127iotrpt.pdf>

“[T]here still isn’t a widely accepted definition of what the IoT (Internet of Things) actually is, according to a report released last month by the Federal Trade Commission. A working definition may be that it is the rapidly growing network of physical devices—from cable TV boxes and refrigerators to wearable medical devices and traffic lights—that can connect to the Internet.... The FTC report said that experts estimate there will be 25 billion such devices in operation this year and twice that number by 2020.” A rival estimate places this number at between 50 and 75 billion devices, which would create 13 quadrillion connections to the Internet and generate 200 exabytes of data a year. “To put that into perspective ... the Library of Congress houses 5 exabytes of data.” The report, based on a Nov. 2013 workshop, looks at the potential misuse of information collected by these plethora of devices and invasion of people’s privacy. (*State Net Capitol Journal*, Feb. 9, 2015).

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