

MONTHLY UPDATE



IDAHO POLICY INSTITUTE, APRIL 2020

PROJECTS IN PROPOSAL STAGE

- Masters of Environmental Management Needs Assessment (multiple sponsors)
- Idaho Public Television Attitudinal Awareness Survey (sponsor, Idaho Public Television)
- Housing Research Proposal (sponsor, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)
- National Science Foundation State of the Nation's Webcams: A Foundation for Research into Webcams as Tools in Informal STEM Learning

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

As with all of you, April has been a challenging month at the Idaho Policy Institute. Mostly, we have missed seeing each other, and each of you. But COVID-19 hasn't slowed down the need for high-quality research. A highlight from April includes the public release of our New Path Housing evaluation. Vanessa Fry and the team have done an exceptional job in evaluating this, and more importantly, we feel honored to be part of such important work in Boise. We also had one of our undergraduate researchers, Emily Pape, present her research at the 2020 Undergraduate Research Showcase. Emily is a research rock star and we look forward to following her success as she takes her talents to the University of Chicago's Masters of Public Policy program. We've also implemented a couple of new initiatives as well. For example, from 12-1 pm every Thursday all of IPI goes into "Low Power Reading Hour" and we all focus on reading something that is NOT project related. We tweet about it and ask others around campus what they are reading. It's great and you are welcome to join us. Finally, one of our researchers, Gabe Osterhout, has officially set a Guinness World Record! He holds the world speed record for identifying every flag around the world in less than 5 minutes. Big props to Gabe.

As you review the rest of our monthly update, we hope you can get a sense for how much the Idaho Policy Institute and our researchers care about the State of Idaho and all of our clients. This is special work and we feel honored to be able to engage in it. We know that times are different now, but social distancing and working from home has not slowed us down one bit, and we are excited to continue to help decision-makers be better informed.

- DR. GREG HILL

PROJECT UPDATE

ONGOING SPONSORED PROJECTS

- Charter School Program Evaluation (sponsor, Bluum)
- SAMHSA Treatment and Transitions Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho Health and Welfare)
- Idaho's Transportation Infrastructure Funding (multiple supporters)
- Diagnostic Site Visits Research Design (sponsor, Bluum)
- New Path Community Housing Evaluation (sponsor, City of Boise)

ONGOING UNSPONSORED PROJECTS

- Downtown Mobility Collaborative (City Go)
- US Census Complete Count Committee
- MPA Employer Needs Assessment
- Statewide Eviction Study in Collaboration with Idaho Press

PROJECTS CLOSING

- Peer Cities (sponsor, City of Boise)
- Transportation Mode Shift (sponsor, City of Boise)

NEW PATH COMMUNITY HOUSING EVALUATION

Team: Vanessa Fry, Benjamin Larsen, and Lantz McGinnis-Brown

New Path Community Housing is a 40-unit, single site, Housing First project in Ada County, Idaho, a project that Vanessa Fry has been involved with since conducting the initial feasibility study that helped launch New Path. New Path's evidence-based program is designed to address specific issues related to chronic homelessness including high utilization of emergency medical and detox services, frequent contact with the criminal justice system, and compromised overall personal well-being. As program evaluator, Idaho Policy Institute oversees all evaluation activities and works closely with New Path partners to design data collection strategies, monitoring, and reporting for this program. "Being involved with this project is something that the institute values and we are honored to have served as the evaluator for its first year," says Fry, "It's not often academics have the opportunity to see their research put into action so, personally, being part of this project since its inception and now being able to engage in its evaluation has been a highlight of my career." IPI's first annual evaluation found the impact of the New Path to include:

- A 63% decrease in utilization of emergency services,
- Total annual savings/cost avoidance of \$1,381,386, and
- An increase in overall resident well-being.

Find the full report on our website: boisestate.edu/sps-ipi/projects-and-clients/local-government/city-of-boise-new-path/

CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM EVALUATION

Team: Vanessa Fry, McAllister Hall, and Gabe Osterhout

It has been one year since Bluum began awarding CSP Grant funds to charter schools across the state. The third cohort of schools were selected in early April increasing the total amount of schools receiving grant funding to 13. The team completed the first-year evaluation report this month. The evaluation focused on the baseline data of the five subgrantee schools in the first cohort. The report included analysis of academic performance and stakeholder perceptions of data from the year before the schools began receiving funding as well as a financial analysis of subgrantee spending in year one. Future reports will be able to compare this baseline data with the stakeholder perceptions and academic performance of these schools after receiving funding and spending across and within all subgrantee schools.

MONTH IN REVIEW

NEW PATH PRESENTATIONS

On April 13, Vanessa Fry presented the New Path Community Housing 2019 Evaluation to Terry Reilly's board of directors. Terry Reilly is the organization that is providing supportive services for New Path and are in the facility around-the-clock to support the residents. Fry also gave the same presentation to the New Path Advisory Committee that comprises all of the partner agencies that support New Path Community Housing. These presentations followed the completion of the evaluation and its report.



STRATEGIC PLANNING

In April, the Idaho Policy Institute conducted the first phase of a strategic planning process. The team gathered via Zoom and with the help of Holly Mikesell from the Provost's Office, began the process of forming goals and objectives for the Institute and its future. The goal of starting this process was to establish some short and long-term goals so that we can better serve our community and align those goals and objectives with Boise State University's strategic plan.

2020 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SHOWCASE

On April 17, Emily Pape presented at the Plenary Lightning talks for the 2020 Undergraduate Research Showcase. Her presentation titled, Why Countries Transition to Clean Energy (and why they don't), discussed the factors influencing a country's energy use and motivational factors to transition to clean energy. She looked at what factors influenced the adoption of clean energy at the national level and argued that the success of energy transition to clean energy is dependent on cost effectiveness, policy incentives, energy consumption, access to resources, concerns for the environment and the existence of energy security threats. Listen to her full presentation on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/SQFmTrG-TtY?t=1710>

GUINNESS WORLD RECORD HOLDER

Gabe Osterhout broke a Guinness World Record on Boise State University's campus. He identified all national flags in 4 minutes and 51 seconds, breaking the title of "Fastest time to identify all national flags". Osterhout considers himself an amateur vexillologist, a person who studies flags. Not only did he need to identify 197 national flags, he had to master the quick and error-free typing of tricky country names like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Equatorial Guinea, and Kyrgyzstan. His world record was also made possible by individual volunteers keeping time, taking photos, and serving as independent witnesses.



WORKSHOP ON TABLEAU

On the April 17, Lantz McGinnis-Brown presented a tutorial on Tableau. In it, he pulled Census data, cleaned the data, and then uploaded it to Tableau. In Tableau, he demonstrated how to build a visualization of total population and population by age per Idaho county and how to add those visualizations to a Tableau dashboard for sharing.

FRY FAMILY ON IDAHO MATTERS

On the April 9, the Vanessa Fry and her family were featured on an episode of Idaho Matters. In the episode, Gemma Gaudette interviews Idaho families about how they are dealing with life at home during the coronavirus. In the morning, the Fry family is broadcasting via Zoom their “ninja warrior warm-ups, which aims at getting their bodies moving and their minds ready for the day. Listen to the [full broadcast on Boise State Public Radio’s website](#).

READING HOUR

After noticing that we all were not taking the time to simply read and catch up on articles, the team decided to dedicate an hour each week to do so. IPI has set aside 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm every Thursday for a Low Power Reading Hour and have been encouraging the campus to join in on Twitter. The only rule set is that computers are not allowed so that the time could truly be spent reading and not getting distracted by an email notification. At least a dozen different books were read in April by IPI and we plan on continuing the reading hour in May.

CHESS TOURNAMENT

To promote friendly competition among the staff, Gabe Osterhout formed a chess tournament for those interested at IPI. The double-elimination tournament took place over April 15-24th, where Benjamin Larsen and Mackenzie Moss battled it out over the championship with Benjamin Larsen winning the first ever IPI Chess Tournament title. Congratulations to Ben!

TEAM SPOTLIGHT

GABE OSTERHOUT

Gabe Osterhout joined IPI in the fall of 2018 and has since been an integral part of IPI’s team building efforts. Most recently he brought the team together for a fierce chess competition. One of his favorite aspects of working at IPI is collaborating with and learning from coworkers. He loves that everyone has different areas of knowledge and how easy it is to bounce ideas off of each other. Lantz McGinnis-Brown, who has worked closely with Gabe on several projects, shared, “Gabe is a driven, creative researcher who holds himself and his work to the highest standards. His talent for finding projects that are interesting, timely, and relevant for Idaho provides a consistent source of inspiration and conversation for his co-workers.”

Gabe attended the College of Idaho for his undergraduate, earning a bachelor’s degree in Political Economy with a focus on state and local politics and the legislative process. He then completed a master’s degree in International Relations at King’s London College. During his time in London, he enjoyed exploring Europe and sampling food from around the world. Gabe served as captain of the University of London hockey team.

After his studies, Gabe made his way back to Idaho. His favorite local activities are biking the beautiful Boise River Greenbelt and attending Hawks baseball games. Gabe recently started teaching in the School of Public Service. During the Spring 2020 semester, he taught a political science course on proliferation and international security, examining the causes and consequences of the spread of nuclear weapons.



FEATURE

The Idaho Policy Institute was featured in the April edition of the School of Public Service's Public Interest newsletter. You can find the full edition of the newsletter online at: boisestate.edu/sps/public-interest-idaho-policy-institute

ACADEMICS IN VIRTUAL ELEVATORS WITH VANESSA FRY

In a special Zoom edition of "Academics Talking Academics in Elevators," School of Public Service Dean Andy Giacomazzi interviews Vanessa Crossgrove Fry, Idaho Policy Institute Research Director. They discuss:

- How IPI is a resource for decision-makers during the current crisis and beyond.
- What was learned from the recent evaluation of New Path Community Housing.
- What is "Housing First" and how does it save taxpayers money and produce better outcomes for the homeless community.
- What projects IPI is working on now.

Watch the full episode online at youtu.be/biu7ObyPqPo.

UNDERSTANDING DATA MODELS

Director Greg Hill writes a piece on understanding data models during the COVID-19 outbreak. Read the full piece on The Blue Review: boisestate.edu/bluereview/understanding-data-models

NEWS

Vanessa Fry interviewed: "[How Idaho Families Are Dealing With Life At Home During The Coronavirus](#)". *Boise State Public Radio*. April 9, 2020.

New Path project mention: "[BSU: Community housing for chronically homeless saves community \\$1.3M](#)". *Idaho Press*. April 14, 2020.

New Path project mention: "[Housing-first initiative saved Ada Co. taxpayers \\$1.3M in 2019, according to BSU report](#)". *KIVI*. April 14, 2020.

New Path project mention: "[BSU study finds housing for chronically homeless saves community \\$1.3M](#)". *Idaho Press*. April 15, 2020.

New Path project mention: "[New Path Community Housing Successfully Homes Boise's Chronically Homeless](#)". *Boise State Public Radio*. April 21, 2020.

Project mention: "[Clean Energy for all](#)". *Boise State News*. April 21, 2020.

Feature: "[Public Interest - Idaho Policy Institute](#)". *School of Public Service*. April 30, 2020.

Gabe Osterhout feature: "[Gabe Osterhout sets new Guinness World Record on campus](#)". *Boise State News*. April 30, 2020.

GET IN TOUCH



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