

MONTHLY UPDATE

MARCH 2021



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Spring is here! March brought longer days, warmer weather, budding trees, and much to celebrate at Idaho Policy Institute including new and existing partnerships across the state.

This month IPI announced its first National Science Foundation grant, a partnership with The Peregrine Fund and Boise State's Department of Education. In addition, the Idaho Transportation Department selected IPI for a research project which will review Idaho's Department of Motor Vehicle's service delivery model. We also completed several projects including our second annual assessment of evictions in Idaho. MPA students and Housing VIP students, now halfway through their semester, are beginning to wrap up their research projects.

IPI's impactful research engagement continues with communities across Idaho. Research on community health emergency medical services in Lincoln County will help the county determine the program's benefits. Examining a pilot creative district in Idaho's West Central Mountains will help Idaho Commission on the Arts determine how such an initiative could be replicated in other regions. We are working with private industries and school districts in the Magic Valley and Eastern Idaho to identify emerging needs and gaps in two rural Idaho industry clusters, the dairy and dairy processing industries in the Magic Valley and Idaho National Laboratory and its approximately 300 partner companies in Eastern Idaho. Findings will help shape academic programming and delivery over the next decade.

In March, IPI, like so many other organizations, reflected on a year of working remotely. From serving as presenters for local, statewide, and national webinars to transferring our knowledge to quiz-bowl like social gatherings we continue to network with one another and colleagues while also building new relationships.

As I patiently (and perhaps anxiously) await being on campus together again, I continue to have immense gratitude for all of the work and commitment of the IPI team. In addition, the continued support of the School of Public Service and university as a whole this last year has been amazing. Together we are truly creating positive impacts for students, the university, and Idaho.

BEST,

DR. VANESSA CROSSGROVE FRY

PROJECT LIST

PROPOSAL STAGE

- Advancement of Idaho Women Attorneys (sponsor, Idaho Women Lawyers)
- Guardian Ad Litem Program Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho Supreme Court)
- Idaho Outdoor Recreation Survey (sponsor, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Idaho GEM (sponsor, Idaho Board of Education)

PENDING

- Democratizing Innovation: Leveraging Integrated Data Infrastructures for Community-Based Problem Solving in Idaho's Treasure Valley (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)
- The compounding impacts of rapid population growth and COVID-19 on vulnerable populations in Idaho's Treasure Valley (sponsor, Osher Institute)

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)
- Department of Motor Vehicle Service Delivery Analysis (sponsor, Idaho Transportation Department)
- Lincoln County Community Health EMS Cost Benefit Analysis (sponsor, Idaho Health and Welfare)
- Master of Environmental Management Needs Assessment (multiple sponsors)
- New Path Community Housing Evaluation (sponsor, City of Boise)
- Oregon Statewide Nonprofit Compensation & Benefits Survey (sponsor, Nonprofit Association of Oregon)
- 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)
- Statewide Permanent Supportive Housing Assessment (sponsor, Idaho Housing and Finance)

ONGOING SPONSORED

- 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

- Annual Treasure Valley Survey
- Boise State's COVID-19 Dashboard
- City Go Annual Awareness Survey
- Industry Cluster Needs Assessment
- State of Local Governments Brief

ENDING

- 2020 Statewide Eviction Study
- Annual Statewide Survey
- COVID-19 Data Analysis

MPA CAPSTONE

- Affordable Housing in Garden City's Live-Work-Crete District (client, Surel's Place)
- An Examination of Democracy in the 21st Century (client, Frank Church Institute)
- 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

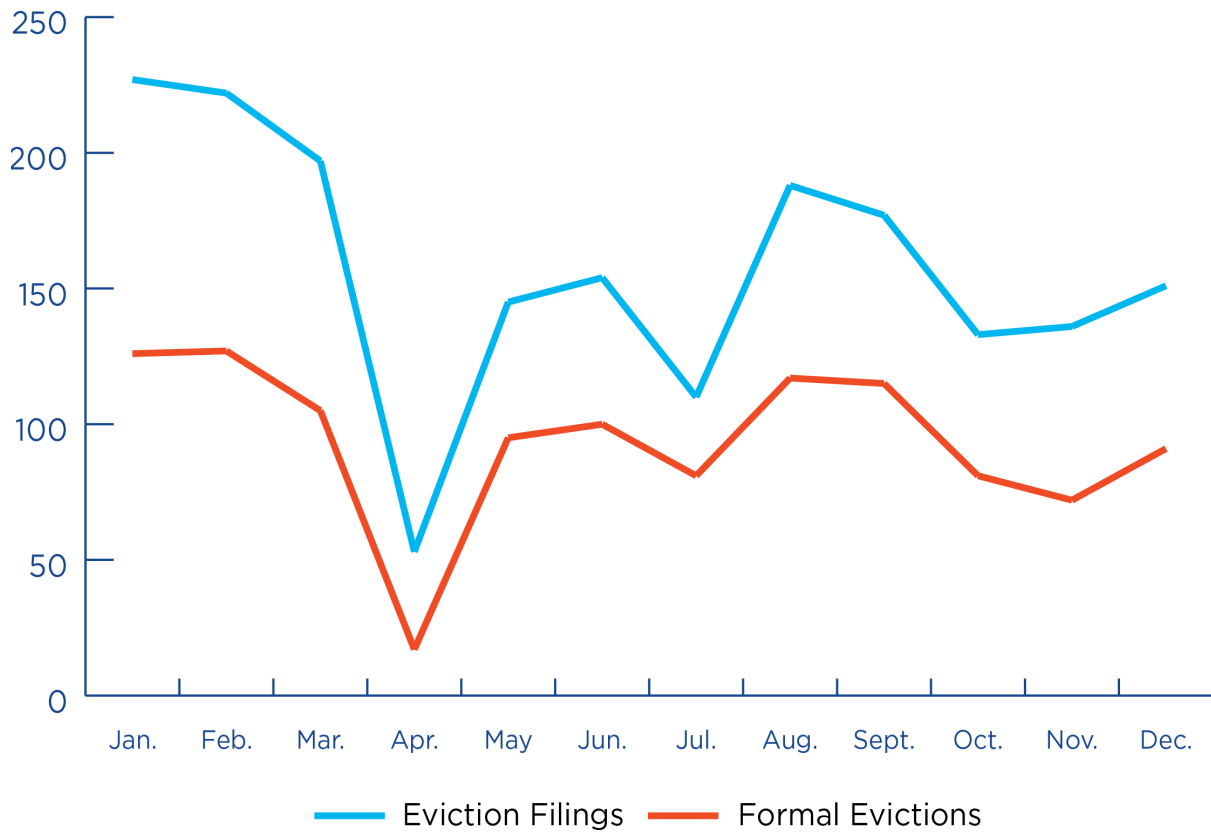
2020 IDAHO EVICTIONS

Team: Ben Larsen, McAllister Hall, Lantz McGinnis-Brown, Vanessa Fry

IPI completed the second annual Idaho Eviction Study looking at statewide eviction filings for 2020. Data was obtained for all eviction court records from the Idaho Supreme Court. In 2020, 1,893 (1%) of Idaho's renting households had an eviction filing and 1,127 (.06%) were formally evicted.

Overall, eviction filings in court decreased by 30% from 2019. Eviction filings were the lowest in April 2020 due to court closures ordered by the Idaho Supreme Court. The courts reopened in May 2020 followed by a sharp spike in eviction filings and formal evictions. Although monthly eviction filings never reached pre-pandemic levels, it is clear that efforts of federal, state, and local programs to mitigate the eviction crisis are unable to help a majority of households facing eviction and housing displacement.

2020 Eviction Filings and Formal Evictions



The ongoing pandemic increased the threat of eviction for hundreds of Idaho's renters. Economic struggles of the pandemic coupled with rapidly increasing housing costs means that some Idahoans are confronted with compounding back rent and the looming possibility of losing their housing security.

Check out [IPI's website](#) for county data and additional details.

PROJECT UPDATES

IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT DMV SERVICE DELIVERY

Team: Gabe Osterhout, Matthew May, Vanessa Fry, Cheong Kim, Emily Pape

IPI was recently awarded a research project to study Idaho's DMV service delivery model. IPI will collect and analyze data to determine best practices for delivering services across the state. Idaho's current model is decentralized and inconsistent among various counties, creating inefficiencies for Idaho Transportation Department, county officials, and customers. Based on this problem, IPI will pursue questions related to the current model's advantages and disadvantages, other states' service delivery methods, possible solutions, relevant statutes and regulations, and recommended best practices.

INDUSTRY CLUSTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Team: Ben Larsen, McAllister Hall, Sophie Croome, Mackenzie Moss, Vanessa Fry

IPI is working with the Boise State President's Office and Provost's Office to study the employment needs and gaps in two large industries in the state: the Idaho National Laboratory cluster in Eastern Idaho and the dairy cluster in Southern Idaho. The research team will be conducting interviews with stakeholders from the INL and their affiliates as well as the dairy and food processing industry. In addition, IPI will distribute a survey of high school students in both regions.

MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

Team: Mackenzie Moss, Matthew May

IPI recently closed two surveys for this project - the first regarding the market needs for individuals with environmental management skill sets and the second surveying regional PhD programs to help identify how an Master of Environmental Management (MEM) can best prepare students to pursue doctoral degrees. The team is currently conducting elite interviews with select employers and has begun initial data analysis. IPI hopes to complete this project by the end of the semester, and provide faculty with useful data to inform their decision-making in pursuing an MEM program at Boise State.

OREGON NONPROFIT COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS SURVEY

Team: Lantz McGinnis-Brown

IPI is working with the Nonprofit Association of Oregon to survey nonprofit organizations across Oregon about the compensation and benefits packages that they offer to employees. The results will be put into a visual platform for use by the Nonprofit Association of Oregon to share with its members.

PROJECT UPDATES

OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH

Team: McAllister Hall, Lantz McGinnis-Brown, Sophie Croome, D'Andre Mathews, Vanessa Fry

Out of school youth are defined as youth aged 16-24 who are not working or in school. IPI is working with the Workforce Development Council at the Department of Labor to understand what these youth are looking for in a workforce program. This month we completed a literature review identifying best practices for engaging youth in programs across the country. We also began the process of organizing focus groups which will be held in April by meeting with regional Department of Labor and education representatives across the state.

WEST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS REGIONAL CREATIVE DISTRICT PILOT

Team: Gabe Osterhout, Emily Pape

IPI continues to work with the Idaho Commission on the Arts to develop a pilot creative district in the West Central Mountains. After conducting a survey and meeting a diverse group of stakeholders, the team has begun drafting the final report. A draft of the report is under review by ICA. A final report is scheduled for completion in April.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

MPA CAPSTONE STUDENTS WORKING WITH IDAHO DEQ-PART 2

This semester, MPA Capstone students are working on two projects with Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. This month we highlight the work being conducted by students Ibrahim Alotaibi and Hannah Stark.

Ibrahim and Hannah are conducting an evaluation of DEQ's Source Water Protection Grant, which funds projects to protect sources of drinking water. Using the survey platform Qualtrics, the team has created a survey and distributed a survey to past recipients of the Source Water Protection Grant. The results of the survey will provide insight into the grant program and help DEQ recruit future applicants.



MONTH IN REVIEW

LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SHADOWS RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

A Meridian Medical Arts Charter High School student interested in a public policy research career recently job shadowed IPI Research Associate Gabe Osterhout. Gabe sat for an interview over his career path and day-to-day responsibilities, and the student also participated in multiple Zoom calls, including the regular IPI staff meeting and one discussing the research life cycle from inception to publication using an education policy project that Gabe and fellow Research Associate McAllister Hall recently completed.

IPI WRITING CLUB RESUMES

The IPI Writing Club is a monthly opportunity for staff and students to build writing skills and network with experienced scholars. After a hiatus during the transition to fully remote work, the Writing Club is back! Ben Larsen kicks off the schedule with a Crash Course in Policy Studies, a four part series that reviews fundamental texts in public policy.

IPI INTERIM DIRECTOR PANELIST ON COVID COMMUNICATIONS PANEL

Tuesday, March 2, IPI Interim Director Dr. Vanessa Fry was a panelist for COVID Conversations: Communicating Science to Local Government co-hosted by [Engineers & Scientists Acting Locally](#), [Federation of American Scientists](#), and [National Science Policy Network](#). She was joined by Flavia Tejada, PhD Student at Universidad Central del Caribe and Dr. Flojaune Cofer, Senior Director of Policy Public Health Advocates. The panelists spoke about science communication best practices and how people with backgrounds in STEM can engage with local science policy. Participants left the panel with a better understanding of how to educate, convey, and communicate scientific concepts—especially about COVID-19—to the general public and local government.

IPI HOSTS WORKSHOPS IN R PROGRAMMING

IPI Research Associate Lantz McGinnis-Brown spoke about the fundamentals of data visualization with R programming for the Boise State Internal Data Visualization Interest Group (IDVIG). The workshop focused on the R package “ggplot,” which provides a powerful layer-based framework for building highly flexible and customizable production-ready visualizations in a reproducible way.

IPI INTERIM DIRECTOR INTERVIEWS TRANSIT EXPERT STEVEN HIGASHIDE

On March 11 IPI Interim Director Dr. Vanessa Fry interviewed Steven Higashide for Urban Land Institute Idaho’s Case for Transit webinar series. Steven, Director of Research for Transit Center, authored the book “Better Buses Better Cities.” During the interview Steven described how decision-makers, philanthropists, activists, and public agency leaders can work together to make transit work in Idaho’s Treasure Valley.

You can view the recording of the program [here](#) with the passcode: G%&n1iiL

OTHER EVENTS

IPI COMPETES IN SPS QUIZ TOURNAMENT

Idaho Policy Institute unsuccessfully defended their reigning title in the 2nd Annual SPS Social Quiz-tancing Bar Trivia Tournament. IPI's team, Alternative Facts, lived up to its name in offering alternative facts in place of accurate answers, especially in the North American native species and city skylines categories. The team, though, had no problem answering niche pop culture questions related to the Kardashians and Tiger King. IPI looks forward to reclaiming its position as champion in 2022 in what will hopefully be an in-person event.

IPI WORKING WITH PEREGRINE FUND ON STEM RESEARCH

Researchers with [The Peregrine Fund](#) and Boise State University received a \$285,000 [National Science Foundation](#) grant that will allow them to perform the first-ever study of the outcomes of live-streaming webcams as a tool in informal STEM learning.

IPI Interim Director Dr. Vanessa Fry is Boise State's principal investigator on the project. IPI is thrilled to be partnering with The Peregrine Fund on this project. This research will allow us to inventory STEM webcams, survey those who are managing the webcams to understand their goals for the livestreams, and survey the viewers of those cameras to assess whether the intended goals are being achieved. For more information see [Boise State's announcement](#).

NEWS

["Evictions down 30% in 2020 due to rental assistance court closures"](#) Boise Dev, March 29, 2021



GET IN TOUCH



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