

Summary of Proposals

| Paper title | Proposal description | Targeted population | Who implements? | Potential outcomes |
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| Section 1. Promoting Early Childhood Development | | | | |
| Expanding Preschool Access for Disadvantaged Children Elizabeth U. Cascio and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach | Proposes a framework calling for the establishment of a high-quality program in areas where preschool programs do not exist, improved preschool quality in those states and localities with subpar programs, and expanded access in areas where high-quality programs already exist. | Disadvantaged preschool-aged children, especially those who currently have limited preschool access | State and local governments | Promote expansion of cost-effective, high-quality public preschool for low-income children to reduce the income-based gap in school readiness and improve school outcomes for disadvantaged preschool children. Costs would depend on the existing preschool options in each state. |
| Addressing the Parenting Divide to Promote Early Childhood Development for Disadvantaged Children Ariel Kalil | Proposes a new federal task force supporting the collection of evidence to develop more-effective parenting interventions and to promote improved child development in early years. | Low-income families with young children between the ages of 0 and 5 | U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families | Collect evidence on successful parenting interventions for young children through rigorous experiments, and develop new interventions that are lower cost and better matched to families' needs. |
| Reducing Unintended Pregnancies for Low-Income Women Isabel Sawhill and Joanna Venator | Proposes to combat unintended pregnancies through a social marketing campaign to encourage more young women to use long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs). | Low-income, unmarried women between the ages of 15 and 30 | U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Population Affairs, in conjunction with state governments | Expand awareness so more low-income women use a LARC or another method of contraception, and thereby reduce the number of unintended pregnancies to lower the number of children born into poverty. |
| Section 2. Supporting Disadvantaged Youth | | | | |
| Designing Effective Mentoring Programs for Disadvantaged Youth Phillip B. Levine | Proposes expanding community-based mentoring programs, such as the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, in accordance with a set of best practices. | Disadvantaged youth who have no or few adult role models in their lives | Nongovernmental organizations—including nonprofits, foundations, charitable organizations, and others—as well as private-sector entities, and the federal government in some circumstances | Improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged youth and raise lifetime earnings by approximately \$7,500. Prior program costs have averaged approximately \$1,600 per child. |
| Expanding Summer Employment Opportunities for Low-Income Youth Amy Ellen Schwartz and Jacob Leos-Urbel | Proposes distribution of federal grants to states for municipalities to provide summer employment to disadvantaged youth, first through a pilot program and then through a nationwide expansion. | Low-income youth between the ages of 16 and 19 who are enrolled in, or have recently graduated from, high school | U.S. Department of Labor, state and local governments, and community-based organizations | Expand summer job programs for disadvantaged youth to increase school attendance, improve educational outcomes, and reduce violent behavior and crime. Cost would be roughly \$2,000 per participant. |
| Addressing the Academic Barriers to Higher Education Bridget Terry Long | Proposes improving placement in college remediation classes, providing better college remediation services, and adopting measures to prevent the need for remediation. | Disadvantaged, academically underprepared students in high school and college | School districts, community colleges, university systems, and state and federal governments | Reduce the need for college-level remediation and better match underprepared students with effective resources and supports to equip them with the skills they need to succeed in college and in the workforce. Reforms would likely result in higher educational outlays in the short run, but would lead to cost savings for students, institutions, and taxpayers in the long run. |

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| Section 3. Building Skills | | | | |
| Expanding Apprenticeship Opportunities in the United States Robert I. Lerman | Proposes a series of targeted federal and state-level initiatives to expand access to registered apprenticeship programs by creating marketing initiatives, building on existing youth apprenticeship programs, extending the use of federal subsidies, and designating occupational standards. | At-risk youth and middle-skill adults in low-wage jobs | U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship, U.S. Department of Commerce, state governments, and Career Academies | Expand apprenticeship opportunities for both youth and adults to improve human capital and raise earnings by an average of nearly \$78,000 over two and a half years after leaving the program. Costs would vary, but successful programs have been implemented at \$5,500 per apprentice. |
| Improving Employment Outcomes for Disadvantaged Students Harry J. Holzer | Proposes the creation of financial incentives for public colleges to offer classes in high-return fields and for employers to offer more training to their employees. | Disadvantaged youth who possess at least some level of basic academic preparation for higher education | Public colleges and university systems, state governments, and the federal government | Incent colleges to reform their curricula to generate better labor market outcomes, with wage gains of up to 30%, for disadvantaged students. Estimates suggest that \$2 billion in expenditures could fund occupational training for up to 2 million individuals. |
| Providing Disadvantaged Workers with Skills to Succeed in the Labor Market Sheena McConnell, Irma Perez-Johnson, and Jillian Berk | Proposes increased funding for training programs targeted to low-skill workers through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult program and a series of reforms to training programming offered by state and local workforce boards. | Low-skilled adult workers with limited workforce experience | Federal government through congressional legislation, and state and local workforce boards | Improve labor market outcomes—including earnings increases of between \$300 and \$900 per quarter—for inexperienced, low-skilled adult workers. Increasing WIA funding to generate these benefits would require direct outlays from the federal government. |
| Section 4. Improving Safety Net and Work Support | | | | |
| Supporting Low-Income Workers through Refundable Child-Care Credits James P. Ziliak | Proposes converting the federal Child and Dependent Care Credit from a nonrefundable tax credit to a refundable one, capping eligibility at \$70,000 and making the credit a progressive function of income, the age of the child, and utilization of licensed care facilities. | Low- and middle-income working families with less than \$70,000 in income and with children ages 12 and under | Federal government through congressional legislation | Increase tax-based subsidies for center-based, quality child care for low-income families to increase their labor force participation, disposable income, and usage of higher-quality child care. Cost would depend on a host of factors, but the proposal could be revenue-neutral or better. |
| Building on the Success of the Earned Income Tax Credit Hilary Hoynes | Proposes expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) by raising the benefits for families with one child to be on par with the benefits for families with two children. | Low-income families with one child who qualify for the EITC | Federal government through congressional legislation | Strengthen work incentives for low-income one-child families. Raise after-tax income by about \$1,000 for one-child EITC beneficiaries, leading to improved health and children's cognitive skills, and raising 410,000 people—including 131,000 children—out of poverty. Annual cost would be roughly \$9 billion before accounting for extra tax revenue from higher levels of work. |
| Encouraging Work Sharing to Reduce Unemployment Katharine G. Abraham and Susan N. Houseman | Proposes that the federal government subsidize state work-sharing payments during economic downturns, make work sharing a requirement for state unemployment insurance systems, change federal requirements to modify provisions of state work-sharing plans that may discourage employer participation, and provide states with adequate funding to administer work-sharing programs. | American workers who would otherwise become unemployed during a cyclical economic downturn | Federal government through congressional legislation and U.S. Department of Labor, and state governments | Increase employers' usage of work sharing rather than layoffs during cyclical downturns, which could have saved as many as 1 in 8 of the jobs that were lost during the Great Recession. Work sharing may impose costs by reducing the pace of structural adjustment during economic downturns, but if the program is well designed, this effect should not be substantial relative to the policy's benefits. |
| Designing Thoughtful Minimum Wage Policy at the State and Local Levels Arindrajit Dube | Proposes that states and localities consider median wages and local costs when setting minimum wages, index the minimum wage for inflation, and engage in regional wage setting. | Low-wage workers | State and local governments | Raise the earnings of low-wage workers with minimal negative impacts on employment. |
| Smarter, Better, Faster: The Potential for Predictive Analytics and Rapid-Cycle Evaluation to Improve Program Development and Outcomes Scott Cody and Andrew Asher | Proposes that federal, state, and local agencies conduct thorough needs assessments to identify where predictive analytics and rapid-cycle evaluation can improve service delivery. | Agencies at all levels of government that run programs targeting individuals living in poverty | Agencies that administer social service programs across all levels of government | Provide more effective services for individuals living in poverty by targeting services appropriately and by identifying effective program improvements. Initial investments in analytical capabilities may be offset by long-term savings. |