

2021–2023

Research Roadmap

About LISC and LISC Research

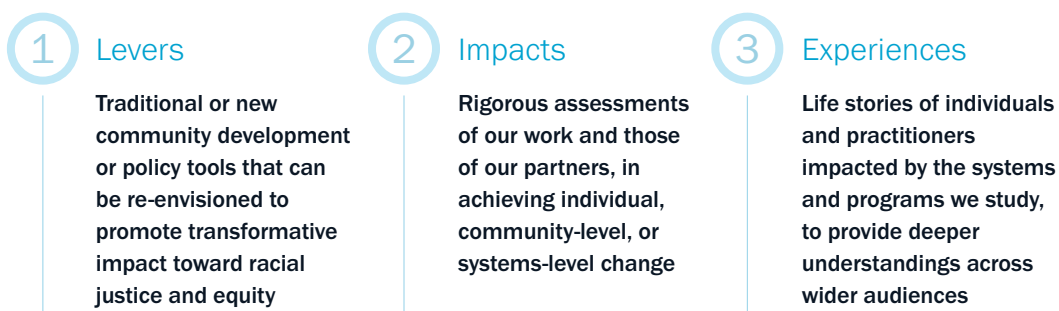
Together with residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America – great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families. We do so by *empowering people*, through [job skills training, career development and financial coaching](#) as well as investments in [educational facilities](#) and access to [healthcare, good food and recreation spaces](#). We *transform places*, through the [preservation and construction of affordable housing, commercial and industrial district development](#), and [creative placemaking](#). We *support enterprise*, through [small business lending and coaching, building capacity for local partners](#) and through [leadership development](#) with residents across the country. And we *foster innovation*, [forging collaboration across sectors](#), and [advocating for policies](#) and practices that sustain and protect this work at the national, state and local levels. In recent years LISC has amplified its commitment to racial equity, through initiatives like Project 10x, an attempt to upend the racial health, wealth and opportunity gap through multiple strategies including [partnerships to promote public safety, as well as policing and criminal justice reform](#). In 2020, we invested \$2 billion in communities across the US, financed nearly 19,000 affordable homes and apartments, helped create 4.5 million feet of commercial space, and supported approximately \$55 million in community services.

The Research and Evaluation department supports LISC and the community development field by conducting studies to better understand our own initiatives and public policies that shape outcomes in urban and rural areas. We collaborate with community partners to ensure that our questions inform policy and practice, and engage in innovative research partnerships to develop path-breaking insights about how communities change and the role of neighborhoods in catalyzing opportunity for their residents. Our research spans the breadth of the work LISC supports, and in 2019-2020 included studies on the impact of [community-anchor partnerships](#), equitable [climate resilience efforts](#), [career pathways programs](#), [industrial district revitalization](#) and related [manufacturing workforce efforts](#), and innovative [grassroots partnerships](#) including [community land trusts](#) and initiatives to support [immigrant communities](#).

LISC

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Building on past research and attempting to seize upon the transformative potential for policy and practice change opened by movements for racial justice and a new Administration, our studies will explore strategies to support people and places who continue to be impacted by COVID economic and public health needs, and will examine pressing issues critical to economic resilience and recovery, including policing and criminal justice reform, climate resilience, and the threats to Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities posed by housing speculation. While maintaining a rigorous scientific lens to understand community impact, we will also incorporate qualitative and innovative forms of documentation, including the arts, to speak to broader audiences about the lived experience of community residents as related to these issues. We conceptualize our roadmap in three domains:



Levers

- **Tools for an equitable small business recovery.** Supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, we are currently developing a policy playbook of concrete actions local governments can take in partnership with multiple sectors to promote an equitable small business recovery. As COVID has only worsened inequities faced by BIPOC and women-owned small and medium-sized businesses, the playbook explores elements of an “all-hands” approach involving lenders, community developers, business district leaders, real estate workforce professionals, policy advocates, and BIPOC entrepreneurs from rural and urban areas nationwide.
- **The role of community organizations in policing and criminal justice reform.** Calls by advocates to advance racial justice by investing in alternatives to overpolicing and mass incarceration have increased interest in community-based violence reduction initiatives. At the same time, rigorous assessments of these approaches so far have shown mixed effects, which suggests the need to understand what it takes to implement anti-violence initiatives successfully. Conducted in partnership

with anti-violence researchers at the University of Southern California, this paper will examine critical capacities that may contribute to stronger outcomes, with the goal of supporting these capacities among community organizations.

- **Medicaid as a multiplier for community interventions.** The Delivery Reform Incentive Payment Program (DSRIP) is a Medicaid restructuring program that has been used to fund “upstream” and preventative strategies that address social determinants of health – in other words, the same kind of work that community development organizations practice every day. While a potentially powerful new resource for community development, partnerships between providers and community-based organizations fueled through Section 1115 waivers (the broader waiver that allows for DSRIP) can be challenging to develop and there has not been extensive research on their implementation. This paper will examine qualities of these successful partnerships, key challenges they experience, and what roles can intermediaries like LISC play in overcoming them.
- **Leveraging financial regulation for climate and housing justice.** The Federal Reserve is the US Central bank and plays a critical role in financial regulation. This report will examine how can it leverage its role to disincentivize investment with negative consequences on communities, and combat climate change.

Impacts

- **Preventing and addressing abandonment.** This paper, a collaboration with the Urban Institute, examines the impact of LISC’s innovative “Zombie” initiative, which capitalized on a unique New York State law meant to ensure that banks were accountable for maintaining abandoned properties in the foreclosure process. The initiative worked with 76 municipalities across New York State to build strategies to prevent foreclosures, as well as inventory and address “Zombie” properties. Given the risks to homeowners posed by Covid-related job losses, the need to hold banks accountable for foreclosures and their impacts, and the challenges of property abandonment, the paper will examine the overall outcomes of the initiative, the more effective strategies taken by local municipalities, and the capacity-building approaches that supported them.
- **Supporting Latinx agricultural communities.** This paper will rigorously document the impact of Rural LISC’s work and those of our partners in the Coachella and San Joaquin Valleys of California, which are home to many Latinx farmworkers. There is limited literature on the impact of community development activities on neighborhood-wide change, particularly in rural areas. This paper describes how the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, Self Help Enterprises, and their partners, contributed to measurable, community-level stabilization and positive change.

- **Community development's role in stopping speculation.** This research, conducted in partnership with the University Neighborhood Housing Program in the Bronx, will examine how speculative sales and the extraction of equity from multifamily properties contributes to negative outcomes for tenants and communities across New York City. Drawing on a unique data set developed by UNHP which contains financial information and building conditions for over 70,000 multifamily rental properties across the city, the research will describe neighborhood predictors of speculation, the ways speculation is associated with negative housing quality and evictions, and the ways community ownership in the form of nonprofit housing and tenant cooperatives may interrupt those cycles.
- **Community development's impact on displacement.** While new data tools have sparked academic debate about gentrification's impact on displacement and the lives of residents, much of these needs to be reframed from a community and a racial equity perspective. As part of a collaboration with Opportunity Insights, we are examining the impact of scaled-up community development activities on dynamics of neighborhood change, gentrification, and displacement, and the impact of these changes on children and adults. The study will draw on longitudinal data about places and the people who live there to examine community development's role in stabilizing neighborhoods and providing for opportunity in hot-market cities

Experiences

A number of qualitative and documentary projects are being launched alongside the research described above. Complementing the study on the impact of rural community development in Latinx, primarily agricultural areas, a series of life histories will document ***the role of housing stability for self-help housing residents who build their own homes.*** A participatory, documentary project related to our study of speculation in New York City will describe how ***tenants in distressed rental housing*** are impacted by abusive landlords and how they are organizing for better conditions. Following up on a forthcoming paper on creative placemaking, a project will ***describe the experiences of artists and community developers working together.*** And in tandem with the paper on community-based anti-violence initiatives, a project will document the experience of anti-violence and health outreach workers as they carry out their difficult work.

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