

# MONTHLY UPDATE

APRIL 2021



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

April was a full month at Idaho Policy Institute (IPI)! Three projects closed this month including the Oregon Statewide Nonprofit Compensation and Benefits Survey, the West Central Mountains Regional Creative District project, and the [Growth in the Treasure Valley in 2020](#) report. Students in the MPA Capstone and Housing Opportunities for All courses continued working on wrapping up their final reporting.

As the semester nears its end IPI is preparing to say goodbye to a few dedicated team members. Sophie Croome will be ending her internship with IPI. This summer she will be working with the Bureau of Labor Statistics and in the fall will continue her Master of Science degree in Economics. For the last two years Mackenzie Moss has been a dedicated MPA graduate assistant. After graduation 'Mack' will be working with the Office of Performance Evaluation at the Idaho Statehouse. IPI extends sincere gratitude to both Sophie and Mack and wishes them the best of luck as they continue their work in Idaho.

IPI continues to engage in new projects that we'll be working on throughout the summer. A first-time assessment of permanent supportive housing projects in Idaho will enable Idaho Housing and Finance Association's efforts to scale supportive housing across the state. A partnership with Idaho Department of Labor will help Idaho Workforce Development Council better address the needs of Idaho's 16-24 year olds who are disconnected from school and work. The second annual evaluation of New Path Community Housing will provide an indication of the level of community cost savings and overall impact of the program.

This month we also welcomed a new 'member' to the IPI family - Lantz McGinnis-Brown and his wife Kelly's baby Abigail. Congrats to them and big brother Henry!

**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)
- Smart and Connected Canyon County (sponsor, Valley Regional Transit)
- Vision Zero Analysis (sponsor, City of Boise)

## PENDING

- Democratizing Innovation: Leveraging Integrated Data Infrastructures for Community-Based Problem Solving in Idaho's Treasure Valley (sponsor, National Science Foundation)
- Department of Motor Vehicles Service Delivery Analysis (sponsor, Idaho Transportation Department)
- Guardian Ad Litem Program Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho Supreme Court)
- Idaho GEM (sponsor, Idaho Board of Education)
- 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)
- Master of Environmental Management Needs Assessment (multiple sponsors)
- New Path Community Housing Evaluation (sponsor, City of Boise)
- Out of School Youth Needs Assessment (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)
- Streamflow Data and Climate Vulnerability Survey (sponsor, Northwest Climate Adaptation Science Center)

## ONGOING UNSPONSORED

- Boise State's COVID-19 Dashboard
- City Go Annual Awareness Survey
- Rural Industry Cluster Needs Assessment
- Policy Brief: Responses of Municipal Governments to the COVID-19 Pandemic

## ENDING

- Growth in the Treasure Valley Report
- Oregon Statewide Nonprofit Compensation and Benefits Survey (sponsor, Nonprofit Association of Oregon)
- West Central Mountains Regional Creative District (sponsor, Idaho Commission on the Arts)

## MPA CAPSTONE

- Affordable Housing in Garden City's Live-Work-Crete District (client, Surel's Place)
- An Examination of Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> 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

## WEST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS REGIONAL CREATIVE DISTRICT

Team: Gabe Osterhout, Emily Pape

Idaho Policy Institute completed a report commissioned by the Idaho Commission on the Arts (ICA) exploring the possibility of establishing a creative district pilot in the West Central Mountains (WCM) region. The WCM region includes Valley County (Cascade, Donnelly, McCall) and the Meadows Valley.

IPI hosted two focus groups with local stakeholders, including artists, arts administrators and educators, city and county economic development representatives, retailers, and community members, and conducted a survey of individuals affiliated with the creative community. The survey instrument was distributed by county and city governments, chambers of commerce, nonprofits, galleries, libraries, and co-ops through their email and social media channels.

Focus group and survey findings indicate that:

- The local creative community is largely perceived as strong or at least moderately strong, while few believe it is weak.
- There is overwhelming optimism regarding creatives' opportunity for economic growth and prosperity.
- Artists, makers, and retailers want to be more connected with other WCM creatives.
- Respondents are divided on knowing where to find information about creatives and how to access their work.

IPI conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the WCM creative community using this data. Ultimately, strengths include its community, value and impact, and optimism. Weaknesses are lack of awareness and access. Opportunities involve creating an online tool, expanding resources, and strengthening connections. The creative community is threatened by growth and erosion of local character.

Finally, IPI considered the implementation of creative districts in other states, particularly in Colorado and California, which offer roadmaps for the establishment of a WCM Creative District, including potential best practices, benefits, local partnerships, resources, and state-level assistance.



# PROJECT UPDATES

## MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

Team: Matthew May, Mackenzie Moss

IPI is in the report-writing stage of the Master of Environmental Management (MEM) Workforce Analysis being completed for the Boise State School of Public Service. All data collection, including two surveys, literature reviews, and two sets of interviews, are complete. The finished report will serve SPS in making decisions, and interfacing those decisions, regarding the creation of a Master of Environmental Management program at Boise State.

## NEW PATH COMMUNITY HOUSING EVALUATION

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

New Path Community Housing is a Housing First Project in Boise that opened in December 2018. In the first annual evaluation, IPI found Ada County stakeholders saved \$1.3 million on community health, criminal justice, and emergency shelter costs by providing permanent supportive housing to residents experiencing chronic homelessness. In addition, New Path residents experienced an increase in overall well-being. IPI is now working on the second year evaluation. This month, the team finished a survey of stakeholder and program staff to learn about their perceptions of New Path's success. IPI is collecting additional quantitative data to determine ongoing community cost savings of the program and well-being of program participants.

## OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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

In April, the Out of School Youth (OSY) team provided technical assistance to representatives from educational institutions across the state to organize and prepare them to conduct focus groups with youth aged 16-24 who were recently or are currently disconnected from school and work. Regional Department of Labor (DOL) offices helped to recruit participants. Focus groups have started and will continue into May. As part of this project, IPI is hosting a DOL intern, Aisha Kayed, a recent SPS Global Studies graduate. The results of this project will help the Department of Labor and Idaho Workforce Development Council improve recruitment of disconnected youth and design programs that meet their needs.

## PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Team: Ben Larsen, McAllister Hall, Cheong Kim, Vanessa Fry

Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA) has partnered with IPI to do a cost-benefit analysis of single-site versus scattered-site permanent supportive housing programs (PSH). PSH provides stable housing and support services to residents formerly experiencing homelessness. The project team is working on collecting quantitative data on costs of housing construction, support services offered, and tenant demographic data. A final report later this summer will provide an evidence-based framework for scaling both types of programs across Idaho.

# PROJECT UPDATES

## RURAL INDUSTRY CLUSTERS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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

The Rural Industry Clusters Needs Assessment is a two part project attempting to find the gap between high school students' plans and industry needs. This month, the team focused on preparing and distributing a survey for high school students. Industry leaders provided feedback on the survey to ensure it is measuring what they are interested in. Superintendents and principals agreed to help distribute the survey. Surveys ask students about their plans after high school. Surveys were fielded for 2-3 weeks and the team is preparing to complete the second phase of the project.

# STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

## MPA CAPSTONE STUDENTS WORKING WITH SUREL'S PLACE

Surel's Place is in the heart of Garden City, Idaho's Surel Mitchell Live-Work-Create District, a neighborhood that values and encourages creativity. The nonprofit offers month-long residencies and professionally supported art events. This semester MPA Capstone students Dalten Fox, Daniel Lemus, and Mackenzie Moss conducted an analysis of past residents and current peer residency programs to aid Surel's Place in expansion efforts. With an ultimate aim of expansion in a high-price, high-demand neighborhood in Garden City, Surel's Place will use the team's work to help inform how the organization can grow while continuously meeting residents' needs and facilitating the successful non-profit artist residency program. To achieve these goals, the students administered a survey of former Surel's Place residents and conducted a review of residency programs around the country.

## STUDENT TEAMS ADDRESS ISSUES WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This semester's Housing Opportunities for All VIP class (taught by IPI Interim Director Dr. Vanessa Fry and SPS Associate Faculty Dr. Krista Paulsen) worked directly with community stakeholders to learn about issues they face in regard to housing availability and affordability. To accomplish this, VIP students and faculty invited community leaders to attend VIP meetings. Guests from City of Boise, City of Nampa, Ada County/Boise City Housing Authorities, Jesse Tree, and Idaho Smart Growth discussed issues they face and shared what research the class could engage in to support their work. As a result student teams are developing a podcast to elevate the conversation about affordable housing, an infographic about the benefits of affordable housing, and a website addressing misconceptions about affordable housing.

# MONTH IN REVIEW

## CUPSO CONFERENCE

The Consortium of University Public Service Organizations ([CUPSO](#)) supports university-based public service institutes in their efforts to assist state and local governments on a range of contemporary issues and challenges. CUPSO facilitates networking, information exchange, and collaboration among its 40 member institutions which represent 28 states.

IPI leadership regularly attends CUPSO's annual conference, but for the first time ever, the entire staff had the opportunity to participate because of the virtual format. Staff attended sessions such as impactful collaboration, empowering women, public service as a priority in difficult times, and others. Interim Director Vanessa Fry represented IPI in a roundtable that showcased IPI's work as well as facilitated a discussion on engaging students and faculty.

## RESEARCH ASSOCIATE PRESENTS IDAHO EVICTION DATA

Dr. Ben Larsen discussed the results of the Idaho Eviction Study for both the National Low Income Housing Coalition COVID-19 working group and the Idaho Asset Building Network. The presentations included Idaho eviction data for 2019-2020 and the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic relief and programs on evictions throughout Idaho.

# NEWS

[“His View: Maintaining roads should remain top priority”](#) Moscow-Pullman Daily News, April 2, 2021

[“Idaho Gov. Brad Little wants \\$80 million per year to address our congested roads”](#)

Idaho Statesman, April 4, 2021

[“Idaho Gov. Brad Little wants \\$80 million per year to address our congested roads”](#) KIVI Boise, April 4, 2021

[“Idaho needs more than general funding for transportation”](#) Idaho Business Review, April 5, 2021

[“Inside Politics: Idaho’s Transportation Future”](#) MagicValley.com, April 8, 2021

[“Treasure Valley growth occurring too fast, Boise State survey finds”](#) KTVB7, April 14, 2021

[“Is the Treasure Valley growing too fast? A recent survey asked that question”](#) Idaho Press, April 15, 2021

[“Nearly 80% of Boise-area residents surveyed say cities are growing too fast”](#) Idaho Capital Sun, April 15, 2021

[“2020 Census gives 2 Idaho neighbors more congressional seats. What about the Gem State?”](#)

Idaho Statesman, April 26, 2021

# OTHER EVENTS

## STAFF MARCH MADNESS COMPETITION

Senior Research Associate Matthew May won the annual IPI March Madness office competition. Dr. May correctly predicted 39 of 67 games, including an accurate prediction of the championship matchup between Gonzaga and Baylor. Although his champion pick, Gonzaga, did not ultimately win the tournament, his overall bracket still scored the best performance among IPI researchers. Notably, Dr. May's bracket outperformed FiveThirtyEight's statistical model compiled by Nate Silver. Indeed, in addition to his expertise in electoral policy and the legislative process, Dr. May is now IPI's in-house college basketball forecaster.

## IPI STYLE GUIDE IMPLEMENTATION

For the past year, a team of IPI staff collaborated to create the official IPI Style Guide. The Style Guide includes guidelines and standardization for writing, citations, creating graphics, and the deliverable and publication process. As a way to implement the Style Guide, the IPI team participated in a series of competitions for learning and emphasizing style guide topics including Kahoot quizzes, crossword puzzles, and a concise writing exercise. All IPI staff found an opportunity to shine but Vanessa Fry, Gabe Osterhout, and Matthew May performed exceptionally throughout the process.



## GET IN TOUCH



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