

SARA HELLER

University of Michigan Department of Economics
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Academic Employment

University of Michigan, Assistant Professor of Economics, 2017 – present
Faculty Associate, Population Studies Center, Institute for Social Research, 2017 – present
MIT Economics, Visiting Assistant Professor & J-PAL, Visiting Scholar, 2016 – 2017
University of Pennsylvania, Assistant Professor of Criminology, 2013 – 2017
Secondary appointment, Graduate School of Education, 2016 – 2017

Education

Ph.D. in Public Policy, University of Chicago, 2008 – 2013
Master of Public Policy, Georgetown University, 2006 – 2008
B.A. in Psychology, *cum laude*, Harvard University, 1998 – 2002

Professional Affiliations

University of Michigan Poverty Solutions faculty expert (2018 – present)
National Archive of Criminal Justice Data faculty affiliate (2017 – present)
NBER Faculty Research Fellow (2017 – present)
Penn Institute for Urban Research faculty fellow (2015 – 2017), fellows network (2017 – present)
J-PAL North America affiliate (2015 – present)
University of Chicago Crime Lab/Urban Education Lab research affiliate (2013 – present)

Publications

- Davis, Jonathan M.V. & Sara B. Heller “Rethinking the Benefits of Youth Employment Programs: The Heterogeneous Effects of Summer Jobs” (forthcoming). *Accepted May 2019 at The Review of Economics and Statistics*.
- Formerly NBER Working Paper 23443 (posted 2017)
- Heller, Sara B. & Judd B. Kessler (forthcoming). "How to Allocate Slots: the Market Design of Summer Youth Employment Programs." In *Fair by Design: Economic Design Approaches to Inequality*, Eds. S.D. Kominers & A. Teytelboym. Oxford University Press Series on Inequality in the Twenty-First Century, Oxford University Press
- Davis, Jonathan M.V. & Sara B. Heller. “Using Causal Forests to Predict Treatment Heterogeneity: An Application to Summer Jobs” (2017). *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*, 107(5): 546–550
- Heller, Sara B., Anuj K. Shah, Jonathan Guryan, Jens Ludwig, Sendhil Mullainathan & Harold A. Pollack. “Thinking, Fast and Slow? Some Field Experiments to Reduce Crime and Dropout in Chicago” (2017). *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 132(1): 1-54
- Formerly NBER Working Paper 21178 (posted 2015, updated 2016)
- Heller, Sara B. “Summer Jobs Reduce Violence among Disadvantaged Youth” (2014). *Science*, Vol 346 Issue 6214

Publications, continued

Heller, Sara B., Brian A. Jacob & Jens Ludwig (2011). "Family Income, Neighborhood Poverty, and Crime." In *Controlling Crime: Strategies and Tradeoffs*, Eds. Philip J. Cook, Jens Ludwig & Justin McCrary. National Bureau of Economic Research Conference Report, University of Chicago Press

Working Papers

Heller, Sara, Harold Pollack, Roseanna Ander & Jens Ludwig (2013). "Preventing Youth Violence and Dropout: A Randomized Field Experiment." NBER Working Paper 19014

In Progress

Bertrand, Marianne & Sara Heller, "One Summer Chicago Plus: Scaling and Unpacking a Successful Youth Summer Jobs Program"

Heller, Sara, "Applying Promising New Findings: An Experimental Evaluation of Philadelphia WorkReady"

Heller, Sara & Judd Kessler, "The Effect of Letters of Recommendation in the Youth Labor Market"

Deming, David, Will Dobbie & Sara Heller, "Experimental Evidence on Reducing Problem Behaviors and Improving Employability in Youth Education and Training Centers."

Bertrand, Marianne, Monica Bhatt, Chris Blattman, Sara Heller & Max Kapustin. "Predicting and Reducing Gun Violence in Chicago: Experimental Results from the READI Program"

Research Dissemination

(Audio) Featured on Freakonomics Radio, "Preventing Crime for Pennies on the Dollar."
<http://freakonomics.com/2015/09/10/preventing-crime-for-pennies-on-the-dollar/>

"Interventions for Urban Youth: Can Summer Jobs and Mentorship Really Affect Violent Crime Rates?" *Urban Link*, University of Pennsylvania, August 2015.

"Summer Jobs and Youth Violence." *Translational Criminology*, Spring 2015.

"Modest but meaningful: Sara Heller on the benefits and costs of a Chicago youth program," blog post for Vera Institute of Justice's Cost-Benefit Knowledge Bank, September 2013.

"Evidence from Chicago shows that a summer jobs program for youth can reduce violent crime arrests by 51 percent," London School of Economics' American Politics and Policy blog, September 2013.

Ludwig, Jens, Sara Heller, Jonathan Guryan & Thomas Miles (2011). "How Can We Know if Juvenile Justice Reforms are Worth the Cost?" Models for Change Knowledge Brief, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Selected Media Coverage

AAAS News, The Atlantic/CityLab, Boston Globe, Business Week, Chicago Tribune, Daily Mail (UK), The Economist, FiveThirtyEight, Forbes, Huffington Post, NBC News, New York Magazine, New York Times, Philadelphia Inquirer, realclearscience.com, Reddit, Scientific American, U.S. News and World Report, Washington Post, Yahoo News

Research Grants

- Population Dynamics and Health Program at Michigan (with Marianne Bertrand, Monica Bhatt, Chris Blattman, and Max Kapustin, 2018-2020), mini-grant for computing and secure data analysis for “Reducing Gun Violence in Chicago: Experimental Results from the READI Program,” \$3,000
- J-PAL North America, Co-PI (with Judd Kessler, 2017-2020), “The Effects of Letters of Recommendation in the Youth Labor Market,” \$226,315
- J-PAL North America, PI (2017-2019), “Applying Promising New Findings: An Experimental Evaluation of Philadelphia WorkReady,” \$312,259
- Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Co-PI (with David Deming & Will Dobbie, 2017-23), “Experimental Evidence on Reducing Problem Behaviors and Improving Employability in Youth Education and Training Centers,” \$582,956
- Overdeck Innovation Funds at Princeton University, Co-PI (with David Deming & Will Dobbie, 2017-19), “Experimental Evidence on Reducing Problem Behaviors and Improving Employability in Youth Education and Training Centers,” \$147,500
- National Institute of Justice, PI (2017-2018), “Applying Promising Evidence to New Settings: An Experimental Evaluation of Summer Jobs in Philadelphia,” \$147,210
- J-PAL North America, PI (2015-2017), “Understanding the Potential of Summer Jobs Programs: A Pilot Replication and Expansion Experiment in Philadelphia,” \$49,632
- McCormick Foundation, Co-PI (with Marianne Bertrand, 2015-2017), “One Summer Chicago Plus: Scaling and Unpacking a Successful Youth Summer Jobs Program,” \$430,000
- J-PAL North America, Co-PI (with Marianne Bertrand, 2015-2017), “One Summer Chicago Plus: Scaling and Unpacking a Successful Youth Summer Jobs Program,” \$195,638
- U.S. Department of Labor Scholars Program (2013-14), PI, research grant \$34,304
- U.S. Department of Labor (2013-2014), contract to evaluate “The Effects of Summer Jobs on Youth Outcomes, \$149,985
- U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP (Co-PI with Harold Pollack, 2012-2015), Community-Based Violence Prevention Field-Initiated Research and Evaluation Program, research grant \$277,621

Awards & Fellowships

- American Society of Criminology, Division of Experimental Criminology: 2015 Outstanding Experimental Field Trial
- Association for Public Policy and Management Dissertation Award, Honorable Mention (2014)
- National Science Foundation/National Bureau of Economics (2012-13), Crime Research Fellow
- U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (2008-13), Institute of Education Sciences Pre-Doctoral Research Fellowship
- Georgetown Public Policy Institute (2006-08), Merit scholarship, Academy of Achievement’s 2008 International Summit
- Harvard University (1998-2002), Robert C. Byrd Scholarship, Doris Cohen Levi prize

Teaching

Penn

Graduate: Evidence-Based Crime Prevention (Crim 634), Research Methods/Crime Analysis Project (Crim 603)
Undergraduate: Practical Data Analysis (Crim 320)

MIT

Undergraduate: Economics of Crime (14.11)

University of Michigan

Graduate: Economic Development and Transition II, Experimental Methods (Econ 666)
Undergraduate: Economics of Crime (Econ 327 and 395)

Peer Reviews

American Economic Review; American Economic Review: Insights; American Economic Journal: Applied Economics; American Economic Journal: Policy; BEJEAP; Campbell Collaboration; Economic Inquiry; Economics of Education Review; IZA Journal of Labor Policy, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization; Journal of Experimental Criminology; Journal of Health Economics; Journal of Human Resources; Journal of Labor Economics; Journal of Law, Economics and Organization; Journal of Policy Analysis and Management; Journal of Public Economics; Journal of Urban Economics; J-PAL; Labour Economics; National Science Foundation; Prevention Science; Review of Economics and Statistics; Smith Richardson Foundation; Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness; Quarterly Journal of Economics; What Works in Health

Conference Presentations & Invited Talks

2019 (including upcoming)

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Berkeley University x2, Berkeley, CA
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI
University of Michigan x2, Ann Arbor, MI
University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN

2018

UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
NBER Summer Institute, Cambridge, MA
IZA/CREST/OECD Conference on Labor Market Policy Evaluation, Paris, France
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
APPAM, Washington, D.C.
Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

2017

American Economics Association Meetings, Chicago, IL
Poverty, Violence, and the Policy Response, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.
SREE, Washington, D.C.
RIIPL at Brown University, Providence, RI

Yale University, New Haven, CT
MIT, Cambridge, MA
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Transatlantic Workshop on the Economics of Crime (co-organizer only), Philadelphia, PA
Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
APPAM, Chicago, IL

2016

MIT, Cambridge, MA
World Bank, Washington, D.C.
SREE, Washington, D.C.
Vanderbilt, Nashville, TN
Northeastern, Boston, MA
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
ASC, New Orleans, LA

2015

SREE, Washington, D.C.
Midwest Economics Association Conference, Minneapolis, MN
University of Pennsylvania (x4), Philadelphia, PA
OJJDP Youth Employment Roundtable, Chicago, IL
MIT, Cambridge, MA
National Job Corps Association, online/nationwide
Columbia, New York, NY
Transatlantic Workshop on the Economics of Crime, London, England
University of Chicago, Chicago IL
Aarhus University/TrygFonden, Denmark
APPAM, Miami, FL
ASC, Washington, DC
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

2014

American Economics Association Meetings, Philadelphia, PA
SREE, Washington, D.C.
Urban Network Roundtable on Youth Employment, Washington, D.C.
U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C.
Midwest Economics Association Conference, Evanston, IL
Evaluating for Peace: Impact Evaluation for Fragility, Conflict, Crime, and Violence Prevention,
Lisbon, Portugal, sponsored by the World Bank and Development Impact Evaluation
AL CAPONE 4th Annual Meeting, Sao Paulo, Brazil
NBER Summer Institute, Cambridge, MA
MDRC, New York, NY
University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
APPAM, Albuquerque, NM

2010-2013

Conference on Crime in Latin America, Philadelphia, PA, sponsored by University of Pennsylvania,
IADB, and AL CAPONE; *Institute for Research on Poverty Summer Institute*, Madison, WI; *SREE*,

Washington, D.C. x2; *APPAM*, Baltimore, MD, Washington, D.C. x2 & Boston, MA; *Duke University*, Durham NC; *IES Conference*, Washington, D.C.; *Global Youth Economic Opportunities Conference*, Washington D.C.

Previous Professional Experience

Teaching and Research

Pre-doctoral Research Fellow, *Crime Lab, University of Chicago*, Winter 2009 – Spring 2013

Teaching Assistant, *University of Chicago*, Winter 2009, Fall and Winter 2010

- Mathematical Statistics for Public Policy I with Robert LaLonde
- Mathematical Statistics for Public Policy II with Jeffrey Grogger
- Crime Policy with Jens Ludwig

Research Assistant, *The Hamilton Project, The Brookings Institution*, Summer 2007

English Teacher *Académie de Créteil*, France, Fall 2005 – Spring 2006

Research Assistant *Harvard Graduate School of Education* and *McLean Hospital*, Summer 2001

Research Assistant to Arthur Gelb, President, *New York Times Foundation*, Part-time 1999

Other

Event Coordinator, *Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center*, University of Maryland, Winter 2003 - Fall 2005

Assistant to the Artistic Director *Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company*, Summer – Winter 2003

Vilar Intern *Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts*, Production Department, Winter - Spring 2003

Technical Manager *Edinburgh Fringe Festival*, CO₂C Venues, Scotland, Summer 2002