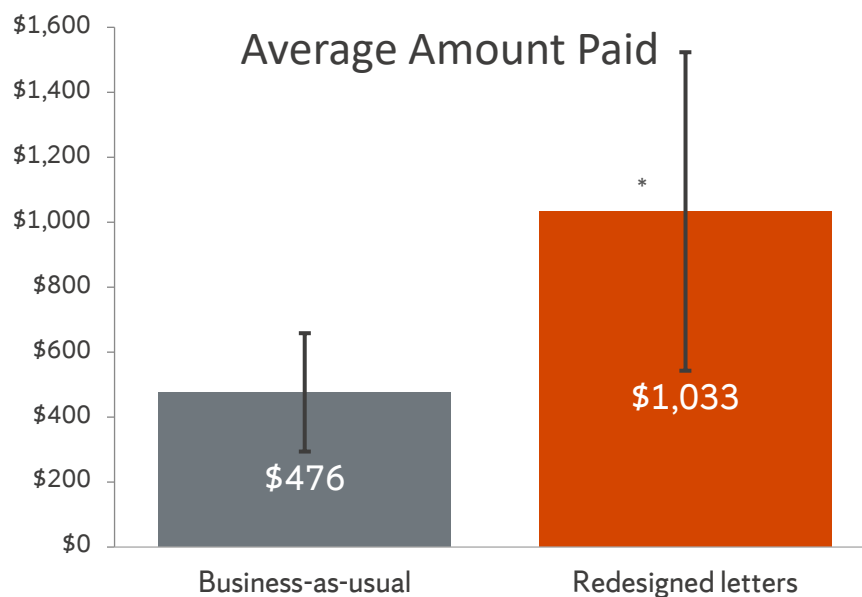


## Tax Foreclosure Prevention Notifications: City of Syracuse

The Maxwell X Lab recently partnered with the City of Syracuse's Department of Neighborhood and Business Development to test whether redesigned foreclosure prevention notifications would affect follow through. The goal of the redesign was to simplify communication: the letters separated and highlighted both the foreclosure process and steps the property owner could take to avoid foreclosure. The redesigned letters also included a personalized handwritten note on the outside of the envelope. In December 2017, 304 property owners who were facing tax foreclosure were randomized to receive our redesigned notifications or pre-existing letters.

Over three months, property owners who received the redesigned letters paid on average \$557 (117%) more than those who received business-as-usual letters (\$1033 to \$476).<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, property owners who received the redesigned letters were not more likely to pay overall (31.9 % to 31.3%), suggesting that the letters increased payment among those already inclined to pay. The trial brought in an additional \$96,725 to the City, and we estimate that at scale the redesigned letters would recoup at least \$169,000 more per year and help property owners avoid foreclosure.



n = 304  
\*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05

<sup>1</sup> Under various models, we estimate an increase in average payment of \$454-\$757. Each are statistically significant at p value < 0.05.