

January 2026



# POLICYTALK

The Latest in Public Policy  
Center News and Events

## Featured News

### The Public Policy Center's Impact in 2025

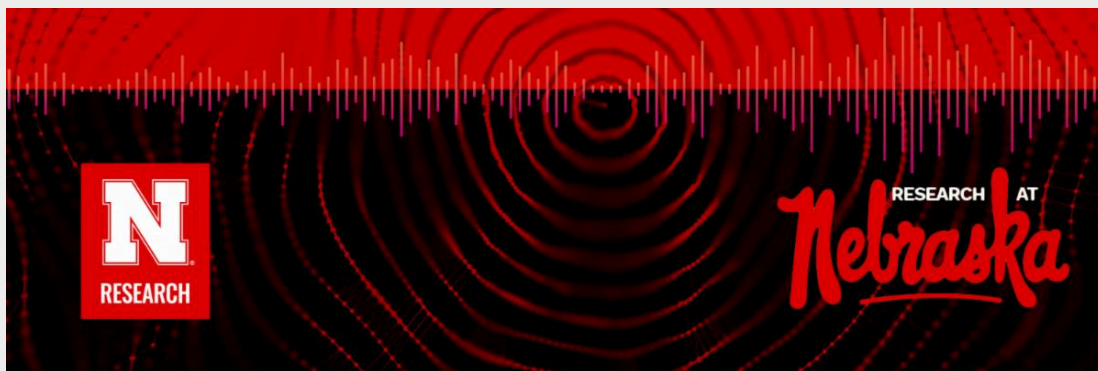


Each January, we take a look back at the impact we've had around the state during the previous year. In 2025, our team was hard at work on a variety of projects around the state. Here are just a few highlights of those impacts:

- 44 proposals submitted (11 additional in development)
- 34 projects awarded
- 100 projects supported
- Projects reaching 93 Nebraska counties
- 5,596 participants in continuing education trainings
- 116 continuing education credits awarded
- 7,372 educators trained in suicide safe schools

We look forward to continuing to serve Nebraskans in 2026 with projects aimed at improving lives through efforts focused on suicide prevention, school safety, violence prevention, behavioral health, and community improvement. Learn more about our projects at [ppc.unl.edu/focus-areas](https://ppc.unl.edu/focus-areas).

### The Nebraska Research Report Highlights 2025 Awards for Research



The Nebraska Research Report is an annual publication produced by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and the University of Nebraska System, showcasing faculty, staff, and student accomplishments in discovery, innovation, and creativity, highlighting research impact, economic development, and major awards. See the [full 2025 report](#).

The 2025 awards for University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (NUPPC) researchers and faculty fellows include the following:

Awards of \$1 Million to \$4,999,999

- **Nebraska Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Project:** \$2,265,000 - Denise Bulling & Stacey Hoffman - NUPPC.
- **Global Centers: Food Innovation and Diversification to Advance the Bioeconomy:** \$2,000,000 - Lisa PytlikZillig, NUPPC; and other collaborators...
- **Supporting School Threat Assessment Teams Via the Implementation of a Statewide Anonymous Reporting System:** \$1,281,919 - Mario Scalora & Denise Bulling - NUPPC

There were over 30 other NUPPC highlighted awards of \$250,000 to \$999,999. View the expanded list of [NUPPC's 2025 awards](#).

## New Release

The **Nebraska Suicide Deaths Dashboard** is now available online!



Developed in partnership with Nebraska DHHS Division of Public Health through the Nebraska Violent Death Reporting System (NEVDRS), this interactive dashboard provides a demographic overview of suicide deaths in Nebraska and allows users to explore trends by year, sex, race and ethnicity, age range, education level, and geography. The dashboard is designed to support data-to-action suicide prevention planning, decision-making, and public awareness efforts across the state.

[Explore the dashboard](#)

# Events

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## Homelessness Among Youth and Young Adults

with Brittany Brakenhoff, Angela Gebhardt, & Sarah Cruz



**Virtual: Via Zoom**

February 24, 2026

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. (Central)

This training session will provide a foundational understanding of youth homelessness in Nebraska. The training focuses on prevalence, common risk factors, treatment challenges, and evidence-based clinical approaches. [Full Youth Homelessness training details.](#)

**Register for Youth Homelessness Training**

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## Violence Risk Assessment (VRA) Workshop

with Dr. Mario Scalora

### In-person:

Room 201A, Bldg. 22  
Swanson Conference Center  
Omaha, NE 68111

March 17, 2026

9:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m. (Central)



This free workshop will enhance and promote statewide clinical expertise in violence risk and threat assessment in Nebraska and help practitioners address risk assessment and management issues in their clinical activity.

**Register for VRA Workshop**

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## Practical (Basic) Behavioral Threat Assessment

with Dr. Mario Scalora & Dr. Denise Bulling

### Virtual via Zoom:

March 19, 2026

8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. (Central)

7:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. (Mountain)



This one-day virtual workshop is designed to provide practical information to guide implementation of behavioral threat assessment in a variety of settings (e.g., schools, communities). Note: All participants are required to complete the brief online course "Intro to Principles of BTAM" prior to attending this workshop. It takes 1.5 hours to complete the three modules of the online course. [Take the prerequisite course.](#)

**Register for BTAM Training**

## **Lunch & Learn Series: Workforce Resilience for Organizations**

### **Virtually Via Zoom**

**Time (all):** 12 - 12:30 p.m. (Central) / 11-11:30 a.m. (Mountain)

#### **Dates:**

- Leadership Qualities Wed., January 21, 2026 - **Completed**
- Organizational Practices - Wed., March 18, 2026
- Workforce Temperature - Wed., May 20, 2026
- Workplace Culture - Wed., June 17, 2026

Join this free Lunch & Learn Series with four sessions to take a deeper dive into each of the four pillars that support workplace resilience. Learn more about [Resilience for Organizations.](#)

**Register for Upcoming Workforce Resilience Sessions**

## **Center News**

### **Exceptional IT Support Recognized with Applause Award**



Congratulations to Matt Luther on being awarded the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Nebraska College of Arts and Sciences Applause Award for being an exceptional employee and going above and beyond as an Information Technology Specialist. Matt works at the UNL Center on Children, Families, and the Law (UNL-CCFL) and the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center. *Photo attributed to UNL-CCFL.*

### **Research Manager Defends Dissertation for Anthropology Doctorate**

Research Manager Kurt Mantonya completed his PhD [dissertation](#) defense for an anthropology doctorate with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln at the end of November 2025. Congratulations, Dr. Mantonya!



**University of Nebraska  
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