

MONTHLY UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2021



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

As I mentioned in last month's note, Idaho Policy Institute (IPI) is working on measuring the impact of our work. Part of determining that impact involves quantifying the reach we have in Idaho from year to year and determining if we're able to continue scaling our work and increase our impact. In addition, we are monitoring our balance between sponsored and non-sponsored research. This is important because IPI was formed to be an objective research resource to Idaho's decision makers, and we intended to ensure limited funding would not prohibit engagement.

In 2020 IPI had seven active sponsored projects; this year we have 17. Of those 17, three are multi-year studies, three are with past sponsors, and the remaining 11 are with new sponsors. Six of the relationships with the new sponsors were generated from engagement with IPI on non-sponsored research. This includes engagement with the MPA Capstone course I teach which spurred the projects with Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and United Way of the Treasure Valley. Two projects with Valley Regional Transit (VRT) were, in part, built off of IPI's work with VRT on City Go, part of an ongoing collaboration between City of Boise, Capital City Development Corporation, Ada County Highway District, and Boise State University.

This month IPI engaged with 12 non-sponsored projects. This research includes projects right here at Boise State. In addition to CityGo, currently IPI is supporting [Frank Church Institute's Democracy in the 21st Century](#) project, conducting the Rural Industry Clusters Needs Assessment for the offices of the President and Provost, and conducting the School of Public Service's [annual Statewide and Treasure Valley surveys](#). A group of MPA Capstone students, with my support, is helping [Boise State's Division of Capital Planning and Space Management](#) better understand staff and faculty needs related to housing shortages and affordability in the Treasure Valley.

Later this semester, IPI will survey past and current partners to better understand the impact they've experienced as a result of our work together.

BEST,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vanessa Fry".

DR. VANESSA CROSSGROVE FRY

PROJECT LIST

PROPOSAL STAGE

- Idaho Tribal Courts Survey (sponsor, Idaho Legal Aid Services)
- West Central Mountains Creative District Network Analysis and Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho Commission on the Arts)

PENDING

- Family Caregiver Navigator Cost Benefit Analysis (sponsor, Idaho Blue Cross Foundation)
- HUD Eviction Protection Program Grant (sponsor, Idaho Legal Aid Services)
- Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Idahoan (sponsor, United Way of the Treasure Valley)
- Modeling Resilience Through a Community Lens: Discovering Data, Creating Tools, and Connecting People Who Make Resilience Possible (sponsor, National Science Foundation)
- Recovery, Renewal and Resilience in a Post-Pandemic World (sponsor, Trans-Atlantic Platform for Social Sciences and Humanities)
- Wastewater and Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey (sponsor, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality)

ENDING

- Policy Brief: Responses of Municipal Governments to COVID-19 Pandemic
- Streamflow Data and Climate Vulnerability Survey (sponsor, Northwest Climate Adaptation Science Center)

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)
- Connected Canyon County (sponsor, Valley Regional Transit)
- COVID-19 Travel Behavior Study (sponsor, Valley Regional Transit)
- Department of Motor Vehicle Service Delivery Analysis (sponsor, Idaho Transportation Department)
- Educational Programming Attitudinal Awareness Survey (sponsor, Idaho Public Television)
- Guardian Ad Litem Program Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho Supreme Court)
- Idaho Literacy Intervention Program Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho State Board of Education)
- Idaho Outdoor Recreation Survey (sponsor, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Public Opinion Survey (sponsor, Ada County Highway District)
- SAMHSA Treatment and Transitions Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho Health and Welfare)
- Statewide Affordable Housing Assessment (sponsor, Office of the Governor)

ONGOING UNSPONSORED

- Boise State's COVID-19 Dashboard
- City Go Annual Awareness Survey
- Data Collection for a Full-Length Paper: Municipal COVID-19 Responses by Government Form
- Rural Industry Cluster Needs Assessment
- SPS Statewide and Treasure Valley Surveys
- Technical Support for Frank Church Institute's Democracy in the 21st Century project

MPA CAPSTONE

- Boise State Employee Housing Needs Assessment (client, Boise State University)
- Critical Crash Data Analysis and Policy Alternatives (client, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance)
- Demographic Shifts in Idaho (client, International Rescue Committee)
- Impact of HB392 (client, Boise Elevated)
- Impact of Idaho's Community Schools (client, United Way of the Treasure Valley)
- Program Evaluation (client, Good Samaritan Home)
- Water Pollutant Discharge Quantification (client, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality)

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Team: McAllister Hall, Gabe Osterhout

In 2018, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Idaho's Communities of Excellence (COE) consortium a \$17.1 million Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant. The amount of the award increased to \$22.5 million in 2019. Grant funds will be distributed over five years with the intent to achieve Idaho's COE objectives. Idaho Policy Institute (IPI) was selected as the independent, third-party evaluator to evaluate the ability of subgrantee schools to meet the grant goals. This month, IPI completed the second annual evaluation of the grant.

The following questions drive IPI's evaluation of Idaho's COE:

1. How are subgrantee schools using funds for school-site implementation?
2. How do students and parents perceive the quality of schools vis-a-vis their prior school experience?
3. What are school and staff perceptions of the successes, improvements, and challenges at subgrantee schools?

Performance data is omitted from the report as standardized testing was not completed in the 2019/20 school year.

Key findings from the year two evaluation include:

- Cohort 1 schools serve more Hispanic/Latino students but fewer economically disadvantaged students.
- All Cohort 1 schools dedicated a majority of year two spending to staffing; however, all schools continue to dedicate money to technology and furniture and fixtures.
- Despite the precarity of COVID-19, parents are satisfied with their school.
- Parents plan to continue sending their children to their CSP school.
- Teachers are satisfied with their school but also feel overwhelmed by their workload.



COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE

IDAHO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT

PROJECT UPDATES

CASC STREAMFLOW DATA SURVEY

Team: McAllister Hall, Vanessa Fry

As part of a grant awarded to Kendra Kaiser in Boise State's Department of Geosciences, IPI wrote and distributed a survey to ecological and hydrological organizations throughout the Western region about their collection of streamflow data. The goal of the survey is to identify who is collecting data, what data they are collecting, and if there can be a way to create a catalog of all streamflow data. Moving forward, IPI will provide any needed technical support regarding survey data.

CONNECTED CANYON COUNTY

Team: McAllister Hall, Vanessa Fry, Emily Pape, Aisha Kayed

This month the IPI Connected Canyon County team helped to plan and facilitate a workshop for community partners. The workshop led partners through an exercise in defining opportunities for developing solutions. The workshop also led discussions on current conditions in Canyon County and ways to increase community engagement on the platform. If you spend time in Canyon County for any reason, we encourage you to check out and contribute to the [engagement page](#). Information from the engagement page will be used to create innovative solutions to community-identified problems.

COVID-19 TRAVEL BEHAVIOR STUDY

Team: Matthew May, Emily Pape

Valley Regional Transit has contracted with IPI in order to better understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected travel behavior and perceptions within the Treasure Valley. IPI's analysis will focus on how individuals' travel behavior has changed and what the long-term implications of these changes might be. This month, IPI went out to bid and identified the survey contractor it will be working with on this project to field the survey through a mixed-mode approach including landlines, cell phones, online, and text message. The project team and survey contractor are currently working to finalize survey questions.

DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES SERVICE DELIVERY ANALYSIS

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

This month, the IPI team continued work on both national and statewide surveys. The national survey, aimed at state DMV administrators, was distributed to potential respondents. A separate survey for Idaho county transaction-processing agents will be distributed in the coming weeks, including additional interviews with county assessors and sheriffs regarding their perceptions of Idaho's current DMV system. IPI hosted a monthly check-in meeting with the Idaho Transportation Department and the team continues to review relevant literature and analyze DMV data.

PROJECT UPDATES

STUDYING THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON IDAHOANS

Team: McAllister Hall, Aisha Kayed, Lantz McGinnis-Brown

IPI recently started working with United Way of Treasure Valley to collect updated facts and figures on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the financial stability, housing stability, education, and health of Idahoans in the Treasure Valley. Data will be collected from state and local agencies and focus on the Treasure Valley population. A summary of the data will be added as an appendix to the United Way of Treasure Valley's 2020 Community Assessment.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

MPA CAPSTONE STUDENTS WORK TO ADDRESS HOUSING ISSUES

Two of this fall's MPA Capstone projects focus on addressing the housing crisis in the Treasure Valley. Emily Berg, Paige Ragno, and Vera Beltran are working with [Good Samaritan Home \(GSH\)](#), a Boise nonprofit providing affordable housing to seniors, veterans, adults with disabilities, and independent adults of all ages who may have low or fixed incomes. The team will help create a baseline assessment tool to identify residents' needs and also identify programmatic best practices related to those needs. GSH will use the information gathered to design a case-management approach to serving residents and implement ongoing evaluation of resident outcomes.

Lila Klopfenstein, Ashlee Mickelsen, and Celeste Giordani are working with [Boise State's Division of Capital Planning and Space Management](#). The team will design and implement a survey of university staff to better understand current needs related to housing shortages and affordability in the Treasure Valley. Elite interviews with hiring managers on campus will provide insight on the challenges being faced by those recruiting talent and inform the survey design. The university will use the findings to make strategic decisions about addressing employee housing insecurity.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL VIP WORKING WITH COMPASS

Students in this semester's Housing Opportunities for All Vertically Integrated Project (VIP) are working directly with [COMPASS](#), the region's metropolitan planning organization, to support an initial phase of a Regional Housing Assessment. This Phase 1 study will provide the information and background necessary to address affordable housing in a coordinated and regionally-comprehensive way. COMPASS member agencies and other stakeholders will use the student's research to help implement Communities in Motion 2050 (CIM 2050) and meet regional planning goals.

MONTH IN REVIEW

CHEONG KIM PRESENTS AT ISTPF ORIENTATION

Cheong Kim presented “The State Budget” at the Idaho Science & Technology Policy Fellowship (ISTPF) Orientation, organized by the University of Idaho’s McClure Center for Public Policy Research on September 1, 2021. Kim provided a general overview of the Idaho state budget in the areas of budget process, revenues, appropriations, and oversight.

IPI INTERIM DIRECTOR CONDUCTS SKILL BUILDER WORKSHOP

Vanessa Fry, IPI Interim Director, led a workshop “Pragmatic Inquiry in Leadership” during this year’s Andrus Center Women in Leadership Conference. The workshop covered the process of applying the concepts of pragmatic inquiry when serving in a leadership role. In the workshop attendees learned how to expand their thinking beyond standard assumptions, enabling them to interpret challenges in new ways. Results of the pragmatic inquiry process may be a small adjustment in plans or a complete change in direction.

IPI INTERIM DIRECTOR MEETS WITH STUDENTS

Vanessa Fry, IPI Interim Director, met with College of Business and Economics Capstone students and College of Health Science Master of Public Health students to discuss how IPI uses economic modeling and cost-benefit analysis in our engaged research.

IPI INTERIM DIRECTOR PUBLISHES WITH COLLEAGUES

Vanessa Fry, IPI Interim Director, Saleh Ahmed, Assistant Professor in SPS, and Elizabeth Eklund, Visiting Scholar in the School of Anthropology at the University of Arizona, published “[Population Growth, Inequality, and the Digital Frontier in the Shadow of the Pandemic in the American West](#)” with the Western Rural Development Center. The article discusses population growth in the Intermountain West and how an already divided society saw a widening gap between sectors as some businesses, particularly in the service industry, closed while ‘Zoom Towns’ thrived. The authors also discuss that with an eye to social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, the ‘New West’ could become a template for the digital era.

NEWS

[“Idaho law limits how infrastructure bill can aid transit, leaves future riders waiting”](#)

Idaho Statesman, September 22, 2021

OTHER EVENTS

HUD EVICTION PROTECTION GRANT - PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

IPI partnered with Idaho Legal Aid Services, Utah Legal Services, Montana Legal Services Association, Jesse Tree of Idaho, and Intermountain Fair Housing Council to submit a proposal for HUD's Eviction Protection Program Grant. The proposed program would provide legal and other support services to low-income households facing eviction across the three states. IPI will serve as the program evaluator and track data for all partner organizations. The research goal of the program is to measure the impacts of additional legal and support services on the short- and long-term housing outcomes for low-income renters facing eviction.

IPI STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

IPI team meetings consisted of two professional development workshops this month. Jana LaRosa, Director of Research Development, trained the team on strategies for proposal development using the logic model. Dennis Feeney, with the Office of Technology Transfer, discussed project management techniques. IPI will use the information from each workshop to better prepare for and carry out sponsored projects.



GET IN TOUCH



ipi@boisestate.edu



(208) 426-5488



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