



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Tribal Internet Access: Increased Federal Coordination and Performance Measurement Needed.
Government Accountability Office. GAO-16-504T. Apr. 2016. 17 p.

<http://gao.gov/assets/680/676830.pdf>

“FCC has placed special emphasis on improving Internet access on tribal lands....However, FCC has not developed performance goals and measures for improving high-speed Internet availability to households on tribal lands. FCC could establish baseline measures to track its progress...Agencies can [also] enhance and sustain their coordinated efforts by engaging in key practices, such as establishing compatible policies and procedures through official agreements. Agencies can also develop means to operate across agency boundaries, including leveraging resources across agencies for joint activities such as training and outreach.”

EDUCATION

***When College Students Start Behind.* By Thomas Bailey, et al. The Century Foundation. June 2, 2016. 16 p.**

<https://tcf.org/content/report/college-students-start-behind/>

This report suggests new ways of providing remedial education for community college students. Among these reforms are suggestions to focus on accelerated courses that are aligned with students' field of study, rather than offering serial remedial courses, and to look at GPAs in addition to using college placement exams in identifying college readiness. The authors highlight several successful programs, such as City University of New York's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs and California's Acceleration Project math pathways.

EMPLOYMENT

***Employment and Disconnection Among Teens and Young Adults: The Role of Place, Race, and Education.* By Martha Ross, et al. Brookings Institution. May 2016. 14 p.**

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports2/2016/05/24-teen-young-adult-employment-recession-ross-svajlenka#V0G0>

This report, which includes detailed data, examines employment trends among teens and compares them to adults age 25-54. "Three million young people are neither in school nor working.... These 'disconnected youth' are primarily people of color. In some metros, black and Latino youth are up to six times more likely to be disconnected than young whites.... The low employment rates among black teens and young adults are concerning, particularly since their rates continue to lag behind other groups as adults. Among the largest metropolitan areas, black-white disparities in employment and disconnection are smallest in Dallas and Houston, and larger in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles." The report advises that youth employment programs are strongest when they include these characteristics: "strong links between education, training, and the job market; focus on promoting healthy youth development; provide support services to address challenges such as childcare and transportation; offer opportunities for paid work closely aligned with or integrated into the program, and provide continuous support after job placement and program exit."

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

***The Effects of Solar Farms on Local Biodiversity: A Comparative Study.* By Hannah Montag, et al. Clarkson and Woods and Wychwood Biodiversity. Apr. 2016. 53 p.**

<http://www.solar-trade.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-effects-of-solar-farms-on-local-biodiversity-study.pdf>

"The study revealed that solar farms can lead to an increase in the diversity and abundance of broad leaved plants, grasses, butterflies, bumblebees and birds. The level of benefit to biodiversity is highly dependent on the management of the site, with greater focus on wildlife management leading to greater biodiversity benefit. The sites with the highest wildlife value were seeded with a diverse seed mix upon completion of construction, limited the use of herbicides, provided good marginal habitat for wildlife and employed a conservation grazing or mowing regime." Eleven solar farms in England were selected for this study.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Comprehensive Tax Reform in California: A Contextual Framework.* California State Controller Betty T. Yee, et al. June 2016. 94 p.**

<http://www.sco.ca.gov/Files->

[EO/Comprehensive Tax Reform in California A Contextual Framework 06_16.pdf](http://www.sco.ca.gov/Files-EO/Comprehensive_Tax_Reform_in_California_A_Contextual_Framework_06_16.pdf)

“Taxes touch on almost every issue we face in California, from funding education to filling potholes.... Designed during the Great Depression, California’s tax structure is outdated, unfair, and unreliable. It reflects economic patterns and demographics of the past. New economic sectors escape tax obligations because the structure was created for an industrial manufacturing base.” A Council of Economic Advisors on Tax Reforms was created in 2015 to “map the inadequacies of the state’s tax system and focus on what it would take to implement truly comprehensive change....” The report provides a framework that facilitates job creation and economic health while keeping the state-local relationship as a key component.

HEALTH

***Bisphenol A and Adosity in an Inner-City Birth Cohort.* By Lori A. Hoepner, et al. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. May 17, 2016. 31 p.**

<http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/advpub/2016/5/EHP205.acco.pdf>

“From pregnancy through early childhood, researchers checked the urine and children body sizes of 369 mother-child pairs in New York City. They found that higher exposure to BPA before birth—estimated by looking at the mothers’ third trimester urine—meant the children at age 7 had higher body fat masses and waist sizes. Researchers did not see an association between body fat and BPA levels in the children themselves at ages three or five. That finding, the scientists said, suggests fetal exposure may be a time of heightened vulnerability to the chemical.... The study doesn’t prove prenatal exposure to the chemical causes obesity, but BPA—used to make plastic hard and shatterproof—mimics the hormone estrogen and acts as an endocrine disruptor. Properly functioning hormones are crucial to reproduction, as well as development, brain function and immune systems.” (*Environmental Health News*, May 17, 2016).

HUMAN SERVICES

***Is the Poverty Rate 1.1 Percent?* By Michael Ettlinger, et al. Carsey School of Public Policy. May 26, 2016. 2 p.**

<http://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1273&context=carsey>

The number of people living in poverty in the U.S. in 2014 constituted 14.8% of the population—or 46.7 million people. This report describes the way increasing their income level by 1.1% could serve to raise them out of poverty. “[W]hile the number of people is daunting, the dollar amount involved is less so. We estimate that those living in poverty in 2014 in the United States were \$192 billion short of the poverty line. In other words, the sum total it would take to raise all poor families to the poverty line is \$192 billion. That isn’t a small sum, of course. But it is only 1.1% of our nation’s \$17.3 trillion of national income in 2014. Thus, while 14.8% of the population lives in poverty, to raise them out of poverty would require raising their income by only 1.1% of total national income.”

Twelve Facts about Food Insecurity and SNAP. By Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, et al. The Hamilton Project. Apr. 2016. 28 p.

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2016/04/twelve-facts-food-insecurity-snap/thp_12facts_snap.pdf

In 2014, almost one in five households with children were food-insecure; in nine states, one in four children lives in a food-insecure household, and about 85% of food-insecure households with children are headed by adults who work. This report captures the latest data about food insecurity in the United States, and discusses the role of the safety net—national and state nutrition programs—in bringing food nutrition to areas and to populations that are most in need.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

California Sustainable Freight Action Plan (Draft Discussion Document). California State Transportation Agency, et al. May 2016. 28 p.

http://www.casustainablefreight.org/app_pages/view/154

“The California Sustainable Freight Action Plan is an ambitious statewide effort to improve freight efficiency and transition the freight transport system to zero-emission technologies, while continuing to support California’s economy.... The integrated action plan will identify strategies and actions to achieve a sustainable freight transportation system that meets California’s environmental, energy, mobility, safety and economic needs.” This report is currently in discussion draft form, and public comments are being solicited through July 6. The final draft is expected later that month.

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