



Research Working Papers

The Effect of Housing First Programs on Future Homelessness and Socioeconomic Outcomes

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Evidence suggests that the Housing First approach to addressing homelessness generates positive and cost-effective housing and non-housing outcomes.

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Housing First programs provide housing assistance without preconditions for homeless individuals as a platform for rehabilitation. Despite the programs' increasing popularity, limited evidence exists on their effects on socioeconomic outcomes. Using a novel dataset combining administrative records from multiple public agencies in Los Angeles County and a random case manager assignment design, I estimate that Housing First assistance reduces homelessness and crime, increases income and employment, and does not have a detectable effect on health-care utilization. Cost-benefit analysis implies that these potential savings offset program costs within 18 months. These findings demonstrate that Housing First can be rehabilitative and cost-effective.

JEL Classifications: H42, I38, J18

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