Stanford wins National Poverty Research Center grant

The Center for the Study of Poverty and Inequality at Stanford University has won a $4 million National Poverty Research Center grant from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The national center will be focused on monitoring trends in poverty and inequality, explaining what's driving those trends, and developing science-based policies on poverty and inequality.

"This is a critical moment in U.S. history in which poverty is growing, long-term unemployment is increasing, and income inequality is reaching an all-time high. The new center will be dedicated not just to monitoring these trends, not just to uncovering what drives them, but also to understanding how national policy affects them," said David Grusky, professor of sociology at Stanford University and director of the new center.

"The Stanford Challenge, which we set forth five years ago, committed the university to seeking solutions to society's most formidable problems," said Stanford President John Hennessy. "This new national center allows us, in a very real way, to expand on that commitment." Through a combination of gift support and its core budget, the university has agreed to contribute another $2 million to the work of the new center.

The center will develop a new web portal that will make it possible for anyone – scholars, the general public, and journalists – to track trends in hundreds of key measures of poverty and inequality and to gain access to the most important research on those trends. "We need to provide a toolkit that allows anyone, not just the national policy elite, to monitor how our country is changing," Grusky said.

The center will focus on regional developments in poverty and inequality as well as national ones. The new California Welfare Laboratory (C-WELL), which will be part of the center, will present trend data and research on California poverty and inequality, with a special focus on welfare program use and unmet needs in California.

The new center will work closely with Sherry Glied, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as well as with the two other National Poverty Research Centers at the University of California-Davis and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
As part of the agreement, the center's national magazine on poverty and inequality, Pathways, will be used to feature the poverty research coming out of all three national centers. Based at Stanford's Institute for Research in the Social Sciences, the new center will work with major research centers at Stanford and other universities.

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