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**Innovating to End
Urban Poverty Conference**

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Panel 3: Household order and structure
Summary

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Stepping Stone or Sink Hole? Immigrants, Poverty, and the Future of Metropolitan America
Considerations
- Immigrants are now a larger percent of the poor than before.
- The geography of immigration has changed (e.g., immigrants are now in the San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, and other areas that were traditionally not immigrant destinations). These areas are not used to dealing with immigrant needs, immigrant services or immigrant organizing to make sure that their voices get heard.
- Spatial reconfiguration makes service delivery and civic engagement more challenging.
- Immigrants are lower educated than native-born individuals: education is key to mobility for immigrants and their children.

Policy directions
- Make work pay: minimum wage, preventing wage theft, labor rights.
- Make mobility possible: the key thing for immigrants to move to the labor market is English as a second language. It is a huge boost to their income.
- Serve the new geography: expand to suburbs.
- Create a path to citizenship: comprehensive and complete reform is important.
- We have seen the whole conversation on immigration change because of the immigrant rights organizing that has begun to pull people around to the idea that comprehensive immigration reform is something that is popular with 70 percent of the U.S. public and 60 percent of Republicans, although it has not seemed to move the House yet.

Why we should care about executive function in the context of a conversation about poverty

- Set of skills that help people to orchestrate their lives, achieve goals, solve problems, and assess results. Like an air traffic controller. Skills are learned by practice.
- Important role in children and adults' lives (science-based research).
- Early childhood interventions are necessary but not sufficient: children spend time with adults the rest of the day, outside of their Pre-K program. We need to think about ways in which we can also improve the capability of adults to care for their children.

What we should be doing in order to put executive function into practice

- Increasing income: free people to be more successful. If people use all of their cognitive resources to be able to figure out how to get through the day, they have fewer resources left to figure out how to take the next steps in life. The more we can do minimum wage, subsidized employment, and training that increases income, it should help.
- Reducing the burden for applying for benefits. If people use all of their cognitive resources to be able to access those programs, they have less left to be able to achieve their goals to be able to problem solve and do what they need to do.
- Modeling programs after ones like Building Nebraska Families, which was a home visiting program targeted to adults and focused on goal setting and helping people to achieve those goals on time management and helping their children.

Discussion

- YWCA Parent-child visitation program: help people exercise their executive function. Program is designed to get children reading 30 minutes every day, which actually exercises the part of the brain that will help children become better at executive functions as they get older. Program also helps mothers sharpen their executive function skills in helping their children.
- Difference between a technical challenge and adaptive challenge. Technical challenges: ones for which we have the answers and know how to implement them. Adaptive challenges: ones where the people with the problem have to become different in order for the problem to be solved. Poverty is both a technical and adaptive challenge. How do we have to be different for poverty to be different, or nonexistent?
- Collective power through community organizing to make programs continue to exist.
- There needs to be a focus on systemic and institutional solutions, not just on "fixing" individuals: importance of looking at the context (e.g., some people that did not grow up in poverty did the same things that others in poverty did, but never went to jail).
- We also need to consider ways to improve existing programs, rather than constantly creating new programs.