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To the Organizing Committee
Emily Breza, Davide Viviano, and Arun Chandrasekhar
Workshop on Development Economics and Networks for Early-Career Researchers
National Bureau of Economic Research

Dear Members of the Organizing Committee,

I am writing to apply to the Workshop on Development Economics and Networks for Early-Career Researchers, to be held on December 5, 2026 in Cambridge. I am an Assistant Professor of Economics at Ashoka University, having completed my Ph.D. in Economics at the University of California, Irvine in 2024, and I am therefore within five years of receiving my degree.

I would like to be considered on the basis of the enclosed working paper, "Do Politics Shape Economic Recovery through Federal Disaster Assistance?" (with Yash Khaitan and Derek Tran). The paper studies how the political economy of government resource allocation shapes local economic recovery. We estimate the causal effect of federal disaster aid on post-disaster county GDP, using county-level political competition under a winner-take-all electoral system as an instrument for the aid a county receives. We find that each additional dollar of aid raises local GDP by \$1.11–\$1.16 in the following year, and that the political allocation of aid operates only where politicians have electoral incentives to target it. The questions at its core, namely how public transfers are allocated across places and whether they translate into real recovery, are central to the applied and identification-focused work this workshop convenes, and I would gain a great deal from the feedback of its participants and senior lecturers.

As requested, a letter of recommendation will be provided by the following faculty member.

Professor Ivan Jeliazkov
Associate Professor of Economics and Statistics
Department of Economics, University of California, Irvine
ivan@uci.edu

Thank you very much for considering my application. I would be glad to provide any further materials the committee may need.

Sincerely,

Parush Arora
Assistant Professor of Economics, Ashoka University