

### **JFI's First Position Paper on Guaranteed Income**

The paper presents a position on those parameters that are well supported by evidence; as new research takes place, JFI will continue to build out additional details.

#### *Press Release*

New York, NY, August 26, 2021 — A new position paper released today by guaranteed income researchers at the Jain Family Institute brings together years of policy research to define basic parameters for a guaranteed income. The paper covers the aspects that overwhelming evidence suggests may create a more robust safety net in the United States, in tandem with existing programs.

Since the start of JFI's work on guaranteed income in 2017, the team's researchers have aggregated, reviewed, and contributed to decades of guaranteed income research and analysis. In the past year, the ongoing JFI white paper series, "Getting to Guaranteed Income," has continued to investigate the practical challenges and implications of a federal guaranteed income program in the United States. As evidence accumulates from pilot projects nationwide, and support for cash policy is at a historical high with the rollout of the expanded Child Tax Credit, this position paper clarifies the view of JFI as an organization. JFI's particular expertise suggests how that interest in guaranteed income might feasibly be implemented on a national level.

Key features of JFI's position on guaranteed income include:

- A guaranteed income is an effective program where markets work, but a poor substitute for some other safety net policies like public insurance against economic shocks and market failures, or pre-distributional programs like minimum wage.
- It would be both feasible and impactful to implement a guaranteed income of \$250/month per person under 65, the equivalent of expanding the existing CTC to adults, though an ideal benefit may be considerably larger and require additional tax revenue.

- A guaranteed income should be administered through the Social Security Administration or a dedicated benefit administrator.
- A guaranteed income should be universal, not income-targeted, with income-based targeting happening on the back end through progressive taxation.
- Guaranteed income should be paired with public banking for a system of seamless digital payments and financial inclusion.
- Cash is superior to in-kind assistance for individual autonomy and effectiveness as an anti-poverty measure. This means replacing TANF, SNAP, and other in-kind supports with unconditional cash assistance in the long term to finance unconditional cash instead.
- A federal guaranteed income program should include “automatic stabilizers,” additional cash payments added during periods of economic downturn.

[Read the full paper here.](#)

These positions rely on the immense research of many academics and policy researchers as well as JFI’s own [research and advisory work](#) on the Stockton SEED pilot, the Chicago Resilient Families Task Force, and Newark’s [Guaranteed Income Task Force](#), in addition to our large-scale applied research on [basic income policy in Brazil](#) and elsewhere. Forthcoming research from the [Compton Pledge](#) and other pilots will help us answer remaining questions about the ideal amounts and frequencies of a guaranteed income program.

Relatedly, JFI researchers have [published](#) guidance on the trade-offs of the proposals that led to the CARES Act, a [response](#) to the immediate shortfalls of those stimulus checks in *The Hill*, [analysis](#) of proposed Child Tax Credit expansions, and early [results](#) of the series of stimulus checks of the 2020-21 COVID-19 response. As multiple guaranteed income pilots have taken off nationwide and the expanded Child Tax Credit may extend past 2021 through Budget Reconciliation, this work is vital to continued debates on cash transfer policies supported by evidence.

JFI Lead Researcher on Guaranteed Income [Stephen Nuñez](#) said: “Given the state of evidence on cash transfers, it is past time to take a practical look at what we know about guaranteed income and how to get there; I’m excited to say we have some conclusions about a policy that could have transformational impacts on poverty in the U.S.”

For background on guaranteed income, JFI provides a comprehensive [FAQ section here](#). A [literature review](#) of theory and evidence on what happens when you give people money can also be found on JFI’s web publication, Phenomenal World.

### **About the Jain Family Institute:**

The Jain Family Institute (JFI) is a nonpartisan applied research organization in the social sciences that works to bring research and policy from conception in theory to implementation in society. Founded in 2014 by Robert Jain, JFI focuses on building evidence around the most pressing social problems. In [guaranteed income](#), JFI’s research focuses on macroeconomic effects; meta-analyses of cash transfer studies around the world; and, most extensively, on policy design and implementation. JFI partners with governments in the US and abroad to build and implement pilots that will answer some of the most important remaining questions about direct cash transfers.

### **Contact:**

[jficomunications@jainfamilyinstitute.org](mailto:jficomunications@jainfamilyinstitute.org)