

Research Methodology



WATCH: What Works Cities' [What We Know and Developing Research to Fill the Gaps](#)

Types of Research

Stanford's [Basic Income in Cities](#) provides a pithy description of the types of research done for guaranteed income pilots and the implications for each type:

- “The nature and extent of research accompanying the pilot will depend on what cities aim to learn about the operational design, and the short- to longer-term impacts of the program. For example, while operations research will critically inform scale up efforts, a randomized controlled trial would produce credible evidence on outcomes. Additionally, qualitative research that collects recipient stories may help build political support.”¹

Impact vs. Implementation Analysis

Two key types of research are impact analysis and implementation analysis. The former is concerned with the statistically significant changes in recipients' lives that can be attributed to the pilot's cash disbursement. The latter explores the effectiveness of the program's administration and what improvements can be made in how best to get cash into people's hands. Implementation analysis can also explore the feasibility of scaling up the program. See the below resource for further details about these two research types.



READ MORE: The Jain Family Institute's [Guaranteed Income Toolkit](#), pages 14-16

Mixed Methods

Because pilot programs produce both quantitative and qualitative data, it is important to utilize mixed methods research to determine the holistic impact of the cash payments on recipient outcomes. Look to the below resource's description of the mixed methods that can be leveraged in a pilot's research strategy.



READ MORE: Stanford's [Basic Income in Cities](#), pages 21-22

¹ Bidadanure, Juliana, Sean Kline, Camille Moore, Brooks Rainwater, & Catherine Thomas, “Basic Income In Cities” (Stanford Basic Income Lab, 2018), page 21.

Continuous Improvement Feedback

Establishing an internal feedback loop process during the course of a pilot's lifecycle can be a powerful tool to ensure challenges are addressed in real time. This is also a way to assess emerging data and whether any actions need to be taken to improve the pilot's implementation. See the below resource for a research design case study.



READ MORE: Urban Institute's [An Evaluation of THRIVE East of the River](#), pages 2-5

Public Opinion Research

It can also be impactful to measure the shift in public perception before and after the pilot runs its course:

- “Researchers can assess various measures of the public’s perception about UBI, such as policy support before and after the pilot. Researchers could also analyze whether a UBI pilot has shifted social narratives on public assistance.”²

Research Timeline

The Jain Family Institute's [Guaranteed Income Toolkit](#) raises some key considerations when designing a research timeline:

- “Research can take time to design. Once you bring a team on board, they may wish to build an advisory council; researchers will likely want to come up with several options that depend on fundraising success to ensure a statistically valid design even if the project falls short of fundraising goals; research must be conducted under the supervision of an Institutional Review Board and an application process that can take 36 months to conclude; the research team may need to find and hire a subcontracting organization to carry out survey field work (this is common practice in evaluation); and, of course, researchers will have to develop data collection instruments, data sharing agreements/NDAs, and a formal analysis plan for the pilot. While much of this work can be done in parallel it is important to allocate sufficient time for it, especially given the possibility of “snags” in the process.”³

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of a pilot's results need to take into account a variety of nuances, from sample size to how recipients are being asked for certain information. See

² Bidadanure et al., “Basic Income In Cities”, page 22.

³ Ahmad, Halah, Charles de la Cruz, and Stephen Nuñez. “Guaranteed Income in the U.S. - Toolkit” (Jain Family Institute, 2021), page 21.

the below resource for nuances to consider related to the monitoring and evaluation of a pilot program.



READ MORE: Impact Charitable's [*Direct Cash Transfer \(DCT\) Best Practices*](#), page 16-17