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JULY 2018

POLICY TALK

The Latest in Public Policy Center News and Events

IN THE NEWS



The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center is Celebrating Our 20th Anniversary This Year.

For 20 years the Public Policy Center's team of researchers and staff have been working with decision makers, faculty, and other organizations to make lasting change in our communities. As we reflect on the last 20 years, we are looking forward to continuing to work in current areas, exploring exciting new areas of research, and connecting with people



from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds. With the help of our dedicated researchers and collaborators, we will continue our mission of putting knowledge into action to build safer, stronger communities in Nebraska and around the world. [See our upcoming events on Facebook.](#)

Mayor's Challenge Hopes to Bring Innovative Shuttle Technology to Downtown Lincoln

The project aims to assess public opinion on autonomous shuttles in Lincoln.

Lincoln is one of 35 cities selected by Bloomberg Philanthropies as finalists in the [2018 Mayors Challenge](#), a nationwide competition that encourages city leaders to develop bold, inventive ideas to confront city challenges. The City of Lincoln has partnered with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center to assess public opinion on the project through a "virtual service journey" survey that allows the public to imagine riding the autonomous shuttle and provide feedback on their experience. If Lincoln's demonstration is successful and additional funding is received, four to six autonomous shuttles could travel along fixed routes in downtown Lincoln as part of a pilot program as early as 2019. Riders would summon the shuttles using smart phones or kiosks. [Read more about the project or take the survey.](#)



QUICK LOOK



Disaster Behavioral Health Professionals Attend Annual Conference in Omaha

This year's Great Plains Disaster Behavioral Health Conference provided new insights and ideas about building resiliency in communities.

A primary focus of the annual conference centers on learning how to prepare and respond to the psychological effects of disaster and mass casualties. The panelists this year addressed issues of cultural inclusion, the role of faith communities, social connection in disaster preparedness, and ethical considerations and challenges. The panel of speakers included SAMHSA Regional Administrator Kim Nelson; Assistant Professor of Emergency Services Dr. DeeDee Bennett (UNO); Executive Director of New York Disaster Interfaith

Services Peter Gudaitis; Associate Professor of Communications Brian Houston (University of Missouri); and Professor of Counseling David Carter (UNO). [Visit the conference site.](#)



Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Annual Conference: Focus on Addiction

Professionals in behavioral health, social work, peer recovery support, and related areas converged on Southeast Community College earlier this month for the 2018 Annual Nebraska Department of Correctional Services

Conference. The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center partnered with the Nebraska Department of Corrections for the 12-hour training. The featured speaker, Darryl S. Inaba, presented on drug addiction trends and treatment. One of the main goals of the conference is to increase practitioner competency to recognize current trends and promote evidence-based practices for substance use disorder treatment.

Statewide K-12 Threat Assessment Training Reaches Over 100 Nebraska School Districts and 65,000 Teachers

Dr. Mario Scalora and Dr. Denise Bulling of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center are partnering with Director of Safety and Security for the Nebraska Department of Education, Dr. Jolene Palmer, to conduct threat assessment training for Nebraska schools. The training is sponsored by local Educational Service Units in all areas of the state and features guidelines created by the Public Policy Center that translate the science and practice of threat assessment for use by local school and community teams. Participants in the training include educators, administrators, law enforcement, mental health, public health, and human resource professionals around the state of Nebraska. [Learn more about the school safety initiative.](#)



CENTER NEWS

Christina Jones Joins the PPC

In June, Christina Jones joined the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center as an Administrative Support Associate. Chris received her B.A. in Human Relations and an M.A. in Management both from Doane College. She has over a decade of administrative support experience in higher education, has developed and taught online courses, and has worked with distance students to complete their master's capstone. Chris works with our researchers to make sure daily operations are running smoothly, so we are thrilled to welcome her to the Public Policy Center.



Research Specialist Teri Perkins Retires after Seventeen Years

Teri Perkins joined the Public Policy Center in October 2001 and has been a respected and productive member of our staff for 17 years. As a Research Specialist at the Center, she worked on projects in a variety of areas and assisted with financial reporting for the PPC. We wish her the best with her retirement!



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**Our mission is to link policy
with research, process &
practice.**

We team with policymakers &
other stakeholders to actively
inform public policy & put
knowledge into action.



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