

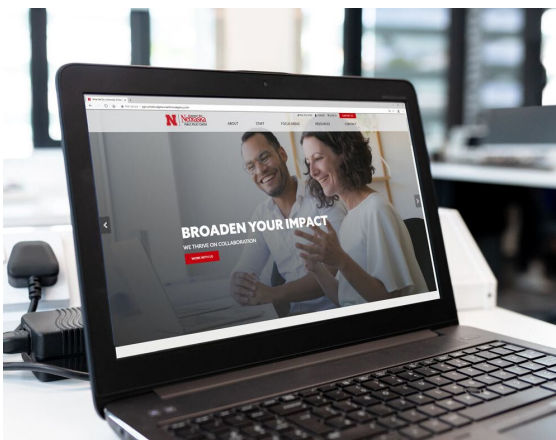
# POLICY TALK

The Latest in Public Policy Center News and Events



## Featured News

### Public Policy Center Unveils Brand New Website!



This month, the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center is proud to unveil our newly redesigned website. Our new website highlights the Center's impact, in Nebraska and beyond, through our partnerships and collaborations with organizations, fellow researchers, and policymakers. A primary aim of the site is to show the broad range of issues where our staff

bring data-focused research and evaluative methods to positively impact policy and practice. A key new feature is our resources page, which provides a searchable database of faculty publications, reports, toolkits, and other deliverables related to a wide array of

projects. We invite you to [visit our new site](#) to see some of the exciting new features and stay up-to-date with the latest happenings and events here at the PPC.

## **Public Policy Center Continuing Work to Prevent Suicide in Nebraska**

COVID-19 is heaping job worries, disrupted family traditions and more isolation on top of normal stress and anxiety. For Nebraskans, there is help. The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, in partnership with state agencies, has a number of ongoing projects to help people in crisis and prevent suicidal behavior.



Nebraska mental health and prevention partners took steps to address the increased amount of stress in the state from widespread flooding in 2019, and those efforts have continued and adapted to the pandemic, said Quinn Lewandowski, a research specialist at the Public Policy Center and a leader in the Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition. "Thanks to the generous support of funders that see the importance of supporting our residents in blue and gray sky days, we have been successful in increasing collaborations, restricting means of suicide, reducing stigma, fostering conversations about mental health and suicide, and providing skills for people to directly intervene when someone they encounter is contemplating suicide" Lewandowski said. Read the full story in [Nebraska Today](#).

## **Center Provides Threat Assessment Training and Expertise to Nebraska Schools and State Agencies**



Center Director Dr. Mario Scalora and Senior Research Director Denise Bulling provided advanced threat management strategies training to more than 50 educational and law enforcement professionals from K-12 schools around Nebraska on January 13. The Public Policy Center (PPC) is partnering with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) to provide training for K-12 public schools around Nebraska. The training is

sponsored by local Educational Service Units in all areas of the state and features guidelines created by the PPC that translate the science and practice of threat assessment for use by local school and community teams. It aims to help schools deal with various security challenges by providing training skills related to threat assessment, case management over time, and management coordination strategies with community resources. In addition to working towards safer schools in Nebraska, Drs. Bulling and Scalora also serve as threat assessment experts, providing support to multiple state and

federal agencies.

**Follow us to see the latest news and events.**



## Spotlight of the Month

### **Two-Year State Opioid Response Program Renewed**

Last month, Nebraska was awarded a second Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant to continue the Nebraska State Opioid Response (SOR) program. The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (NUPPC) serves as the program evaluator for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and system partners to implement comprehensive evidence-based programs addressing opioid misuse and overdose in Nebraska. The project lead at the Public Policy Center is Denise Bulling, senior research director, and the team includes Khadijah Davis, Megan Allen, and Rosa Vinas-Racionero.



**Next Time:** the February issue of Policy Talk will include a new spotlight feature about an ongoing project.

## Upcoming Events

### **Upcoming Training Focuses on Recovery and Relapse in Co-Occurring Disorders**

This training, presented by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health and the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, will feature Dr. David Mee-Lee speaking on "Recovery and Relapse in Co-Occurring Disorders: Definitions, Dilemmas, and Discrepancies." Recovery in both substance use disorders and mental illness is not always a smooth path. Psychiatrists and other mental health clinicians can often view



recovery and relapse for psychiatric disorders differently from substance use disorders. This presentation will discuss what we really mean by recovery in substance use and mental health treatment.

**Location: Zoom Meeting**

**Date/Time: Wed., February 3rd, 1:00pm-4:00pm CDT**

Application has been made for 2.75 APA and criminal justice continuing education hours. Participants must attend the entire webinar to receive continuing education credits.

Register today at [go.unl.edu/co-occurring-disorders](https://go.unl.edu/co-occurring-disorders).

*The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (NUPPC) is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The NUPPC maintains responsibility for this program and its content. This training is hosted by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.*

**Register  
Today**

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## Center News

### Faculty Fellow Discusses Resilience in Agriculture

In December, Craig Allen, director of the Center for Resilience in Agricultural Working Landscapes spoke to RFD-TV about new initiatives to study resilience and strengthen agricultural ecosystems here in Nebraska. Dr Allen, a faculty fellow at the PPC, discusses "ecological resilience and what happens when a system or landscape is pushed past a threshold and actually collapses." With respect to agriculture, Dr. Allen explains that "Resilience seeks to guarantee output under a broad range of conditions, versus optimization approaches that seek to maximize output under rarely seen ideal conditions." [See the full interview.](#)



### Welcome to the Team, Liz Green!

In December, Elizabeth "Liz" Green joined the Public Policy Center staff as a grant coordinator. Liz Green received her B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Prior to joining the PPC, Liz worked at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. At the PPC, she will be assisting researchers with

*Welcome*  
**TO THE TEAM**



developing and submitting grant proposals and the overall management of awarded funds.

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## Community Resources

### Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention and The Nebraska Suicide Prevention Lifeline

**Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention** is working to decrease the suicide rate among young people by sharing resources on their [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for people currently dealing with anxiety and worry. During difficult or challenging times, mental health is especially important. **Individuals needing help can contact The Nebraska Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.** The lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention, and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

### Nebraska Rural Response Helpline and Nebraska Family Helpline Provide Help During COVID

The **Nebraska Strong Recovery Project** is working to help those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic by sharing resources on the [Nebraska Strong website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#). **Individuals in need of help can contact the Rural Response Hotline at 1-800-464-0258** (M-F from 8AM-5PM) or the **Nebraska Family Helpline at 1-888-866-8660** (24 Hours/Day, 7 Days/Week). The hotlines provide free and confidential support for all Nebraskans experiencing difficulty during the events surrounding COVID-19.



#### CONTACT US

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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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