



# PIRL

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY RESEARCH LAB

Spring 2025

## Current PIRL Projects

### Creating Moves to Opportunity

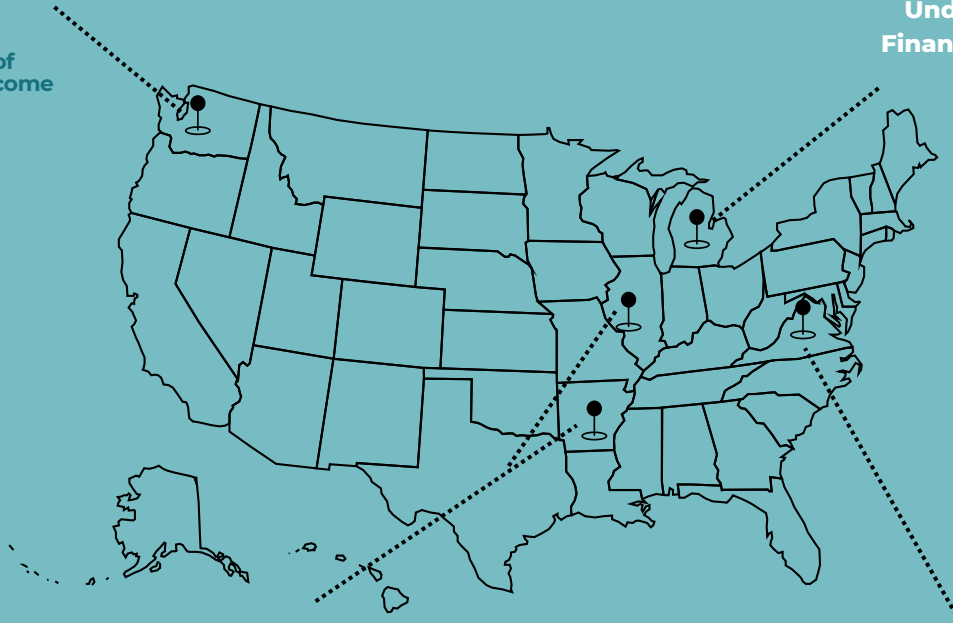
**Location:** Washington

How can we increase economic mobility by improving the quality of neighborhoods low-income families live in?

### Understanding the HAIL Financial Aid Intervention

**Location:** Michigan

How can we help academically-promising students make college decisions?



### Increasing Opportunity and Upward Mobility: What We Can Learn from Communities

**Location:** Arkansas & Illinois

What leads to gains and losses in economic mobility by race and class?

### College and Career Decisions Study

**Location:** Virginia

How can we support community college students as they make post-HS decisions?

## Our Current Funders



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# Current Projects

## Understanding the HAIL Financial Aid Intervention

The study looks at how the HAIL Scholarship, a guarantee of four years tuition-free at the University of Michigan, impacts students' decisions. The experimental intervention more than doubled application and admission rates of low-income students at the University of Michigan. We aim to learn more about how financial aid and other interventions can support the college and career decisions of academically strong students from low-income families, and how these students navigate their transitions to and through postsecondary education or work. Data is collected from students who received the HAIL financial aid offer and those who did not, both prior to high school graduation, and in the six years post-high school graduation through qualitative interviews. **Co-PIs: Elizabeth Burland and Susan Dynarski**

## Increasing Opportunity and Upward Mobility: What We Can Learn from Communities

This project is a collaboration with Opportunity Insights (OI) at Harvard University. We explore how communities have changed over time to explain significant shifts in economic mobility by race and class in recent birth cohorts. For example, tax data shows that low-income white children have lost economic ground compared to low-income black children during the same period. To understand these changes, we conduct life history interviews with adults who grew up between 1978 and 1992, in Crittenden County, AR, and Madison County, IL, where the OI study found that county-level economic mobility trends mirrored those at the national level. PIRL is examining how community and social capital shape mobility, as well as the varying historical, institutional, and policy factors that impacted the employment opportunities of the parents of these cohorts. **Co-PIs: Raj Chetty and Kaylee Matheny**

## Creating Moves to Opportunity (CMTO)

The Creating Moves to Opportunity (CMTO) project is an ongoing collaboration between researchers and public housing authorities (PHAs) in Seattle to evaluate an experimental intervention to help low-income families move to higher-opportunity neighborhoods, reduce residential segregation, and increase upward mobility. Current papers focus on how parents think about schooling in the context of moving, which factors people consider in their moves, and the longer-term outcomes of moving to higher-opportunity areas, such as cross-class social interactions. This project is also a collaboration with Raj Chetty and Opportunity Insights (OI) at Harvard University.

## College and Career Decisions Study

Community college students face a number of obstacles (e.g. housing, health shocks, and food security) that can affect their likelihood of degree completion and transitions to employment. The College and Career Decisions Study is a partnership between PIRL and a community college in Virginia to examine community college student pathways and long-term outcomes. For example, we explore the order, sequence and number of institutions attended, what gets in the way of students' achieving their goals and what drives success. We use administrative data and interviews with students and staff to inform our research questions. **Co-PI: Nicholas Papageorge**

# PIRL in the World in 2024-2025

## Publications

**“Increasing Residential Opportunity for Housing Choice Voucher Holders: The Importance of Supportive Staff for Families and Landlords.”** *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development & Research*.  
Authors: **Stefanie DeLuca and Jacqueline Groccia**

**“‘I Just Had to Go with It Once I Got There’: Inequality, Housing, and School Re-optimization.”** *City and Community*.  
Authors: **Stefanie DeLuca, Jennifer Darrah-Okike, and Kiara Nerenberg**

**“Creating Moves to Opportunity: Experimental Evidence on Neighborhood Choice.”** *American Economic Review*.  
Authors: **Peter Bergman, Raj Chetty, Stefanie DeLuca, Nathaniel Hendren, Lawrence F. Katz, and Christopher Palmer**

**“Exploring the Tradeoff between Surviving and Thriving: Heterogeneity in Adversity among Disadvantaged Black Youth.”** *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*.  
Authors: **Stefanie DeLuca, Nicholas Papageorge, and Joseph Boselovic**

**“Equal Inputs, Unequal Outputs: How Capacity Limits Policy Implementation.”** *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*.  
Authors: **Amanda Lu and Kaylee T. Matheny**

**“Complicating the ‘Suburban Advantage’: Examining Racial and Gender Inequality in Suburban and Urban School Settings.”** *Sociology of Education*.  
Authors: **Emily E. N. Miller and Alejandro Schugurensky**

**“The Promises and Limitations in District Digital Capacity for Education during Covid 19.”** *AERA Open*.  
Authors: **Emily E. N. Miller and Sarah Pedersen**

**“What Good Are Treatment Effects without Treatment? Mental Health and the Reluctance to Use Talk Therapy”** Forthcoming, *Review of Economic Studies*  
Authors: **Nicholas Papageorge, Christopher J. Cronin and Matthew Forsstrom**

**“Rational Self-Medication (with Michael Darden)”** Forthcoming, *Economics and Human Biology*  
Authors: **Nicholas Papageorge and Michael Darden**

## Conferences

**DeLuca, Stefanie and Jacqueline Groccia.** “Using Navigators to Increase Access and Decrease Administrative Burden: A Cross-System and Government Perspective.” APPAM 2024, Washington D.C.

**DeLuca, Stefanie and Jacqueline Groccia.** “When Someone Cares about You, It’s Priceless”: Reducing Administrative Burdens and Boosting Housing Search Confidence to Increase Opportunity Moves for Voucher Holders.” APPAM 2024, Washington D.C.

# PIRL in the World in 2024-2025

## Conferences cont.

**Gannon, Matthew.** "The Rent Eats First: Did Ending the National Eviction Moratorium Increase Food Insufficiency Among U.S. Renters?" 2025 Eastern Sociological Society Conference, Boston.

**Qin, Angelica.** "Chinatown For Whom? A Relational Account of the East Asian Co-ethnic Gentrification of Flushing, Queens" 2025 Eastern Sociological Society Conference, Boston.

**DeLuca, Stefanie, Nicholas Papageorge, Sarah Sullivan, Jacqueline Groccia.** "Sub-baccalaureate Swirling: Understanding Timing, Trajectories and Degree Completion for Community College Students." PAA 2025, Washington, D.C.

**DeLuca, Stefanie, Nicholas Papageorge, Sarah Sullivan, Jacqueline Groccia.** "Timing and Transitions: Understanding Complex Sub-baccalaureate Trajectories and Degree Completion for Community College Students." ASA 2025, Chicago.

## Policy Impact

### National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine

Stefanie DeLuca was appointed to committee for a consensus study on a Research Agenda for Improving Economic and Social Mobility in the United States. Committee on Population and Committee on National Statistics. 2023-2025

### Legislative Impact of Research

The Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act (S.1257, H.R.3776)

Sponsors: Sens. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Todd Young (R-IN); Reps. Joe Neguse (D-CO) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

Choice in Affordable Housing Act of 2025 (S.890, H.R.1981)

Sponsors: Sens. Chris Coons (D-DE) and Kevin Cramer (R-ND); Reps. Emanuel Cleaver, II (D-MO) and Mike Lawler (R-NY)

Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration Act of 2018 (H.R.5793)

### Stefanie DeLuca's Legislative Research Presentations and Policy Briefings

Congressional Staff Briefing on Housing Policy. "Bipartisan Solutions for Housing Security: Ensuring Stability for Families Across the Nation." Bipartisan Policy Council. U.S. Capitol Building, Washington, D.C. December 3, 2024.

Keynote, 50th Anniversary of Housing Choice Voucher Program. Department of Housing and Urban Development. October 16, 2024.

"Improving Neighborhoods to Improve Lives: Re-Imagining the Power of Place." Briefing for Federal policymakers, U.S. Capitol Building, Washington, D.C. Sponsored by the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University. October 9, 2024.

Senate Staff Briefing on the Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act. Bipartisan Policy Council and the Offices of Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Todd Young (R-IN). July 25, 2024.

# PIRL in the World in 2024-2025

## Awards and Affiliations

**Andrew Carnegie Fellowship**, Carnegie Corporation of New York. 2024.  
Finalist: **Stefanie DeLuca**

**Dissertation Prize Fellowship**, Johns Hopkins University. 2024.  
Recipient: **Jacqueline Groccia**

**Candace Rogers Student Paper Award**, Eastern Sociological Society. February 2024.  
Recipient: **Jacqueline Groccia**

**Paper of the Year**, Housing Policy Debate. August 16, 2024.  
Recipient: **Stefanie DeLuca**

**Undergraduate Paper Award**, Southern Demographic Association (SDA). October 17, 2024.  
Recipient: **Hailey Saya Tomlinson**

**Provost's Distinguished Faculty Fellowship**, Georgetown University. 2024-2025.  
Recipient: **Kaylee T. Matheny**

**Futures Fellowship**, Stanford Center on Longevity. 2024-2025.  
Recipient: **Stefanie DeLuca**

**Faculty Affiliate**, Stone Center for Research on Wealth Inequality and Mobility, University of Chicago. 2025-  
Recipient: **Stefanie DeLuca**

## Media

**"Housing Policy and Vouchers."**  
*PBS NewsHour*, March 18, 2024.

**"What Gives Poor Kids a Shot at Better Lives? Economists Find a Surprising Answer."**  
*Wall Street Journal*, July 25, 2024.

**"Who Can Achieve the American Dream? Race Matters Less Than It Used To."**  
*New York Times*, July 25, 2024.

**"Voucher program is supposed to help poor families rent a home. Nearly half the time, it fails."**  
*USA Today*, August 13, 2024.

**"Housing vouchers help most when counselors are on hand."**  
*The Baltimore Banner*, August 29, 2024.

**"America's Role Reversal: Working-Class Blacks Make Gains While Whites Fall Back."**  
*Wall Street Journal*, December 4, 2024.

# PIRL in the World in 2024-2025

## Invited Talks, Stefanie DeLuca

**Harvard University, Department of Sociology Urban Workshop**, February 15, 2024.

**Community College of Carroll County, MD, "How Social Science Can Shape Better Social Policy,"**  
April 15, 2024.

**University of Chicago, Stone Center for Research on Wealth Inequality and Mobility**, November 15, 2024.

**University of Buffalo, Department of Sociology**, November 20, 2024.

**Family and Education Workshop, St. Helena, CA**, March 2-3, 2025.

**Yale University, Department of Economics**, March 27, 2025.

**University of Kentucky, Martin School and Department of Economics**, April 25, 2025.

**Northwestern University, Institute for Policy Research, Inaugural Visiting Scholar**, May 2025.

**Social Science Research Council**, September 23, 2025.

**Brandeis University, Department of Economics**, October 2025.

**UCLA and California Population Center**, November 5, 2025.

## Funding for PIRL

*We could not conduct our rigorous policy-relevant research without our funders. Their generous support makes our multi-site fieldwork, training, analysis, writing and dissemination possible.*

*Thank you to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Smith Richardson Foundation, Russell Sage Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Foundation/Opportunity Insights at Harvard University, and the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences at Johns Hopkins University.*

# PIRL Team Transitions and Kudos

## PIRL Graduate Students successfully defend dissertations

**Joseph Boselovic** defended his dissertation, "Barriers and Pathways to Educational Opportunity for Low-Income Families: Qualitative Evidence from an Experimental Intervention", in May 2024. Following his successful defense, Joseph joined William & Mary's School of Education as a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow.

**Jochebed Cadet** defended her dissertation, "The Role of Emotion in Help-Seeking Behaviors Among First-Generation College Students", in May 2024. Since her successful defense, Jochebed has been working as a Triage Specialist in the Center for Student Success at Johns Hopkins University.

**Jacqueline Groccia** defended her dissertation, "Navigating Uncertainty: Understanding Housing Insecurity Among Low-Income Families", in March 2025.

## Kaylee Matheny leads SEA conference

Former Postdoctoral Fellow and current PIRL Research Team Member **Kaylee Matheny** (now an assistant professor at Georgetown University) led the 2025 Sociology of Education Association (SEA) Conference as program chair. The three-day event, held in Asilomar, CA, featured sociologists presenting research and ideas to address educational inequality.

## New PIRL Team Members

We are thrilled to add to our strong team of researchers! Over the summer, we welcomed to the PIRL staff Postdoctoral Fellow **Emily Miller**, two new Predoctoral Fellows **Matthew Gannon** and **Angelica Qin**, and Research Program Coordinator **Carrie Hanks**.

We also welcomed a new undergraduate Administrative Assistant, **Layomi Omole**, and eight new undergraduate Research Assistants: **Sharon Dogbo**, **Rosa Kim**, **Clare Levine**, **Anna Liu**, **Olivia Lowry**, **Anahat Goraya**, **Aisha Oyediran**, and **Sharada Vishwanath**.

This summer, we will be welcoming a new Postdoctoral Fellow, **Yingjian Liang** from Indiana University, and two new Predoctoral Fellows, **Julia Kapusta** from Boston University and **Mia Xia** from Northwestern University.

## PIRL Team Member Transitions

More PIRL team members have launched into the world! Our undergraduate student **Frank Meng** is pursuing a Ph.D. in sociology at University of Pennsylvania, and **Maggie Tydings** joined Teach for America Philadelphia. Former Research Program Manager **Kendall Dorland** is pursuing her MA in Near and Middle Eastern Studies at New York University. Former Predoctoral Fellow **Sydney Sauer** is pursuing a Ph.D. in sociology at Harvard University. Current Predoctoral Fellow **Sarah Sullivan** will begin a Ph.D. program in sociology at the University of Michigan in Fall 2025.

To learn more about our nearly 200 former students and research team members, see our website at [otheramerica.org/former-research-assistants](https://otheramerica.org/former-research-assistants).



# The Team



**Stefanie DeLuca**  
Director

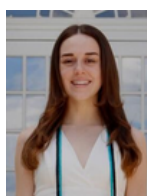


**Nicholas Papageorge**  
Associate Director

## RESEARCH AND PROGRAM STAFF, AFFILIATES



**Elizabeth Burland** (UConn)  
**Matt Gannon**  
**Carrie Hanks**  
**Diksha Iyer**  
**Kaylee Matheny** (Georgetown University)



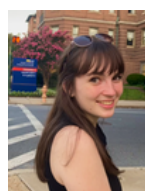
**Emily Miller**  
**Angelica Qin**  
**Sarah Sullivan**  
**Elizabeth Tong** (Univ. of Washington)

## GRADUATE STUDENTS



**Jacqueline Groccia**  
**Gorana Illic**  
**Jasmine Sausedo**  
**Dayna Valek**  
**Alexi Williams**

## UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS



**Lidie Ataoguz**  
**Sara Bartlett**  
**Caroline Blakeman** (Georgetown University)  
**Sharon Dogbo**  
**John Ellis**



**Anahat Goraya**  
**Clare Levine**  
**Anna Liu**  
**Olivia Lowry**  
**Sandy Monter-Casio**



**Layomi Omole**  
**Aisha Oyediran**  
**Hailey Saya Tomlinson**  
**Sharada Vishwanath**