# Kelsi G. Hobbs
## Research Statement

I am an Applied Microeconomist whose research emphasizes Public Economics, Urban Economics, and Innovation Economics. I am broadly interested in topics that affect low- to moderate-income individuals and families. I pursue research questions that can influence Federal, state, and local policy decisions aimed at improving our communities, particularly those that are marginalized. In my current research, I study the prevalence and prevention of rental housing evictions. In a typical year, US landlords file over 2 million evictions, about 900,000 of which result in the removal of an individual or family from their home. Eviction is associated with numerous negative consequences which carry costs not only to the individuals that experience it directly, but also to the communities in which they live. Despite its increasing presence in the media, eviction remains understudied in the literature. My current research fills this gap in the literature.

In my job market paper, *The Effect of Unemployment Insurance on Rental Housing Evictions*, I study the effect of state-level unemployment insurance benefits on county-level eviction filing rates. I construct a large dataset of nearly all US counties from 2002-2016 using state-level UI benefit information from the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, as well as eviction filing rates from the Eviction Lab, the first national dataset on eviction. Using a fixed effects regression, I exploit variation in UI benefit generosity across states to estimate a causal effect of UI benefits on eviction filing rates. I allow this relationship to vary by the county-level unemployment rate. Further, I estimate this relationship before, during, and after the most recent instance of high unemployment: The Great Recession. Despite what intuition may indicate, I find that prior to the Great Recession, an increase in UI benefits led to an increase in county-level eviction filing rates. Although this effect remained positive during and after the Great Recession, it significantly decreased in magnitude after the Great Recession. The effectiveness of eviction prevention policies is an important topic that I hope to continue to pursue in the future. The ability to prevent evictions is an important political issue; however, we still know little about the effect of potential policies on eviction outcomes. A better understanding of prevention can help policymakers and the public.

A second working paper of mine, *Understanding the Variation in Eviction Rates across US Counties*, examines the difference in eviction filing rates and eviction judgment rates across US counties. Although the eviction literature has focused on the causes and consequences of eviction, most of the research has focused on one city, county, or state, not the nation. As a result, we have little understanding as to whether the predictions found in previous research hold across the entire US. Using county-level data on nearly all US counties from the Eviction Lab and panel data methods, I find that both demographic and economic factors predict differences in eviction filing rates and eviction judgement rates across US counties. Further, the factors that predict higher eviction filing rates do not always predict higher eviction judgement rates. This research highlights an importance in distinguishing between different outcomes in the eviction process. It also suggests that true eviction prevention policy will need to address more than just the financial situation of tenants, as discrimination seems to be present.

My previous work in Innovation Economics focuses on university research parks. My co-authors and I have studied the literature on university research parks, the relative importance of university research parks being near their home universities, and the economic impacts of university research parks on communities. Overall, we find that university research parks can be a valuable resource to communities and universities. However, there is still much more research to be done.

I look forward to continuing to pursue topics related to eviction. The new focus on eviction research has led to the development of better data sources, which will give researchers like myself the opportunity to pursue new questions. Another aspect of my dissertation that I wish to continue to pursue is modelling the decision of a landlord to evict their tenant. I would like to formally test landlords' decisions using survey data in the future. The landlord's perspective continues to be understudied in the eviction literature. Finally, I hope to bring my interest in Innovation Economics into my work on rental housing evictions.