Information Session for Pre-Doctoral Fellows

October 2020

OPPORTUNITY INSIGHTS

General Overview

Our mission is to develop scalable policy solutions that will empower families throughout the United States to rise out of poverty and achieve better life outcomes

OPPORTUNITY INSIGHTS

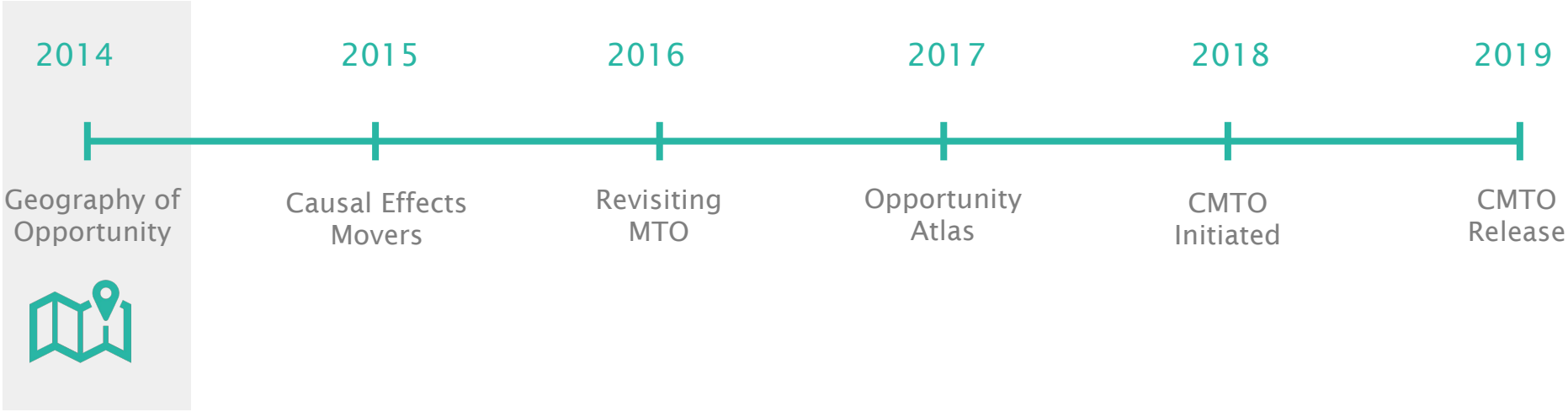
From Jasmine, 7 years old, whose family moved to a high-opportunity area in Seattle

From Research to Policy: Helping Families Find Opportunity

OPPORTUNITY INSIGHTS

From Research to Policy: Helping Families Find Opportunity

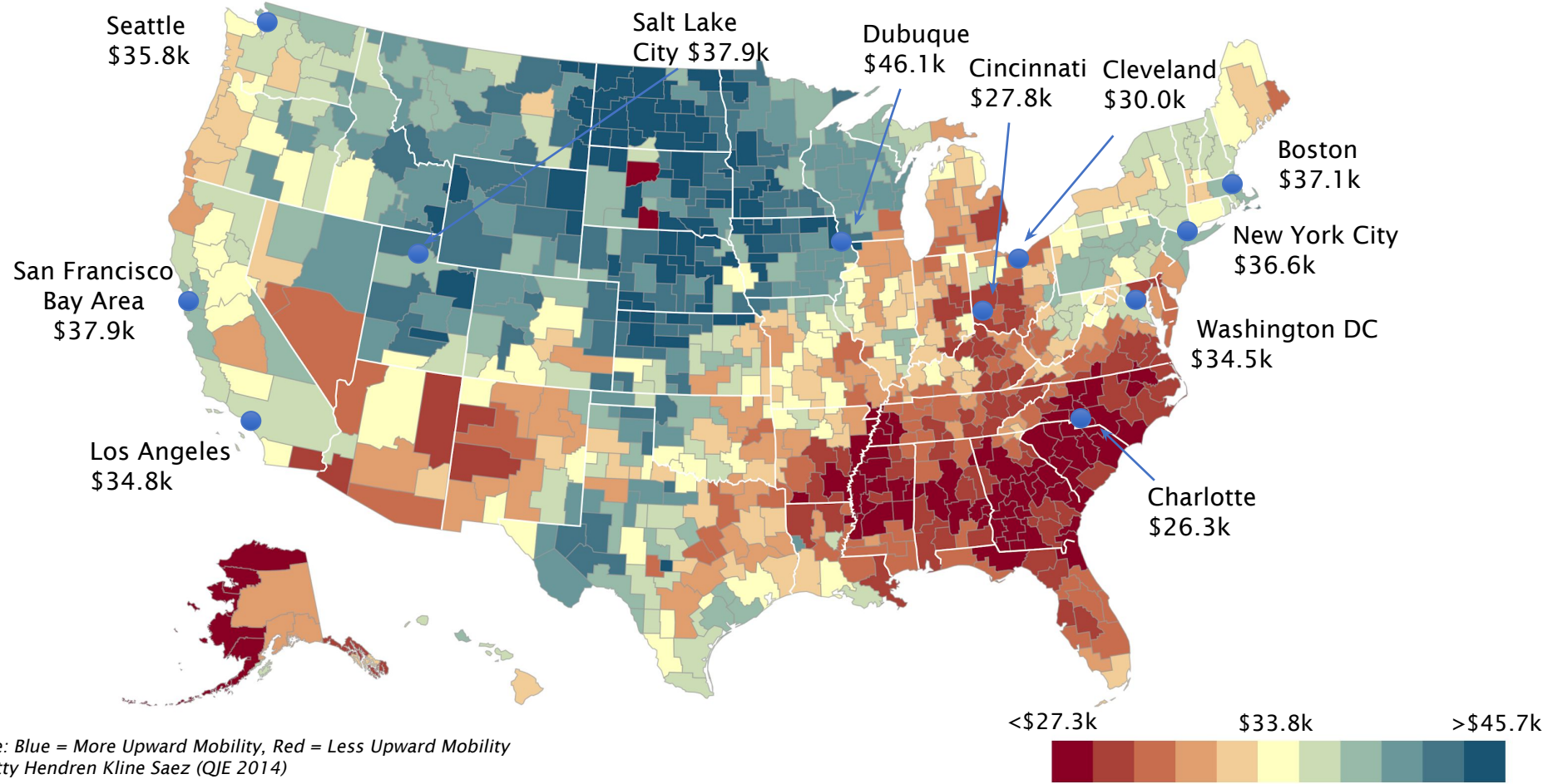
From Research to Policy: Helping Families Find Opportunity



Pre-Docs: Sarah Abraham, Shelby Lin, and Michael Stepner

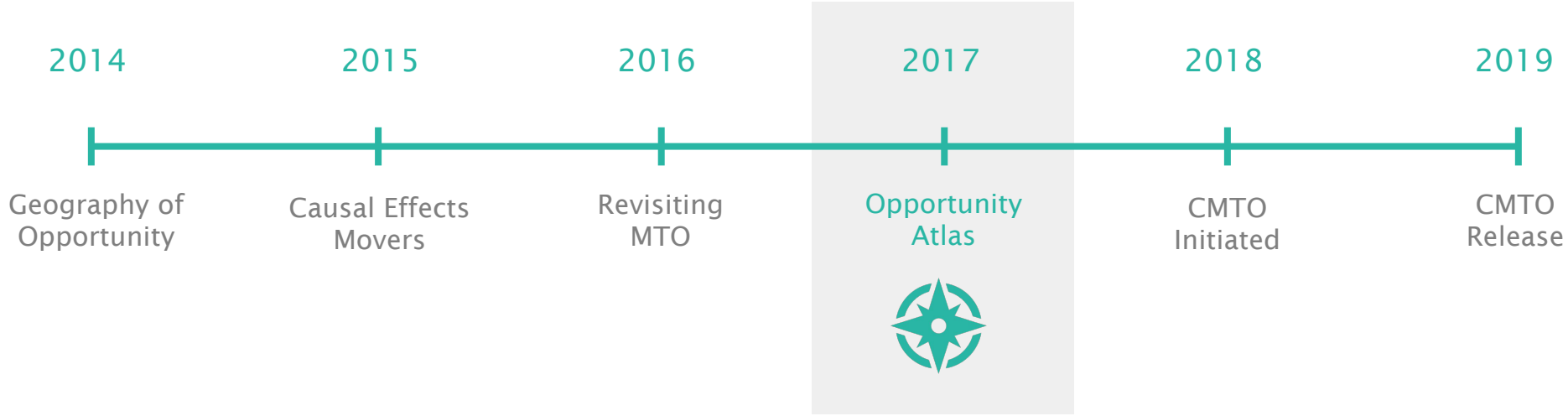
The Geography of Upward Mobility in the United States

Average Income at Age 35 for Children whose Parents Earned $25,000 (25th percentile)



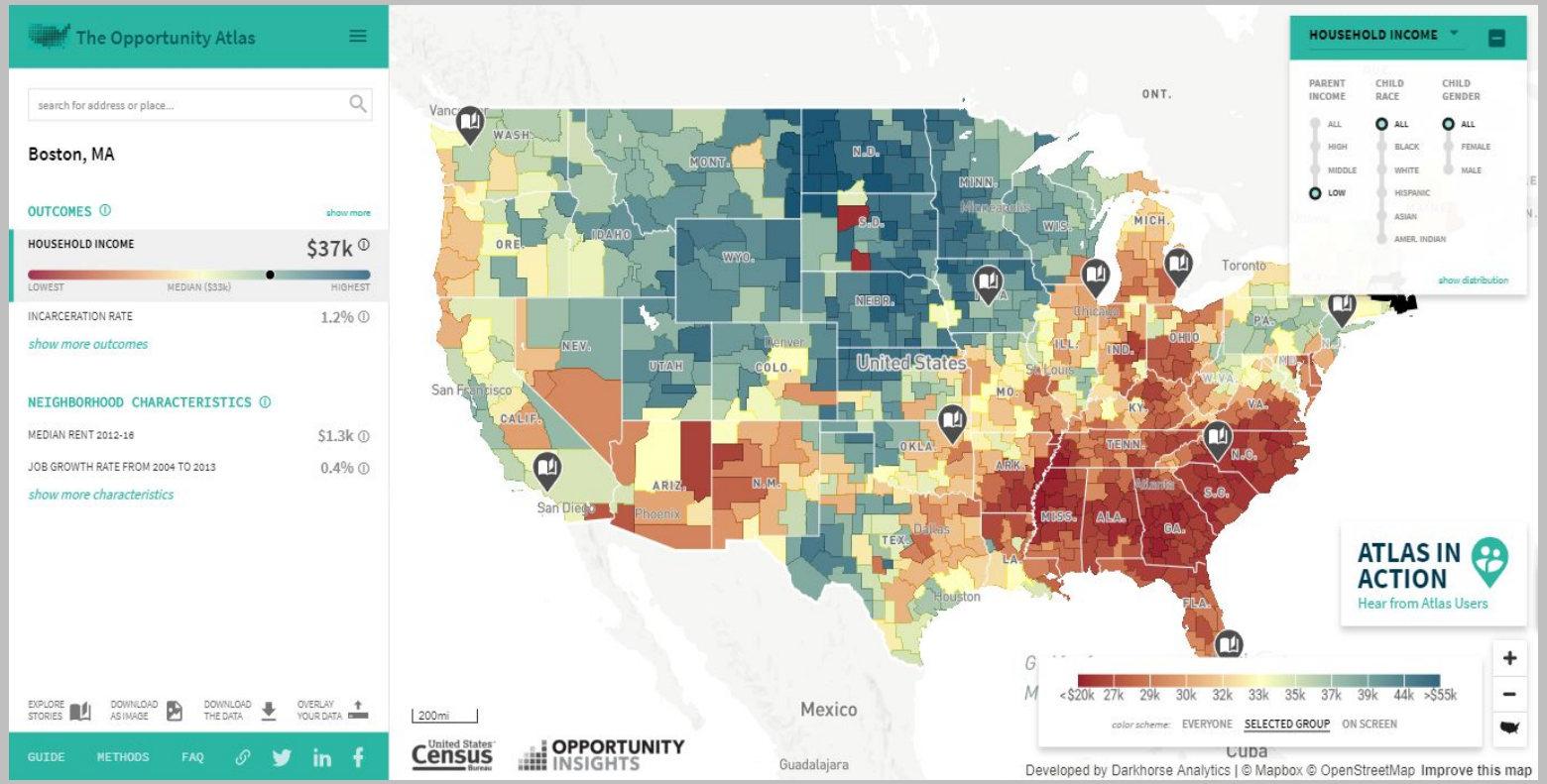
Note: Blue = More Upward Mobility, Red = Less Upward Mobility
Chetty Hendren Kline Saez (QJE 2014)

From Research to Policy: Helping Families Find Opportunity



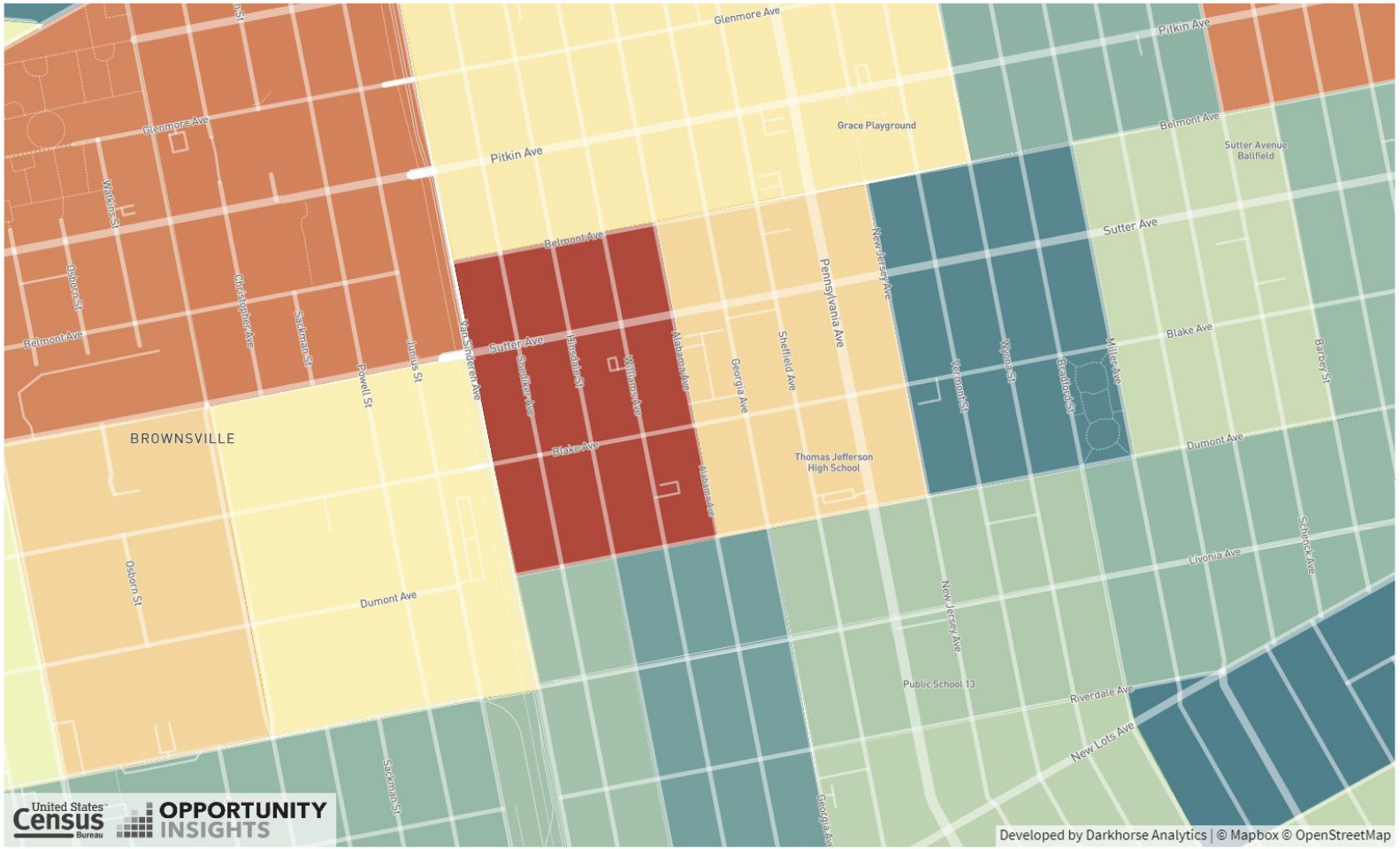
Pre-Docs: Michael Droste, Benjamin Goldman, Jamie Gracie, Martin Koenen, and Joseph Winkelmann

The Opportunity Atlas



Chetty Friedman Hendren Jones Porter 2018

Household Income
for Black Children of Low Income Parents



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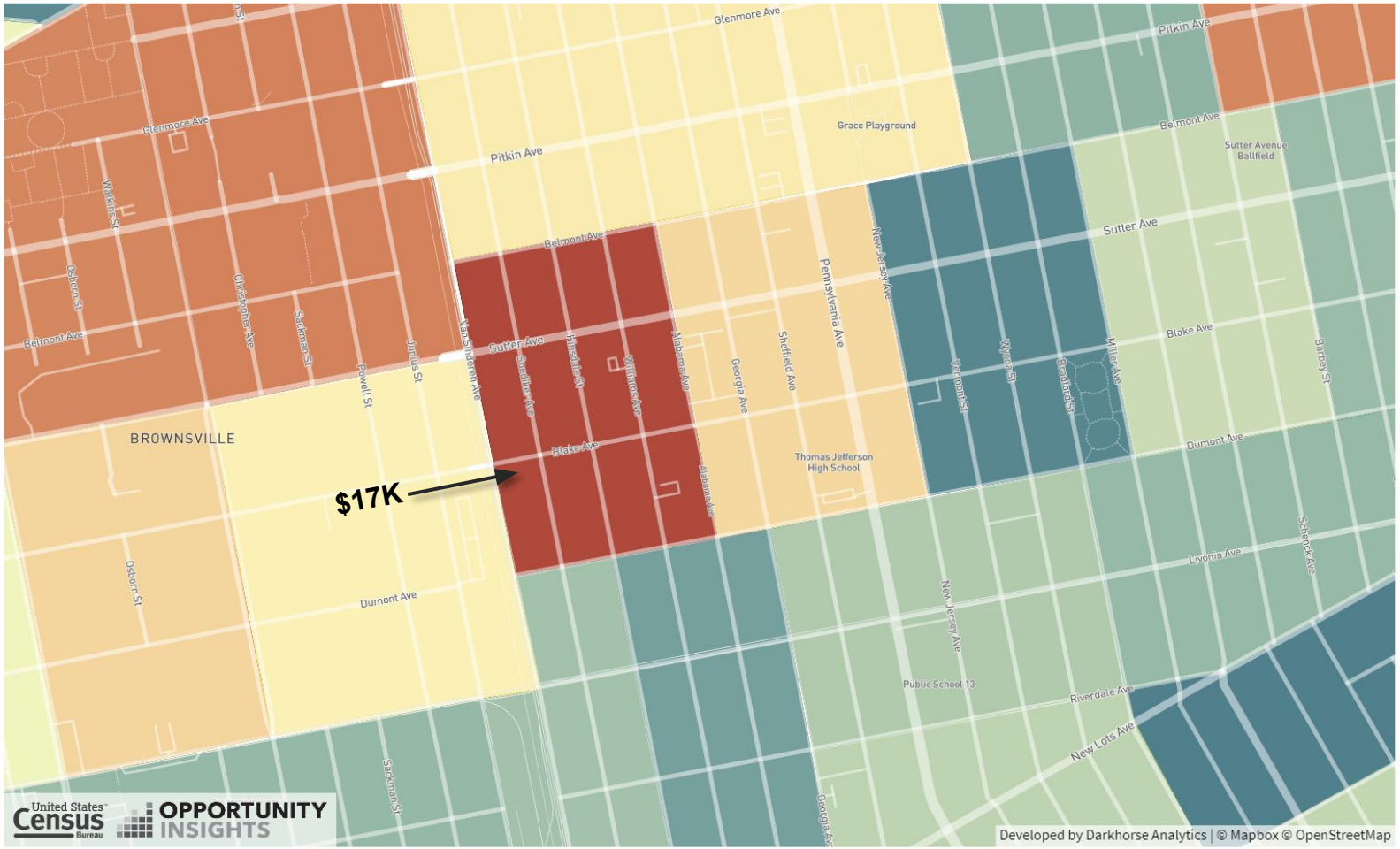

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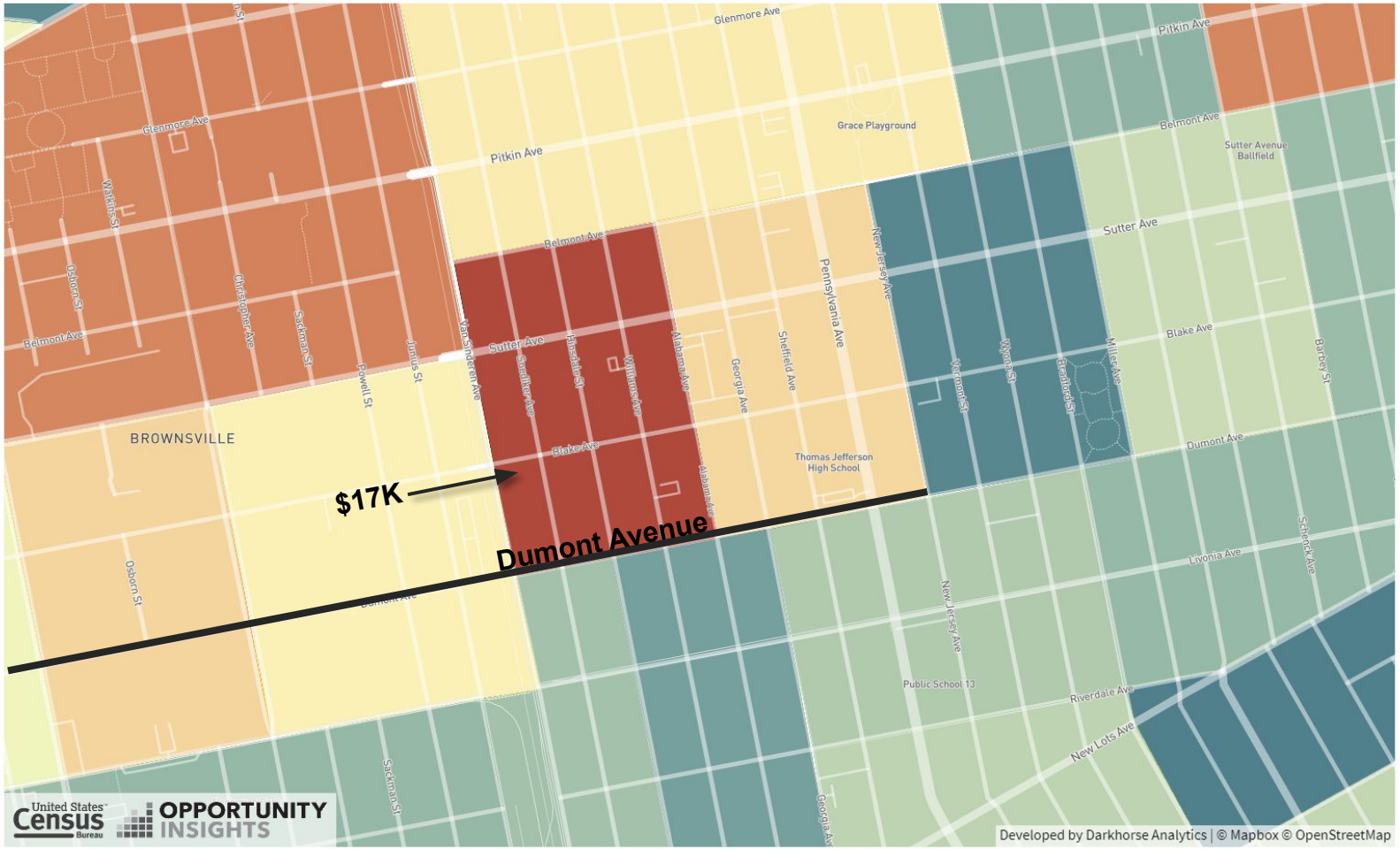

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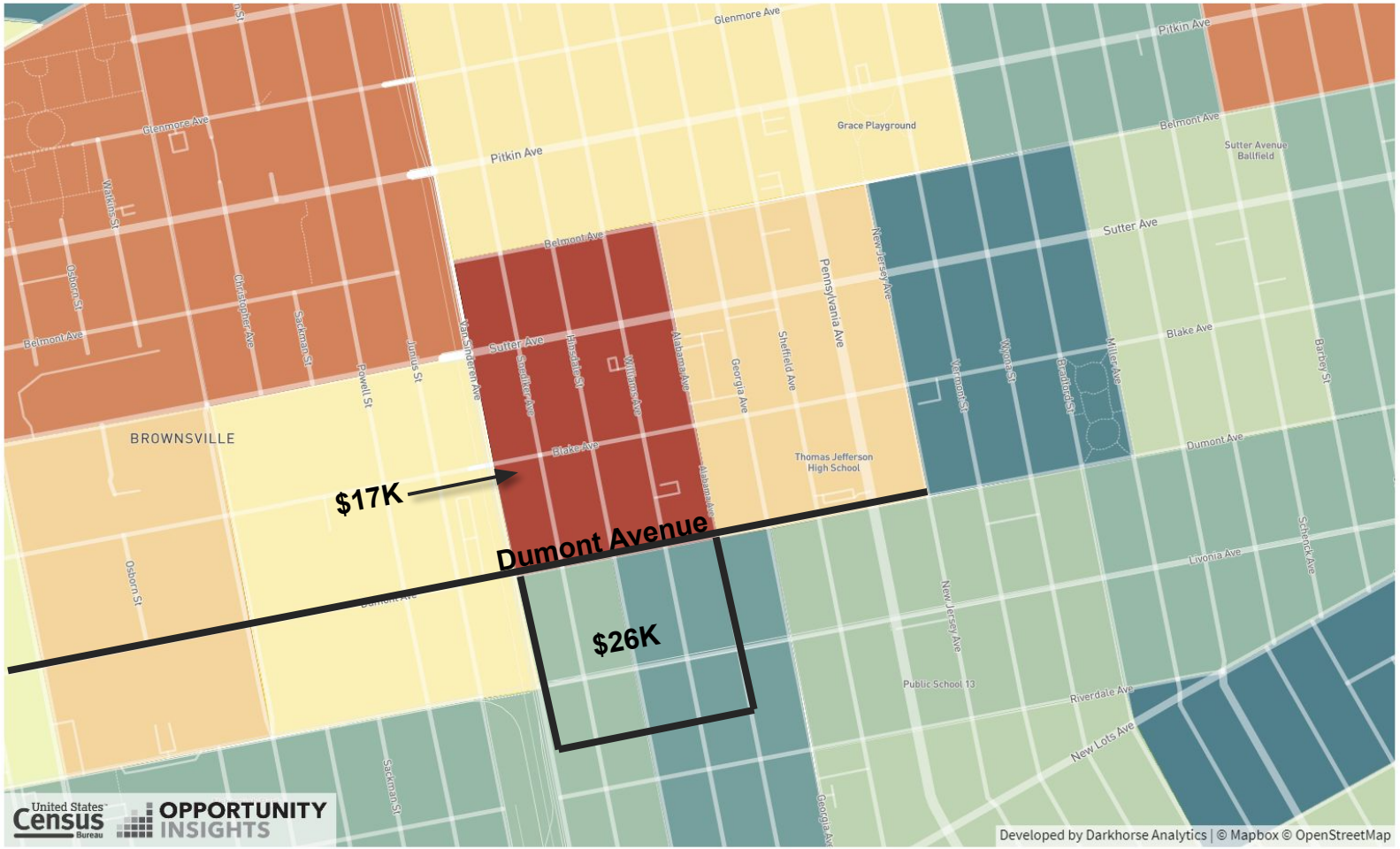
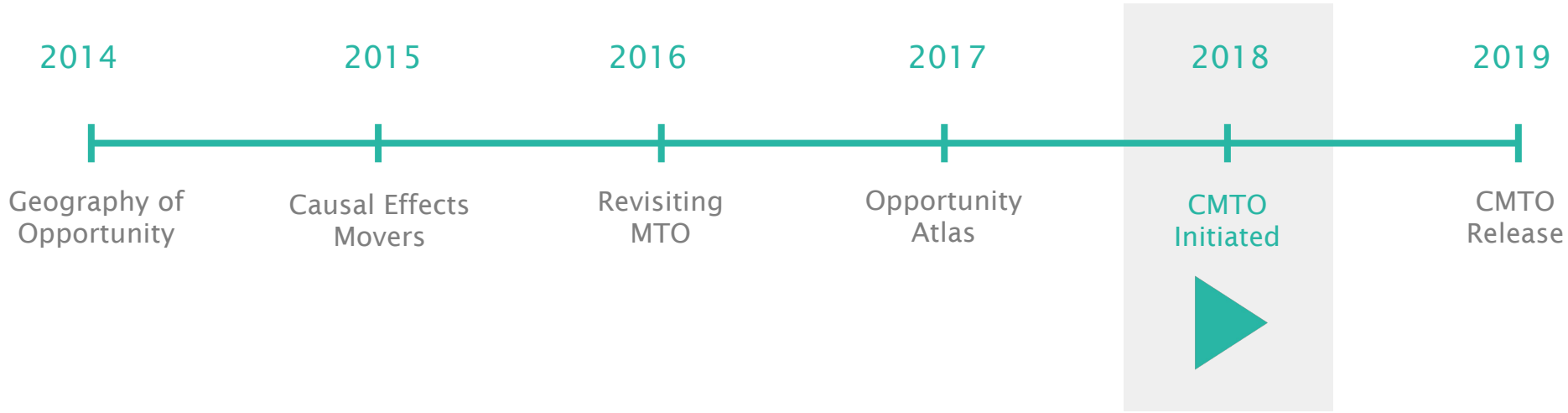


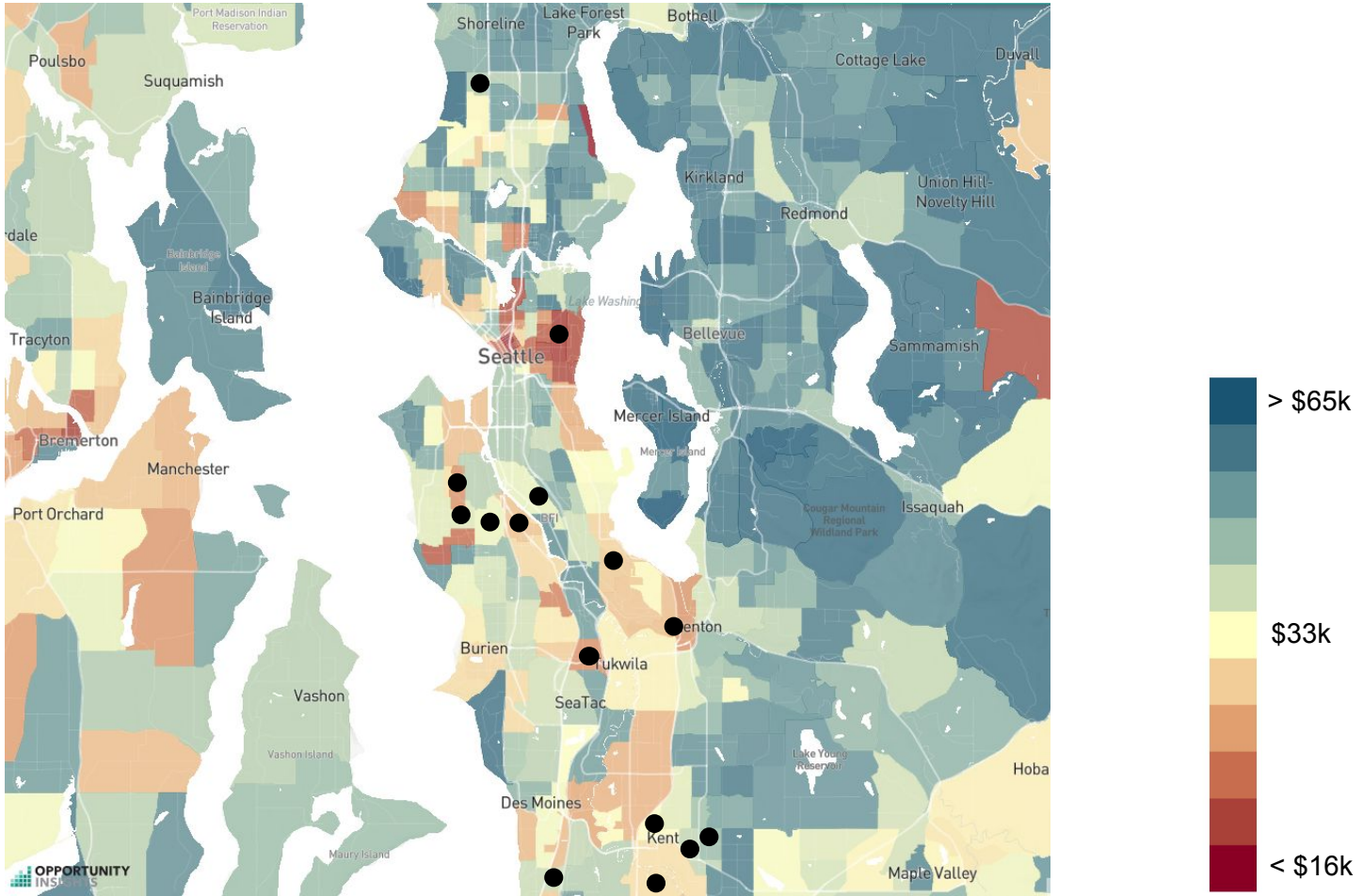
From Research to Policy: Helping Families Find Opportunity



Pre-Docs: Nick Flamang, Jamie Gracie, and Sarah Merchant

Is Affordable Housing in Seattle Maximizing Opportunities for Upward Mobili

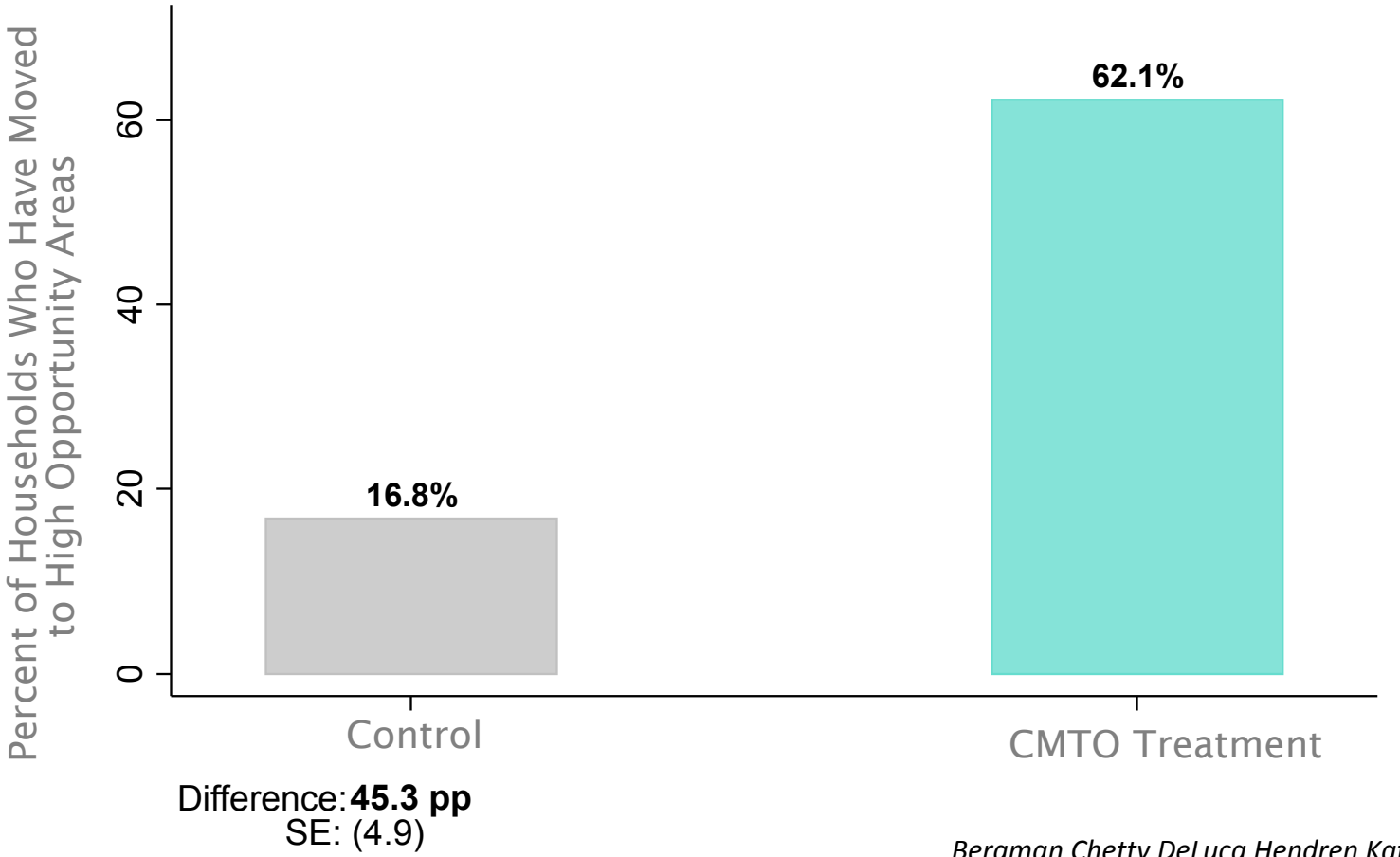
Most Common Current Locations of Families Receiving Housing Vouchers



From Research to Policy: Helping Families Find Opportunity

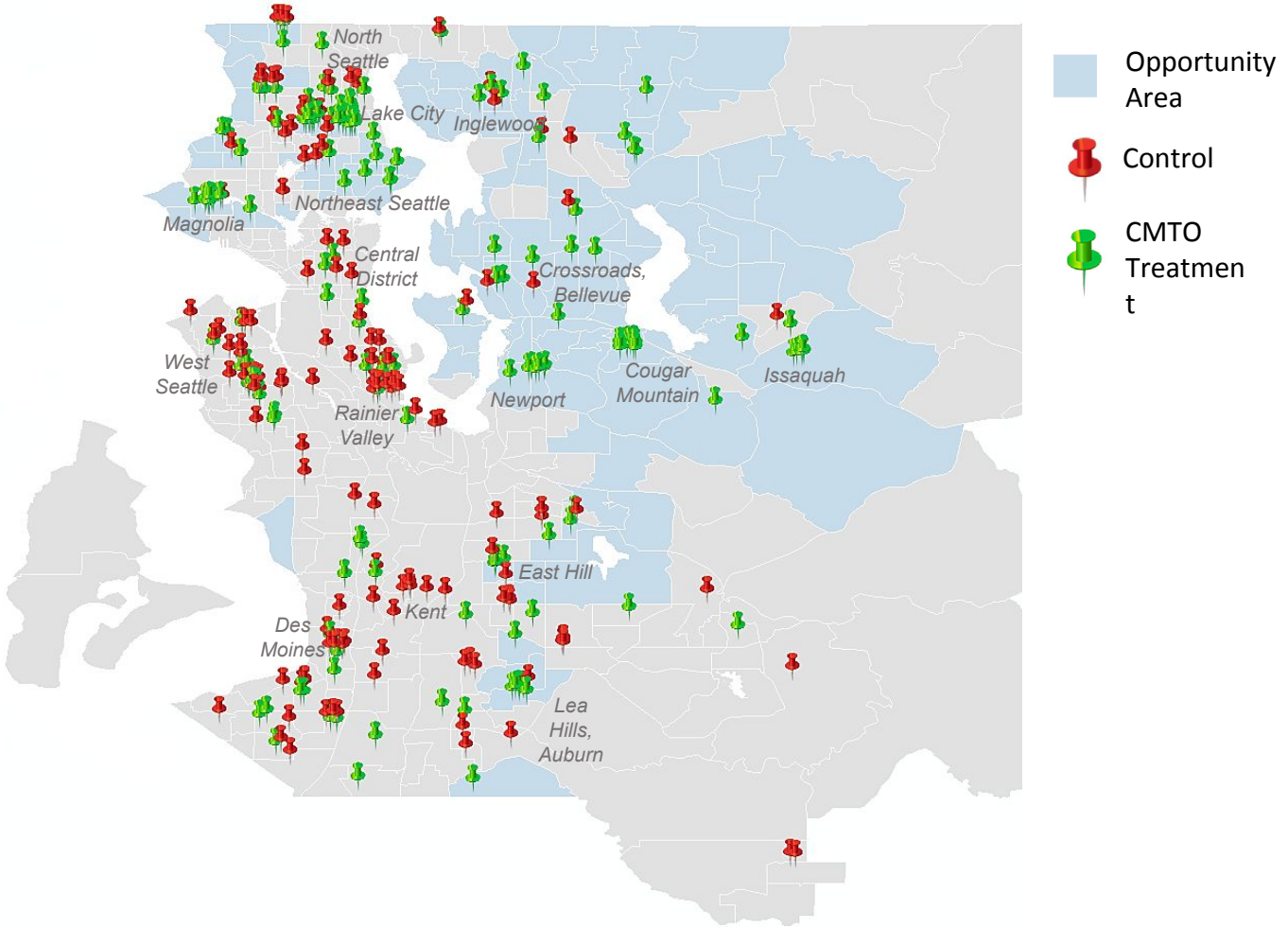
Pre-Docs: Sarah Merchant and Federico González

Fraction of Families Who Leased Units in High Opportunity Areas



Bergman Chetty DeLuca Hendren Katz Palmer 2019

Destination Locations for Families Leased Units Using Housing Vouchers



From Research to Policy: Helping Families Find Opportunity

Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration Act

Shown Here:
Referred in Senate (07/11/2018)

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5793

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES
JULY 11, 2018
Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

AN ACT

To authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to carry out a housing choice voucher mobility demonstration to encourage families receiving such voucher assistance to move to lower-poverty areas and expand access to opportunity areas.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER MOBILITY DEMONSTRATION.

(a) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (in this section referred to as the "Secretary") may carry out a mobility demonstration program to enable public housing agencies to administer housing choice voucher assistance under section 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)) in a manner designed to encourage families receiving such voucher assistance to move to lower-poverty areas and expand access to opportunity areas.

(b) SELECTION OF PHAS.—

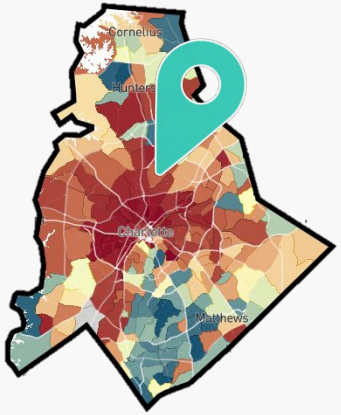
(1) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary shall establish requirements for public housing agencies to participate in the demonstration program under this section, which shall provide that the following public housing agencies may participate:

Opportunity Insights: Three Pillars

Reducing Segregation

Help Low-Income Families Move to High-Opportunity Areas

Place-Based Investments

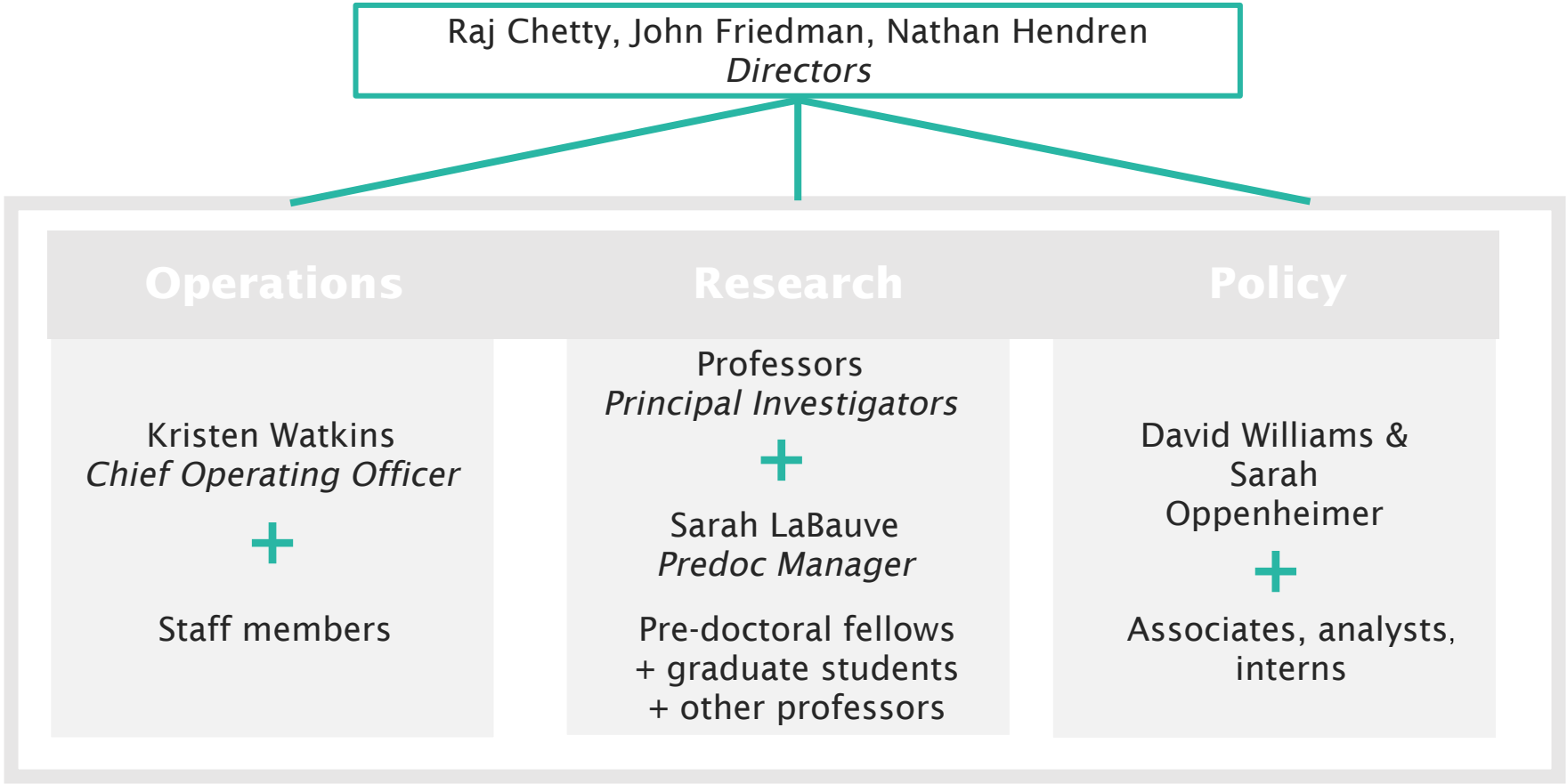


Increase Upward Mobility in Low-Opportunity Areas

Improving Higher Education

Amplify Impacts of Colleges on Mobility

Organizational Structure: Three Branches



Life as a Predoc

Life as a Predoc

- Pre-docs are an integral part of the research process
  1. Process and analyze data
  2. Create figures and presentations
  3. Put together and help write/edit paper drafts
  4. Strong interaction with the PIs through weekly meetings and continuous iterations near project releases

- We are also part of the Harvard and general research community
  1. Access to the seminars occurring at OI and Harvard as a whole
  2. Can take classes for credit at a substantially reduced price or audit at Harvard/MIT

Research Teams

Facebook	Census	IRS	Headquarters
Social Capital	Geography of Opportunity	Higher Education	Welfare Impacts, CMTO, Joint Work

Examples of Ongoing Projects

- Social Capital Project
  1. We aim to build a measure of social capital using actual social network data
  2. Examine its relation to economic mobility and other existing social capital measures
  3. Decompose social capital measure and its determinants

Examples of Ongoing Projects

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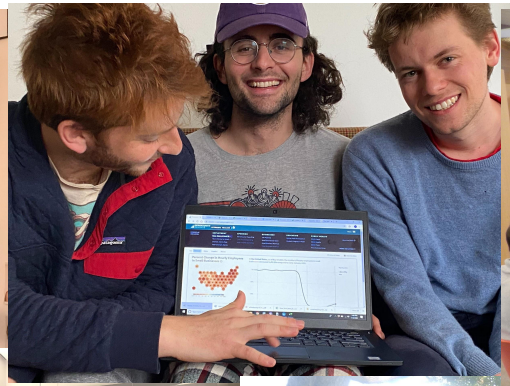
- COVID Tracker
  1. Study the impact of COVID-19 on the US Economy
  2. Build macroeconomic indicators

Life as a Predoc - FRIENDS and FUN!

- We also celebrate with lab outings and parties! Bowling alleys, holiday parties, backyard BBQs with the PIs
- And between us and other econ RAs, we are also all FRIENDS and have fun hang outs :)



Post Fellowship Life

What happens after your pre-doc?

- Most predocs go on to economics graduate programs

- Other predocs have gone on to other grad programs: law school, sociology, public policy, machine learning

- Economics PhDs also have a variety of options
  1. Academia
  2. Private sector: econ consulting, data sciences, economist
  3. Public sector: Federal Reserve, World Bank, IMF, think tanks

ALUMNI

With Initial Position After Pre-Doctoral Fellowship

Sarah Abraham
Ph.D Program in Economics, MIT

Trevor Bakker
Ph.D Program in Economics, Stanford University

Alex Bell
Ph.D Program in Economics, Harvard University

Augustin Bergeron
Ph.D Program in Political Economy and Government, Harvard University

Kaveh Danesh
Ph.D Program in Economics, UC-Berkeley

Caroline Dockes
MPhil in Machine Learning and Machine Intelligence, University of Cambridge

Mike Droste
Ph.D Program in Economics, Harvard University

Niklas Flamang
Ph.D Program in Economics, UC-Berkeley

Robert Fluegge
Ph.D Candidate in Economics, Harvard University

Jamie Fogel
Ph.D Program in Economics, University of Michigan

Benny Goldman
Ph.D Program in Economics, Harvard University

Federico Gonzalez
Ph.D Program in Economics, Harvard University

Charlotte Grace
M.Phil in Economics, University of Oxford

Jamie Gracie
Ph.D Program in Economics, Harvard University

Heather Sarsons
Ph.D Program in Economics, Harvard University

Nikolaus Hildebrand
Ph.D Program in Economics, MIT

Jack Hoyle
MSc in Computational Statistics and Machine Learning, University College London

Alex Jenni
Ph.D Program in Economics, University of Zurich

Jesse Silbert
Ph.D Program in Economics, Princeton University

Sam Karlin
JD Program, Harvard Law School

Martin Koenen
Ph.D Program in Political Economy & Government, Harvard Kennedy School

Frina Lin
Ph.D Program in Public Policy, Harvard University

Shelby Lin
M.Phil in Management Science, University of Cambridge

Jeremy Majerovitz
Ph.D Program in Economics, MIT

Carl McPherson
Ph.D Program in Economics, UC-Berkeley

Sarah Merchant
Ph.D. Sociology, UC-Berkeley

Kate Musen
Ph.D Program in Economics, Columbia University

Jimmy Narang
Ph.D Program in Economics, UC-Berkeley

Alex Olssen
Ph.D Program in Economics, MIT

Donato Onorato
Ph.D Program in Economics, Columbia University

Daniel Reuter

Jordan Richmond
Ph.D Program in Economics, Princeton University

Nina Roussille
Ph.D Program in Economics, UC-Berkeley

Peter Ruhm
Remote Monitoring Expansion Coordinator, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Benjamin Scuderi
Ph.D Program in Economics, UC-Berkeley

Priyanka Shende
Ph.D Program in Economics, UC-Berkeley

Kamelia Stavreva
Ph.D Program in Economics, Columbia University

Evan Storms
Ph.D Program in Economics, Stanford University

Wilbur Townsend
Ph.D Program in Business Economics, Harvard Business School

Amanda Wahlers
Ph.D Program in Economics, Stanford University

Joe Winkelmann
Ph.D in Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School

Things learned as an OI predoc

- Exposure to a wide variety of topics in economic research
- Technical skills -eg. Working with “Big Data”
- Big emphasis on presenting results visually to outside audiences
- A great community!

Application Process

Application Materials

- Application flyer posted on the Opportunity Insights website

- Fill out the following **two** forms:
  1. Application form with general info through Google forms
  2. Application through Harvard's hiring portal

- Submit following materials in the Dropbox:
  1. Resume/CV
  2. Cover Letter
  3. Writing sample (independent work preferred or clear indicator of contribution)
  4. 2-3 References whom we can contact (this is only for later stages and we will give notice)

- We can accommodate a need for expedited decisions and other extenuating circumstances; just let us know!

Application Process

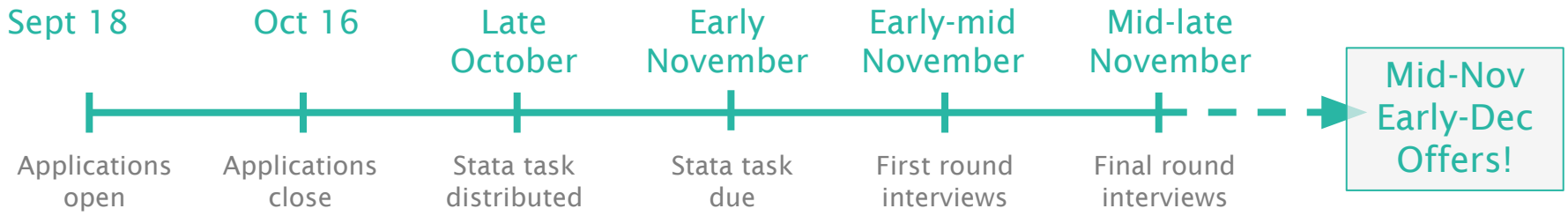
- Resume review process begins after submitting all application materials

- Selected candidates will receives a data task that they have 48 hours to complete
  1. Though we prefer Stata, it can be in any programming language!
  2. Candidates have a two week time frame to choose when they want to complete the task

- Selected first-round interviews with one PI and two pre-docs
  1. Most of the interview will be walking through a project that you've worked on, and thinking about different identifications and assumptions
  2. An example about working on a team (since OI is all team-based!) :)

- Final round interviews with PIs + Predoc Manager
  1. Same questions and format as the first round interview, and the chance to meet all the PIs and any questions you may have

Fall 2020 Application Timeline



Thank You!

1-on-1 with the predocs
Meeting ID: **983 8870 1893**
Password: **OI_predocs**

Send any further questions to hiring.opportunity.insights@gmail.com!

Please fill out our survey! (*link in the chat*)

Ask us anything!