

MONTHLY UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2020



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

November is a month to express gratitude. Despite the challenges that have surrounded us in 2020 we have much to be grateful for at Idaho Policy Institute. We have an amazing team that has worked together, albeit remotely, to serve clients across the state. We have been creative in our efforts to stay connected through our weekly team Zoom meetings and our (virtual) Thoughtful Thursday social gatherings.

So far this year, we completed some of our largest and highest profile projects to date, including the [Idaho's Transportation Infrastructure: Moving Idaho Forward](#) project. We are fortunate to have continued to expand our work across Idaho. Over the next few months we look forward to working with a number of new partners including Idaho Housing and Finance Association, Idaho Workforce Development Council, and Idaho Commission on the Arts. We also are excited to have a number of large-scale federal grant proposals pending with the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

All these efforts are possible thanks to the support we get from our clients and across the university. The Dean's Office of the School of Public Service deserves a special thanks. IPI went through multiple transitions this year and with their help we have become stronger as a team.

As we close the semester, I wish you a holiday season full of health and hope.

BEST,

DR. VANESSA CROSSGROVE FRY

PROJECT LIST

PROPOSAL STAGE

- Advancement of Idaho Women Attorneys (sponsor, Idaho Women Lawyers)
- Idaho Outdoor Recreation Survey (sponsor, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Juvenile Detention Program Evaluation (sponsor, Ada County)
- Public Opinion Survey (sponsor, Ada County Highway District)
- Statewide Housing Needs Assessment (multiple sponsors)
- Statewide Permanent Supportive Housing Assessment (sponsor, Idaho Housing and Finance)

ONGOING UNSPONSORED

- Annual Treasure Valley Survey
- Annual Statewide Survey
- Boise State's COVID-19 Dashboard
- CityGo
- Industry Cluster Needs Assessment
- State of Local Governments Survey

ONGOING SPONSORED

- Communities of Excellence Charter School Program Evaluation (sponsor, Bluum)
- Lincoln County Community Health EMS Cost Benefit Analysis (sponsor, Idaho Health and Welfare)
- Literacy Intervention Program Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho State Board of Education)
- Master of Environmental Management Needs Assessment (multiple sponsors)
- New Path Community Housing Evaluation (sponsor, City of Boise)
- Out of School Youth (sponsor, Idaho Workforce Development Council)
- Peer Counties Analysis (sponsor, Ada County)
- SAMHSA Treatment and Transitions Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho Health and Welfare)
- Streamflow Data and Climate Vulnerability Survey (sponsor, Northwest Climate Adaptation Science Center)
- West Central Mountains Regional Creative District (sponsor, Idaho Commission of the Arts)

PENDING

- A Foundation for Research into Webcams as Tools in Informal STEM Learning (sponsor, National Science Foundation)
- Accessing Independence by Leveraging Partnerships to Catalyze a Smart and Connected Region - Caldwell, Idaho (sponsor, National Science Foundation)
- Modeling Resilience Through a Community Lens: Discovering Data, Creating Tools, and Connecting People Who Make Resilience Possible (sponsor, National Science Foundation)
- Prevalence and Probability of Youth Homelessness (sponsor, U.S. Housing and Urban Development)

ENDING

- Idaho Public Education Policy Review (sponsor, yes. every kid.)



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

IDAHO EDUCATION POLICY REVIEW

Team: McAllister Hall, Gabe Osterhout, Vanessa Fry

Kestrel West and yes. every kid. partnered with Idaho Policy Institute (IPI) to better understand the implementation of state and local-level education policies in traditional public school districts across the state of Idaho. Survey responses from 28 superintendents and 48 teachers were used to support analysis of district policy manuals from districts across the state. The collected data answered a list of 30+ research questions provided by the client spanning several topics including out of school learning, open enrollment, and success.

Many of the questions were related to the implementation of the statewide open enrollment policy. Analysis of policies revealed that most schools have similar open enrollment rules and regulations and only five districts have opted out of the statewide program. Students commonly transfer to different districts for better academic programs or because their caregiver works for the district or in district boundaries. Students are most likely to be denied open enrollment if they have poor behavior records or if the school is trying to maintain student-teacher ratios. Participation numbers are mostly unknown, but survey data suggests that most districts with the program are enrolling anywhere between 1-10 and 50 or more out of district students each year.

Overall, most districts implement policies and their related programs similarly. In the case of statewide open enrollment or identifying students at risk of dropping out, this has a positive impact on accessibility and inclusivity. When considering policies involving measuring student success or calculating instructional time, there is room for growth and creativity.



PROJECT UPDATES

LITERACY PROGRAM EVALUATION

Team: Matthew May, McAllister Hall

IPI is conducting its third evaluation of the statewide Literacy Program for the Idaho State Board of Education. However, this evaluation will be the first to include a survey element. This month surveys were sent out to K-3 teachers and district administrators across the state asking questions about use of program funds, literacy instruction, intervention methods, and more. Staff members from the State Board of Education assisted in survey distribution. Both surveys were in the field for 16 days. The teacher survey received over 600 responses from 72 districts/charters and the administrator survey received 115 responses from 76 districts/charters. Survey results will be included in the final report which will be presented to the legislature early in 2021.

WEST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS REGIONAL CREATIVE DISTRICT PILOT

Team: Gabe Osterhout, Emily Pape, Lantz McGinnis-Brown

Idaho Commission on the Arts is piloting a creative district in the West Central Mountains. IPI is assisting in this effort by developing research questions, reviewing literature, identifying best practices, collecting data, and reporting results. The project team recently hosted a focus group with local stakeholders and is in the process of distributing a survey to understand their desires, required needs for future growth, and impact in the region.

STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SURVEY

Team: Cheong Kim, Matthew May, Vanessa Fry

IPI developed and fielded a survey to the chief executive officers of municipalities in eleven Western states. The project is intended to provide insight into how municipal governments, particularly their chief executives, make decisions, including their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey received approximately 200 responses in November. The survey is still open to Idaho cities and the research team has worked with the Association of Idaho Cities to encourage participation. Data analysis will begin in December.

ECONOMETRICS WORKSHOP SERIES

Team: Cheong Kim

Cheong Kim is holding a monthly workshop series for econometrics this semester. The series covers numerous topics that he found particularly significant in quantitative research. In the November session (11/19), he discussed OLS assumptions about variances and covariances of errors, and effective strategies to address violations of the assumptions. The next session will be held on December 17, the focus of which will be on non-linear functional forms.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

MPA POPULATION HEALTH LEARNING COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

This semester, IPI Interim Director Vanessa Fry advised a group of MPA Capstone students who worked with the [Population Health Learning Collaborative](#) in an effort to identify organizations across the U.S. that have successfully implemented innovative financing solutions and have secured homeownership for families who would otherwise be unable to attain housing. The students analyzed secondary data and conducted interviews to answer the questions:

1. What are some of the most promising financial innovations for enabling people to overcome the obstacles to become successful homeowners?
2. What are some best practices of organizations using these financial models?
3. How can these best practices be applied to Boise or other cities?

The goal of the project is to inspire more communities to adopt the best practices identified and encourage similar collaborative efforts. The students presented their findings to an online audience at the [Population Health Solutions Summit](#) on November 18th. People from across the country attended the presentation.

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

Please join us in welcoming two new members to the IPI Team – Cathe Scott and Valerie Hayes (pictured below). Cathe and Valerie have each been with the School of Public Service for over seven years. Together they bring expertise on a number of administrative tasks. Cathe Scott is the SPS Research Administrator and works closely with our Office of Sponsored Programs to prepare new projects, ensure compliance, and oversee the financial goals of the School’s research endeavors. Valerie is the new Management Assistant to SPS Centers and Institute Directors. She will work closely with Dr. Fry and all of our researchers to ensure the day-to-day needs of the Institute and staff are met. We’re excited to have Cathe and Valerie on board and look forward to working with them in their new roles.



MONTH IN REVIEW

VIP CLASS PRESENTS AT BOISE NEIGHBORHOOD INTERACTIVE

This fall, IPI Interim Director Vanessa Fry and School of Public Service faculty member Dr. Krista Paulsen launched the Vertically Integrated Project (VIP) Housing Opportunities for All. The VIP allows students from across disciplines, from undergraduates to post docs, an opportunity to use research to address one of the largest issues in the Boise metro region, access to affordable housing. For their first project the class prepared a presentation for City of Boise's Neighborhood Interactive. Presented on October 19, their talk, "Affordable Housing in Your Neighborhood: Options and Inspirations," clarified understandings of what affordable housing is and provided participants with examples of projects to inform discussion and inspire action.

IPI DIRECTOR PRESENTS AT ACHD MEETING

November 4, 2020, Dr. Vanessa Fry, Interim Director at IPI, presented the findings of the report Idaho's Transportation Infrastructure: Moving Idaho Forward at the November Ada County Highway District Commission meeting (video). An infographic covering the report's major findings has been widely shared across the state. The full report, dynamic financial model, and interactive policy map are available on IPI's web page dedicated to the project.

IPI RESEARCH ASSOCIATE PRESENTS EVICTION STUDY RESULTS

On November 12, 2020, Dr. Ben Larsen, IPI Research Associate, presented the results of the Idaho Eviction Study to the monthly Idaho Asset Building Networking working group. An infographic and interactive map are available on IPI's web page with information about formal eviction rates statewide and by county.

NEWS

"VIP Class Presents at Boise Neighborhood Interactive" Idaho Policy Institute News, October 28, 2020.

"IPI Director Presents at ACHD Meeting" Idaho Policy Institute News, November 6, 2020.

"IPI Research Associate Presents Eviction Study Results" Idaho Policy Institute News, November 12, 2020.

"Butte Moving Closer to 'Permanent Housing' for Homeless" Montana Standard, November 28, 2020.

"MPA Capstone Students Present at Population Health Solutions Summit" Idaho Policy Institute News, November 30, 2020.

GET IN TOUCH



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