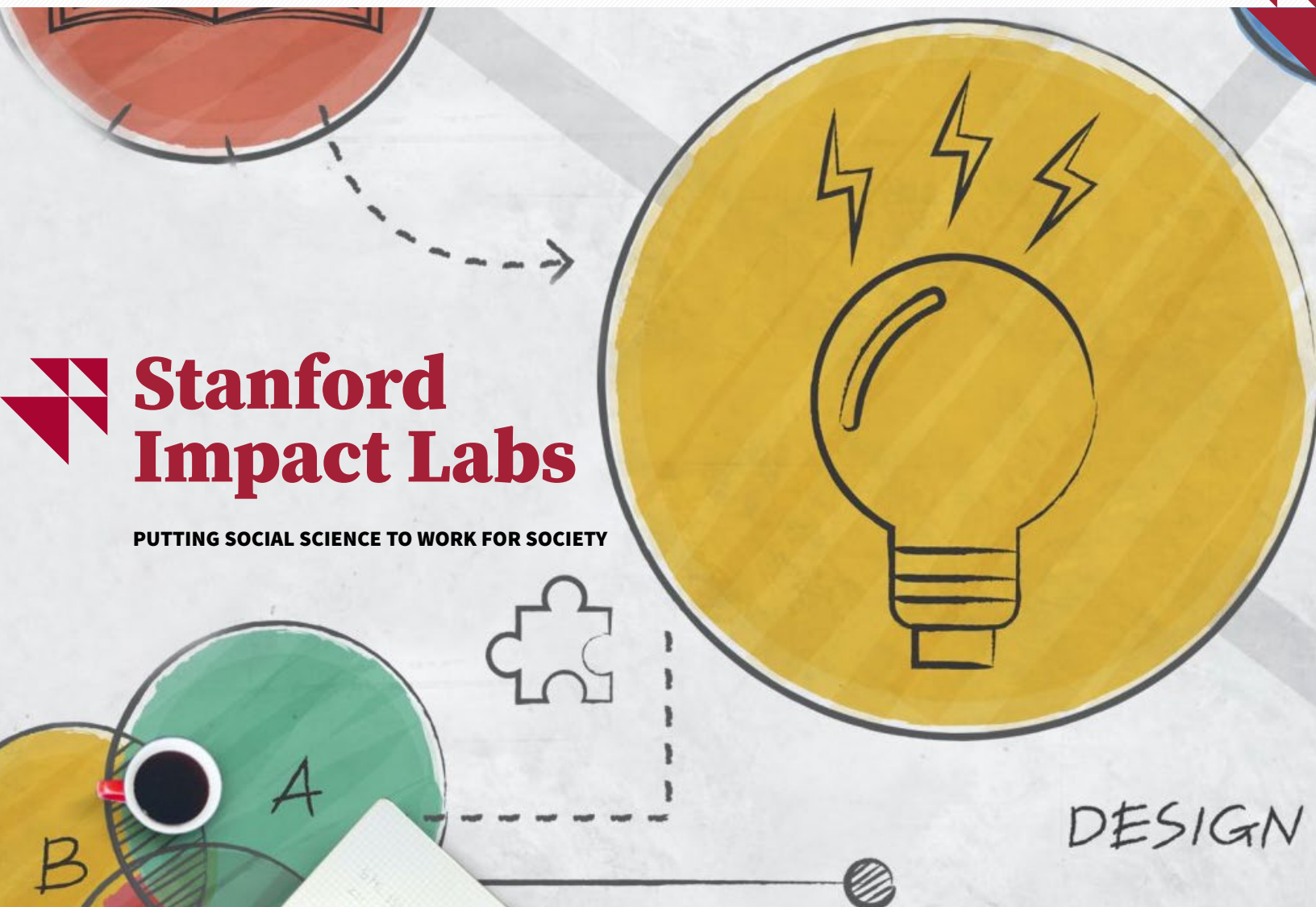




PUTTING SOCIAL SCIENCE TO WORK FOR SOCIETY



We're building a new way for teams of research, government, business, and nonprofit leaders to work together to tackle the world's biggest social problems.

The world's biggest social problems are complex, multi-faceted, and stubborn. No academic center, company, or organization can solve issues like economic inequality, immigration, or political polarization alone. We need leaders with different kinds of expertise and experiences to come together to create fresh insights, evidence, and action to make progress.

Stanford Impact Labs is a new university-wide model that transforms teaching, training, and investment in the social sciences in order to increase our public impact. We provide financial investment and mentoring to highly-motivated teams of researchers and practitioners from government, business, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropy. Our model creates new ways for them to jointly develop, test, and scale new solutions to social problems that affect millions of people worldwide.

Why Now?



Social science can do more for society than ever before

The social sciences are at an inflection point in terms of what is possible. Researchers can measure human behavior and institutions better than ever before. They can deploy cutting-edge data science tools to extract practical insights. And they can mobilize teams to generate insights and applications with potential for public impact. To increase the public impact of social science, though, the research must be informed by practical experience and put into practice with people outside the university.

Linking research and practical experience creates new insights and better evidence

Leaders in the public, private, and social sectors are championing evidence-based practices and innovation. They want new data and research to shape their policy and program decisions. But often, they are pressed to make decisions quickly, without the benefit of rigorous research built into their processes. Leaders in government, nonprofits, business, and philanthropy are eager to partner with social scientists to jointly design, test, and scale new interventions.

An R&D model for the social sciences can create public impact now and for the future

An effective model of research and development for social problems requires significant financial investments and a commitment to training a new generation of problem-solvers. Our approach builds on what works in the life sciences and engineering to turn academic discovery into medical advances and new technologies: significant investment in research and development, and close partnership between academics and leaders outside the university.

The core of our model is a set of staged and sequenced investments to create new impact labs—run by leading researchers and practitioners—to generate innovative policies, programs, and interventions for specific social problems. In parallel, we offer training for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty who aspire to tackle social problems but need additional skills and capabilities to do so effectively.


With financial capital, professional support, and training, we can catalyze problem-focused research and partnerships to generate new insights and solutions to persistent social problems. In doing so, we can make social science work for society.

GENERATING NEW EVIDENCE AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Sequenced Investments in Partnerships between Leading Researchers and Practitioners



Sequenced Investments in Partnerships between Leading Researchers and Practitioners



We make staged and sequenced investments to build impact labs that can generate new evidence and practical solutions to persistent social problems—from reducing unnecessary pretrial incarceration to rebuilding local economies following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our investments support problem-focused teams of scholars and practitioners who bring together expertise from across the university, government agencies, school districts, police departments, community-based advocacy organizations, and the private sector to:

- Deepen understanding of a concrete, real-world problem;
- Generate hypotheses about key causes of the problem;
- Design and test potential solutions;
- Capture and share insights about what works and what doesn't; and
- Identify opportunities to adapt and expand promising approaches.

Our earliest investments help faculty conceptualize new impact labs with external partners. We make larger investments in start-up labs or term labs that already have a team of scholars and external partners working together on a defined problem and approach. With support, the impact labs can connect research to practical solutions and shape new policies, programs, practices, or products that can improve people's lives and opportunities.

Design Fellowships

One-year, \$50,000 design fellowships provide resources, training, and mentoring for faculty to conceptualize new impact labs. Funding is flexible and recipients work alongside a cohort of faculty each year, all of whom are working to design and launch new impact labs with partners in government, businesses, nonprofit and community organizations.

Start-Up Lab Investments

Investments of \$250,000 per year for two years for teams that have a well-defined social problem, a strong partnership, communicate a promising research design and credible teams, and have a compelling theory of how science and practical experience can create social impact. Start-up funding is judged by expert reviewers in the academic area and leading practitioners.

Term Lab Investments

Term funding goes to impact labs that show the most promise and articulate a clear plan for generating, testing, and scaling solutions. Impact labs have maximum flexibility to allocate resources as they see fit, including to pay for professional staff, postdoctoral fellows, and data collection. Term funding is limited to five years.

In addition to financial capital, we equip all of our problem-focused partnerships with training, thought-partnership, mentoring, communications support and advice, and other tools and resources so impact labs can turn their evidence and experience into purposeful work that benefits society.

BUILDING SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

Innovations in Education and Training



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We also run programs to help Stanford faculty and students build the skills and capabilities required to strengthen their public impact scholarship.

New Undergraduate Major in Data Science & Social Systems

Data science is revolutionizing science, industry, and government. Work across nearly all domains is becoming more data-driven, affecting both the jobs available and skills required.

A new interdisciplinary undergraduate major in data science & social systems, beginning in September 2022, will equip the next generation of leaders to work at the intersection of statistics, computation, and the social sciences on important social problems such as poverty and inequality, polarization, criminal justice, and urban development.

As part of the major, students will complete core course work in computer science, statistics, and the social sciences; a practicum in which they apply data science skills to a well-defined problem; and a specialization in a particular domain. The new major will engage faculty from across the university and support students to learn and apply technical skills to practical, social problems that affect our economy, society, and daily life.

Summer Collaborative Research Fellowship

An experiential training program offers outstanding doctoral students the opportunity to work on problem-focused research with existing impact labs across the university. PhD fellows benefit from hands-on work in the labs and weekly training and mentoring with our team, guest speakers, and other fellows.

Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

The postdoctoral fellowship is open to anyone who has recently completed a doctoral degree in the social sciences. Those selected will work directly with one of the social science labs across the university, including the Polarization and Social Change Lab; the Poverty, Violence, and Governance Lab; and the VMware Women's Leadership Innovation Lab. Fellows collaborate on impact-focused research and may publish in journals to elevate their public impact scholarship. Our goal is to create a diverse community of scholars who are committed to producing research that has a positive impact on society.

MAKING PROGRESS ON THE WORLD'S HARDEST SOCIAL CHALLENGES

Creating a Culture of Public Impact at Stanford and Beyond



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Public Impact Professors

As part of Stanford's commitment to accelerating its impact on social problems, the university will appoint a set of endowed Public Impact Professorships to be located within a set of participating departments, schools, and institutes. These appointments will be made on the basis of three criteria: exceptional scholarship that advances our understanding of social problems, achievement in undergraduate and graduate training, and demonstrated impact beyond the university through public service, engagement in public deliberation, or sustained partnership with social sector institutions. These professorships will provide a visible signal of the university's commitment to attract, recognize, and reward faculty who strive for public and social impact beyond the university.

Scholars in Service

In partnership with the Haas Center for Public Service, the Scholars in Service program supports faculty to pursue in-depth, hands-on learning within public service organizations, with the goal of generating new research insights and accelerating promising approaches to intractable social issues. The program provides financial and staff resources to identify and support placement for a summer, quarter, or up to a year in public sector agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Building Momentum Beyond Stanford

Beyond the impact or influence of any single investment or impact lab, we also want to build momentum around the impact labs' scholar-practitioner approach to tackle real-world problems and explore practical solutions. Universities have a critical role and responsibility to ensure their research, education, and resources make a purposeful impact in the world. We believe Stanford Impact Labs' investments in rigorous research and practical partnerships will spur leaders in universities, government, business, and nonprofits to build new ways of working together that can make progress on the world's hardest social challenges.

Stanford

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