

URBAN

INSTITUTE · ELEVATE · THE · DEBATE

# Bridging the Gap Between Research & Policy

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Initiatives**

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# About the Urban Institute

**Founded in 1968**

**Mission: To open minds, shape decisions, and offer solutions through evidence-driven economic and social policy research.**

**Over 450 employees in 11 research centers and groups work to understand the problems facing America's cities**

## POLICY CENTERS

Center on International Development and Governance

Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population

Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy

Health Policy Center

Housing Finance Policy Center

Income and Benefits Policy Center

Justice Policy Center

Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center

Policy Advisory Group

Statistical Methods Group

Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center

# Challenges to effectively communicating social and behavioral science research

**Research needs to be:**



ACCESSIBLE

DIGESTIBLE

ACTIONABLE

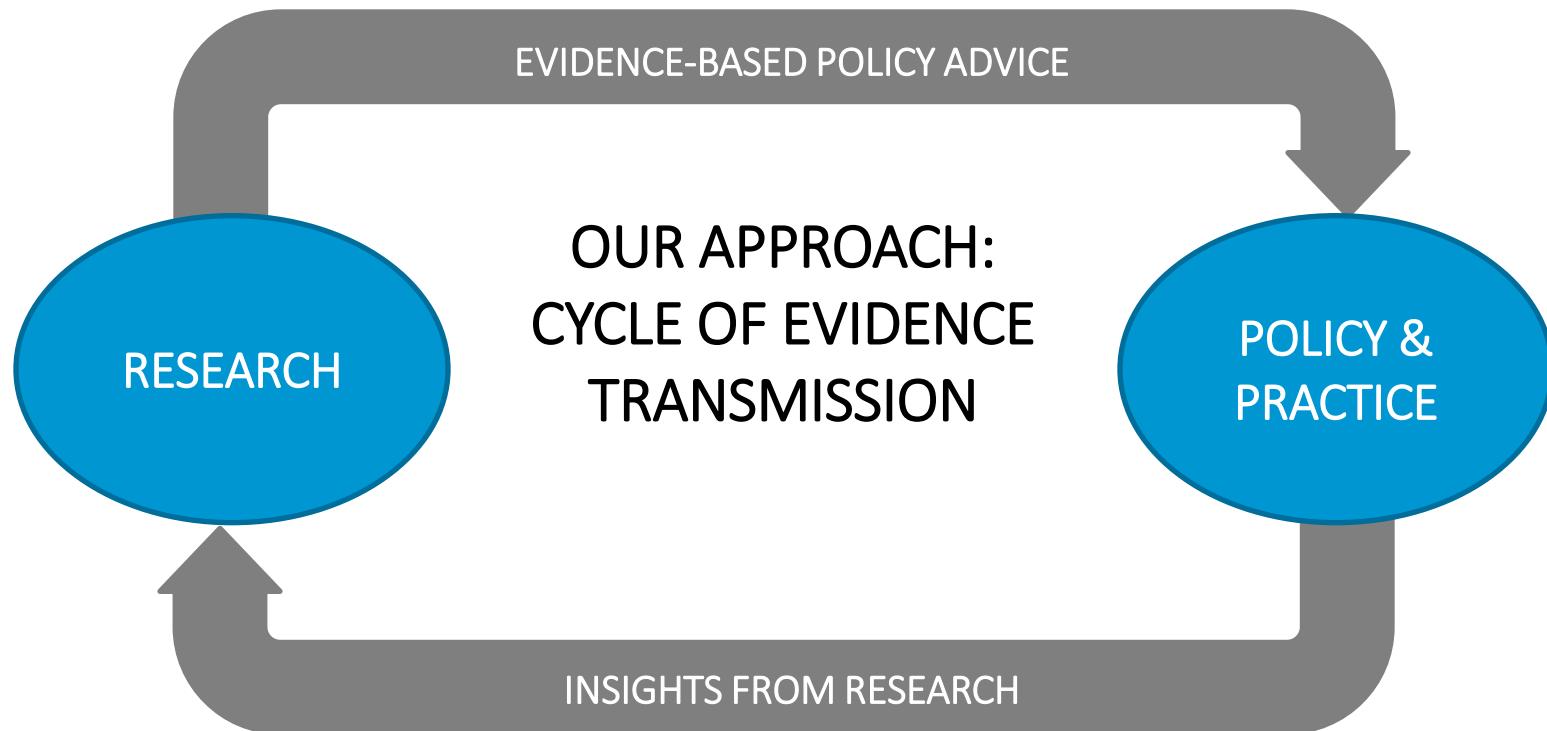
# Opportunity to position research to have impact

Appetite for evidence-based solutions

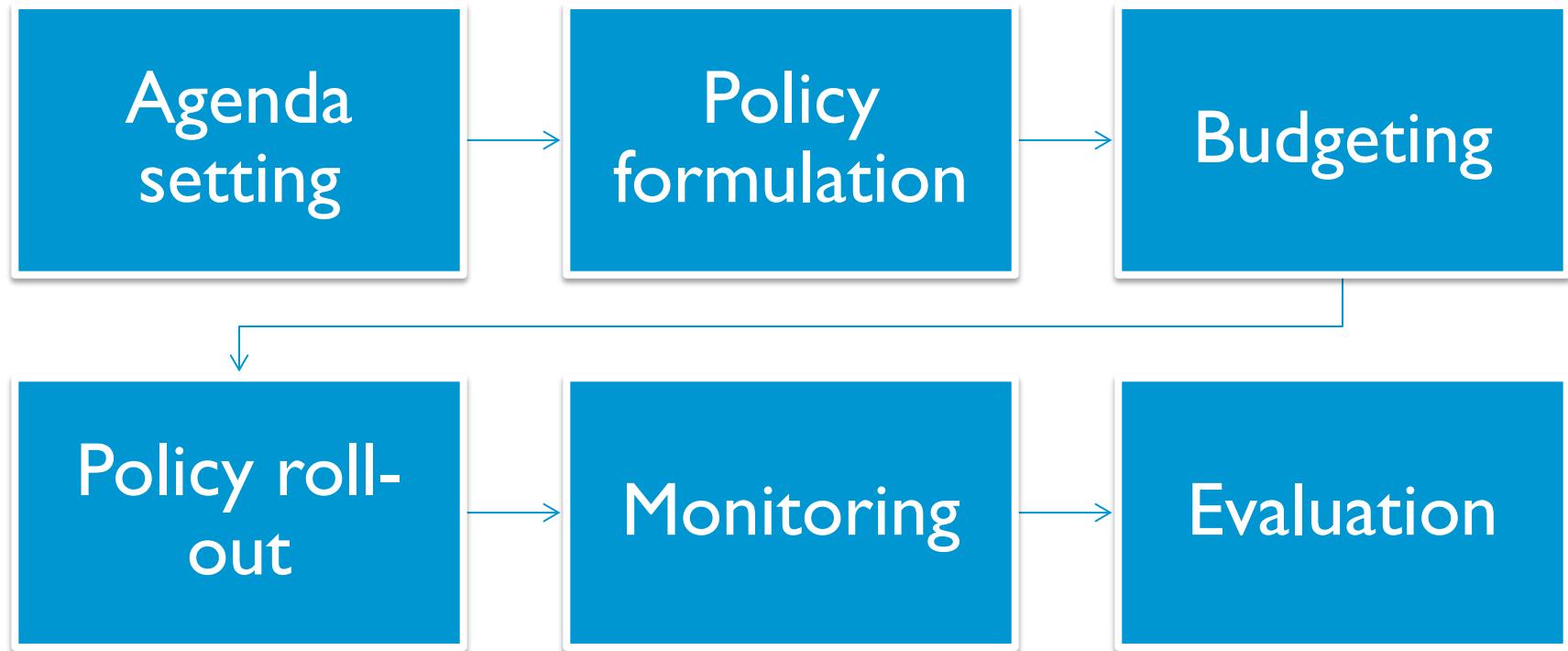
# POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Maximizing the  
impact of research  
in urban policy  
decision-making

# Successful communication of research requires a continuous feedback loop



# Consider what stage of the policymaking process you are trying to inform



# Cycle in Action: How Housing Matters initiative

## Using research to help set the agenda

**John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation funded a \$25 million research initiative to expand evidence on the effects that decent, stable affordable housing has on education, employment, health and other outcomes.**

MacArthur Foundation



### Urban's role:

1. Conduct research as a grantee
2. Maximize the policy impact of the 40+ research projects

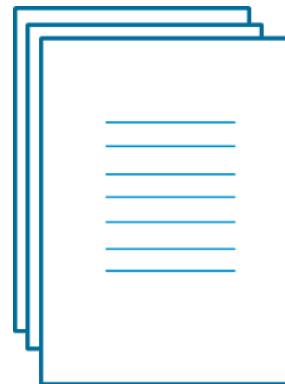
# Maximizing the policy impact of research



## Convening power



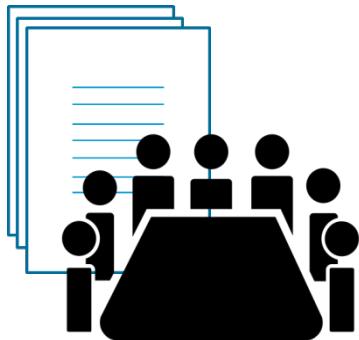
## Synthesis paper



# Amplifying tools to build and broaden the conversation



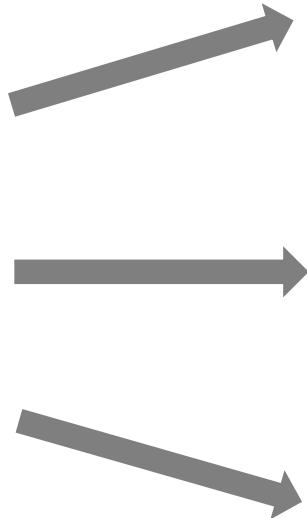
**Synthesis paper  
& convening**



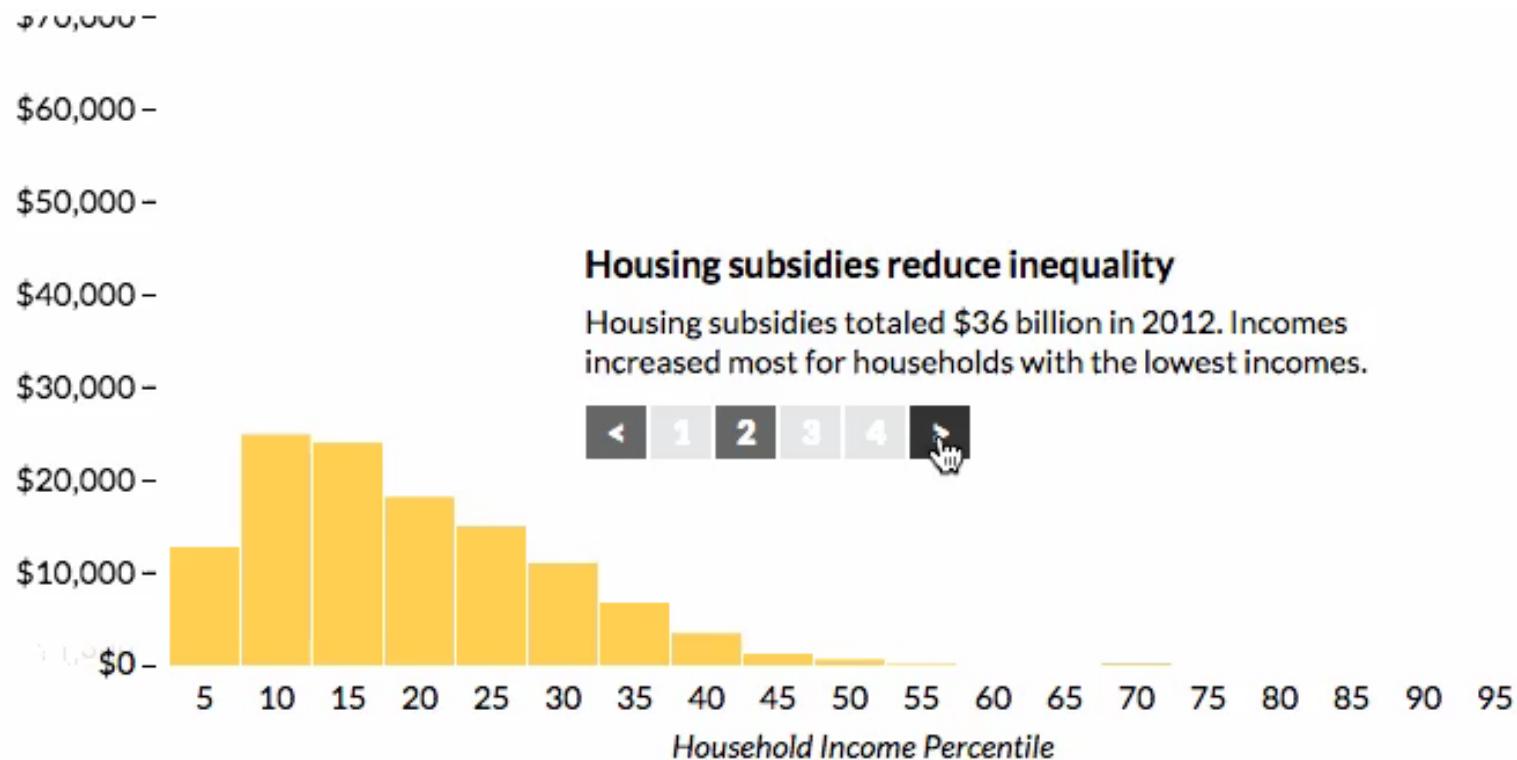
**Data  
visualization**

**Blogs**

**Social media**



# Bringing analysis to life through data visualization



<http://www.urban.org/urban-wire/visualizing-housing-policies-impact-inequality>

# Succinctly stating key takeaways of research through blog posts



Lifts up report

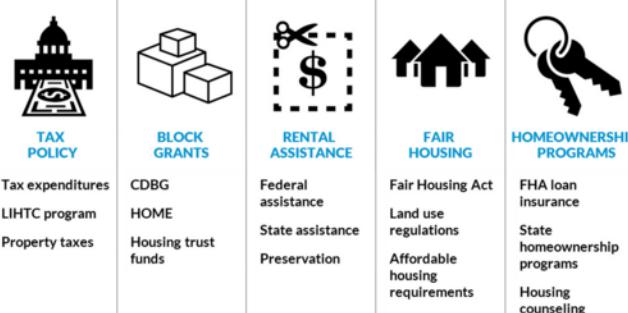


## Using housing policy tools to build ladders to the middle class

Opportunity is intimately tied to place in the United States. Where you live determines school quality, available transportation options, proximity to jobs, and community assets. Because place is so closely linked to access to opportunity, housing policy provides important and effective strategies for promoting economic opportunity and upward mobility.

Our [new report](#) samples the variety of housing policy tools at our disposal to promote economic mobility, particularly for disadvantaged populations. We set forth a menu of evidence-driven federal, state, and local policy tools that can help families climb the ladder. We believe, with the right policies in place, people can have both choices about where they live and opportunities wherever they choose to call home.

### Housing Policy Toolbox



Many of the federal housing policy levers involve providing incentives for state and local action. But even without federal policy changes, states and their local jurisdictions have numerous opportunities to improve the economic mobility of their residents.

Simple visual rolls up and buckets complex policy levers

# Reaching wider audiences through social media



Urban Institute  @urbaninstitute · 30 Sep 2015  
Using housing policy tools to build ladders to the middle class: [urbn.is/1iLwY4G](http://urbn.is/1iLwY4G)



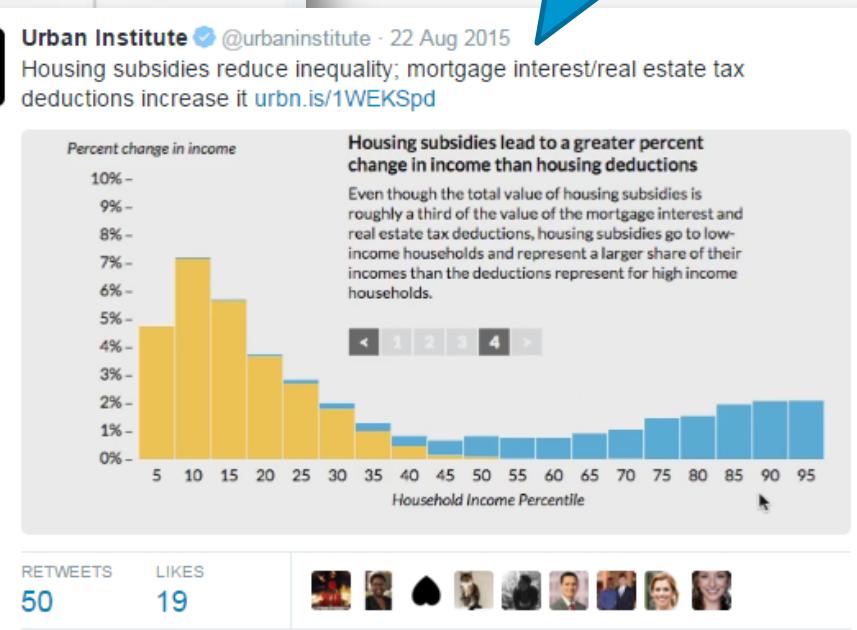
TAX POLICY	BLOCK GRANTS	RENTAL ASSISTANCE	FAIR HOUSING	HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS
Tax expenditures	CDBG	Federal assistance	Housing subsidies reduce inequality; mortgage interest/real estate tax deductions increase it	LIHTC program
LIHTC program	HOME	State assistance	 @urbaninstitute · 22 Aug 2015	Property taxes
Property taxes	Housing trust funds	Preservation	Housing subsidies reduce inequality; mortgage interest/real estate tax deductions increase it	<a href="http://urbn.is/1WEKSpd">urbn.is/1WEKSpd</a>

RETWEETS 18 LIKES 15



Sharable takeaway and visual that peaks the reader's interest

Reaching new people, elevating the debate



# Concluding thoughts

- 1. Research must be accessible, digestible, and actionable.**
- 2. Consider the decisions policymakers must make, the information they need, and at what point in the policymaking process they need that information.**
- 3. Building in support for communicating and lifting up insights from research is critical.**