

# MONTHLY UPDATE

JANUARY 2021



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The beginning of a new year is always a time of change—for Idaho Policy Institute, 2021 has already been filled with both change and opportunities.

January brought new elected officials to the Idaho Capitol and an chance for IPI and SPS Survey Director Jeff Lyons to present the results of the [Sixth Annual Idaho Public Policy Survey](#) to the legislators and Governor Little. Key findings of this year's survey are included in this update.

Although the vaccine is now being distributed across the state, COVID-19 continues to impact us all. IPI continues to support [Boise State's COVID-19 dashboard](#) and is now working with the Governor's Office to understand the discrepancies between COVID-19 case reporting across media outlets and health organizations. In addition, IPI and SPS examined Idahoans' opinions about COVID-19 in a [brief](#) released in conjunction with the statewide survey report.

IPI is excited to announce its first National Science Foundation Grant in conjunction with Peregrine Fund. Researchers from IPI and the College of Education will work with Peregrine Fund to build foundational knowledge about basic aspects of STEM webcams from the perspectives of both practitioners and viewers. IPI is also working with Frank Church Institute to examine attitudes about democracy in the 21st century.

I would like to welcome Sophie Croome and Melanie Hernandez to the team. Sophie, an intern with IPI, is pursuing her master's degree in economics in the College of Business and Economics. Melanie, a work-study student and undergraduate art major specializing in graphic design, returns to IPI after spending last semester as a WorkU student.

Finally, I want to congratulate Dr. Cheong Kim on his new publication in *The Social Science Journal*. Dr. Kim's publication is the result of years of dedication toward creating a database of Idaho municipalities.

**BEST,**

**DR. VANESSA CROSSGROVE FRY**

# PROJECT LIST

## PROPOSAL STAGE

- Advancement of Idaho Women Attorneys (sponsor, Idaho Women Lawyers)
- Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (currently un-sponsored)
- Idaho Outdoor Recreation Survey (sponsor, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Smart and Connected Communities (sponsor, National Science Foundation)
- Statewide Housing Needs Assessment (multiple sponsors)
- Statewide Permanent Supportive Housing Assessment (sponsor, Idaho Housing and Finance)

## PENDING

- 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)

## ONGOING SPONSORED

- A Foundation for Research into Webcams as Tools in Informal STEM Learning (sponsor, National Science Foundation)
- 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)
- Public Opinion Survey (sponsor, Ada County Highway District)
- 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)

## ONGOING UNSPONSORED

- 2020 Statewide Eviction Study
- Annual Treasure Valley Survey
- Annual Statewide Survey
- Boise State's COVID-19 Dashboard
- COVID-19 Data Analysis
- CityGo Annual Awareness Survey
- Industry Cluster Needs Assessment
- State of Local Governments Brief

## ENDING

- Ada County Peer Counties Analysis (sponsor, Ada County)

## MPA CAPSTONE

- Affordable Housing in Garden City's Live-Work-Crete District (client, Surel's Place)
- Best Practices for Accessing Capital (Emmett School District)
- Source Water Protection - Program Guide (client, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality)
- Source Water Protection - Use of Grant Funds (client, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality)
- Southern Idaho Forest Fund (client, National Forest Foundation)



# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## THE ANNUAL STATEWIDE SURVEY

Team: Matthew May, Jeffery Lyons, Vanessa Fry, Andrew Giacomazzi

The Boise State School of Public Service and Idaho Policy Institute conducted its Sixth Annual Idaho Public Policy Survey at the end of 2020, surveying 1,000 adults over the age of 18 who currently live in Idaho. The survey's purpose is to serve as a resource for leaders and decision makers throughout the state.

The survey's key findings include:

- More Idahoans believe the state is headed in the right direction than not.
- Idahoans say education is at the top of the list of issues that the Idaho Legislature should address in the coming year.
- A narrow majority of Idahoans would get a vaccine for COVID-19 if one were available today.
- Idahoans are divided on how to use an expected budget surplus, with tax relief being the most popular option.
- Idahoans are favorable toward a criminal justice system that focuses on rehabilitation and education of offenders.
- A majority of people in the state have confidence in the security of Idaho's elections.

On January 27th, SPS Survey Director Jeff Lyons and IPI Interim Director Vanessa Fry presented the survey's results to elected officials at the Idaho Capitol. Dr. Lyons and the report's co-author IPI Senior Research Associate Matthew May have been interviewed by a number of media outlets.

In February, Drs. Lyons and May will use the survey findings to produce a report regarding opinions of Treasure Valley residents.

# STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

## MPA NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION PROJECT

This semester's MPA Capstone class is working with four clients on five different projects. This month we'll highlight the partnership with the [National Forest Foundation](#) (NFF). NFF is working with a three MPA students, Brianna Pitcock, Jonathan Rodriguez, and Krissy Veseth.

Together the team will develop and conduct a series of surveys designed to identify potential Idaho-based partners to support development of a Southern Idaho Forest Fund. Such a fund would support on-the-ground restoration and forest stewardship in south and central Idaho, currently one of the fastest growing areas in the West. Students will also interview actors engaged in similar out-of-state programs.



# PROJECT UPDATES

## LINCOLN COUNTY EMS COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Team: Gabe Osterhout, Lantz McGinnis-Brown, Vanessa Fry, Melanie Hernandez

IPI is working with Boise State's Department of Community and Environmental Health to develop an evaluation plan and pilot implementation of data collection and reporting strategies for a community paramedicine program in Lincoln County. IPI is conducting a cost benefit analysis of the modeled data and projected outcomes, providing an economic evaluation that captures both the costs and outcomes of the program. The research team's work includes identifying variables and developing formulas for the model. IPI is also creating a one-page infographic summarizing the program's utility and the region's demographics.

## WEST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS CREATIVE DISTRICT

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

IPI continues its work assisting the Idaho Commission on the Arts to develop a pilot creative district in the West Central Mountains. The project team is currently working on a survey that will be sent out to members of the West Central Mountains creative community with the intent to gain a more focused understanding of their desires, required needs for future growth, and impact in the region. The team has had several meetings with the client and plans to distribute the survey in early February.

## MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (MEM) NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Team: Mackenzie Moss, Vanessa Fry, Matthew May

IPI is working closely alongside Boise State faculty to create a report to inform the creation of a Master's of Environmental Management (MEM) degree. IPI researchers are surveying employers across the country regarding their interest in MEM programs. In February, IPI is set to release a survey of similar PhD programs. Next steps include interviewing key employers and developing the final report.

## COVID-19 REPORTING

Team: Ben Larsen, Emily Pape, McAllister Hall, Vanessa Fry

IPI is assisting the Idaho Governor's Office with evaluating the different COVID-19 reporting data coming from a diverse group of news sources and health organizations. The team is attempting to uncover the reasons for the discrepancies in the reported numbers for each source and will report back to the Governor's Office by the end of January. Ultimately, the team plans to deliver an infographic outlining the different data methodologies and reporting systems at work across the distinct sources.



# MONTH IN REVIEW

## CHEONG KIM PUBLISHED IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCE JOURNAL

In his paper, “Local government growth from a tri-sector perspective,” published in *The Social Science Journal*, Cheong Kim sought to explain how government growth was associated with for-profit and nonprofit sector sizes by theories of market and government failures. He found from the analysis of panel data from Idaho localities, 1996–2014, that for-profit and nonprofit sector sizes negatively affected government growth, confirming the theories. The paper can be found [here](#).

## NEWS

[“Idaho has a nearly \\$242 million a year transportation funding gap”](#) Idaho Press, December 27, 2020.

[“Study says Idaho underfunding transportation by a quarter billion dollars each year”](#)

Boise Dev, December 31, 2020.

[“Report: More annual revenue needed to fund Idaho’s transportation infrastructure upgrades”](#)

Transportation Today, January 4, 2021.

[“Education, vaccines, masks: BSU policy study sheds light on public opinion”](#) Idaho Press, January 29, 2021.



## GET IN TOUCH



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