

January 2023

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska | PUBLIC POLICY
CENTER



POLICYTALK

The Latest in Public Policy
Center News and Events

Featured News

A Year in Review: What We've Been Up To in 2022



During 2022 our staff have been busier than ever. Center efforts were aimed at community engagement, improving school safety, addressing behavioral health concerns such as substance use, preventing targeted violence, preventing suicide, and expanding training opportunities around the state. A few highlights include:

- **Substance Use Prevention:** Partnering with Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to orchestrate a statewide substance use prevention campaign. Conducted trainings for 196 unique participants representing 44 agencies at five virtual substance use prevention trainings.
- **Preventing Targeted Violence:** Received funding from Nebraska Emergency Management Agency via the State Homeland Security Grant Program to design and deliver a program for clinicians and threat assessment teams in Nebraska. Currently, there are 235 approved members from

49 counties and eight Educational Service Units for the NE K-12 threat assessment teams.

- **School Mental Health:** Awarded a Mental Health Awareness Training grant from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to meet the mental health needs of NE K-12 students with Psychological First Aid training for Schools. Over the course of the project, 1,250 NE educators will be trained.
- **Community Engagement:** In collaboration with the Lincoln Community Foundation, we released the 2022 Lincoln Vital Signs Report in July, which looks at how Lincoln is addressing community needs as well as how we align with other cities and outcomes.

Visit our website to **learn more** about our latest projects and partnerships.

Partnership with Department of Health and Human Services Focuses on Substance Use Prevention



The **University of Nebraska Public Policy Center** is working closely with the **Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services** on a statewide substance use prevention campaign. The campaign features Nebraskans from around the state telling their stories about why they choose to live substance free. It includes print media, video, and television advertisements, as well as window clings and posters to be distributed around the state. The

'Choose You' video campaign received over 600,000 impressions on YouTube, and the digital audio campaign made over one million impressions. Since August 2022, Center researchers have conducted trainings for prevention professionals on topics related to substance use. In total, the trainings have had 196 unique participants representing 44 agencies and organizations at five virtual substance use prevention trainings. This January, project partners and representatives from all of Nebraska's state behavioral health regions convened for a virtual summit to review the goals and objectives of the campaign and receive training on how to implement the 'Choose You' marketing campaign statewide.

Learn more.

Washington D.C. Professional Enrichment Academy Now Accepting Student Applicants

The Washington D.C. Professional Enrichment Academy (DCPEA) is a free value-added program for students who have already obtained summer internships in the D.C.

Washington D.C. Professional Enrichment Academy



metro area. DCPEA participants meet once a week in the evenings to connect with each other and NU alumni who work in one of the world's premier capital cities. More information about the DCPEA program is available [here](#) and includes a Summer 2023 information session recording. Applications for Summer 2023 are open until April 15.

"I am very grateful that this program was recommended to me and I had the opportunity to go on this amazing journey with you all. I had a much more complete experience of D.C. than if I had been out here on my own."

**—UNMC Medical Student
& DCPEA participant**

Events



Preventing Targeted Violence

DR. MARIO SCALORA

Feb. 21 in Lincoln, Feb. 22 in Elkhorn

Dr. Scalora will be conducting trainings in Lincoln and Elkhorn, Nebraska for threat assessment team members and clinicians charged with completing violence risk assessments. Attendees should have working knowledge of behavioral threat assessment principles and practices, because this training builds on that information (the instruction level is advanced). This training will provide 5.25 continuing education credits related to the diagnosis and treatment of major mental disorders. Credits will be awarded to participants who attend the entire training. [Learn more.](#)

**Register
Today**



Hiring a Postdoctoral Research Fellow

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICANTS

The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center is now hiring a Postdoctoral Research Fellow to join our targeted violence research team. Apply by March 31, 2023 using the link below or visit our [careers page](#) for more details about each position.

Apply
Today

Partner Highlight

Safe2Help Has a Positive Impact on Nebraska Schools

The issue of safety in schools is one of the most important issues faced by students, parents, and staff in our communities. A product of the partnership between the Nebraska Department of Education and Boys Town, the Safe2Help Hotline is an anonymous way for individuals to report concerning



behaviors. Our team is now actively engaged in an evaluation of the effectiveness of Safe2Help funded by a grant from the National Institute of Justice. More and more schools around the state are adopting the helpline to give students a safe and anonymous way to report anything that causes them concern or may be a sign of a larger issue. The aim is to prevent acts of violence or other safety issues in schools. "It's a really great resource for our schools," says Tom Szlanda, the director of operations and human resources for Hastings Public Schools. [Read more.](#)

Center News

Help us Welcome Our Newest Team Members

The Center has welcomed several new team members to our staff.

Sarah Erdmann joined our research team as a research coordinator. A recent graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, she earned her degrees in psychology and criminology/criminal justice.



We welcomed **Catherine Wilkins** as our administrative support associate. She recently earned her bachelor's degree in business administration and human resource management from Wayne State College.



Charalampos Mavroutsikos joined our team as a research specialist. He earned his PhD in Agricultural Economics from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is experienced in designing and implementing applied research projects with particular emphasis on survey and experimental design, choice modeling, and data management and analysis.



Honorable Mentions

- A 2022 Nebraska Space Use Survey looks at how the pandemic impacted attitudes about remote working and office space. PPC faculty fellow and director of the Bureau of Business Research at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, **Dr. Eric Thompson**, co-authored the survey results. **See the Report.**
- On Jan. 18, **Dr. Craig Allen** presented on "Regional Perspectives on Climate Tipping Points and Cascading Impacts" for the Great Plains at an online workshop sponsored by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Dr. Allen is a faculty fellow at the PPC and a University of Nebraska-Lincoln scientist specializing in environmental resilience.

Community Resources

Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention

Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention is working to decrease the suicide rate among young people by sharing resources on their website for people currently dealing with anxiety and worry. During difficult or challenging times, mental health is especially important.



Visit Our
Website

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Call or Text 988

Free 24/7 confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

Nebraska Family Helpline

1-888-866-8660

Free 24/7 confidential support for all Nebraskans.

Rural Response Hotline

1-800-464-0258

(M-F from 8AM-5PM)

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