Personalizing Homelessness Prevention: Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial

David C. Phillips and James X. Sullivan[*]

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Abstract

Through a randomized controlled trial, we test whether providing personalized case management along with emergency financial assistance more effectively prevents homelessness than financial assistance alone. For the study sample of young adults and families with children who are at risk of homelessness, our results indicate that participants assigned to case management and financial assistance are more likely to access other homeless programs and no less likely to be evicted. Downstream outcomes are mostly unchanged, though the probability of being arrested increases. Using non-experimental variation in the nature of the case management provided across staff, we find that case management is associated with better outcomes when it is more intensive and pays financial assistance quickly.