



# POLICYTALK

The Latest in Public Policy  
Center News and Events

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May 2022

## Featured News

### Suicide Prevention, Awareness, and Trends Featured in Local News

Disasters can significantly impact people's mental health. Senior research specialist Quinn Lewandowski spoke with the Lincoln Journal Star about how crucial suicide prevention and awareness is especially around disasters like the pandemic. As Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition's president, Lewandowski helped roll out the new app called My Companion, designed to help youth manage their mental health and prevent suicide.



Additionally, the Public Policy Center is collaborating on a shortened hotline meant to ease the process of asking for help for those with thoughts of suicide. This new, three-digit suicide hotline (988) will be introduced this summer to replace the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255). [Learn more.](#)

## Events

### 20th Annual Great Plains Disaster Behavioral Health Conference

The **2022 Great Plains Disaster Behavioral Health Conference** is planned for July 29 in Omaha, Nebraska. This year's conference focuses on post-disaster recovery and offers a special pre-conference

workshop for clinicians with Dr. Jessica Hamblen. Planned speakers include Dr. Jessica Hamblen (National Center for PTSD and Dartmouth Geisel School of Medicine), Dr. Rebecca Wyoske (UNMC), Christian Burgess (Vibrant Emotional Health and Disaster Distress Helpline), and Crayton Jirovsky (Mental Health and Substance Abuse Therapist).

**Learn More.**



## THE PPC IS HIRING!

The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center is now hiring a research specialist to assist with current and future funded projects. Accepted applicants will join a diverse, interdisciplinary research team within the PPC that engages in a variety of research and consultation activities involving private and public sector partners.

Interested applicants should apply for the research specialist position on or before **May 31 (apply here)**.



## Zero Suicide Academy



Senior leaders of health and behavioral health organizations from around Nebraska have the chance to gather virtually in June for training with the most aspirational of goals: zero suicides. For the second time in a row, the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center is organizing a Zero Suicide Academy as a two-day training intended to help these organizations find gaps in services. The Center will be tracking outcomes as part of the Garrett Lee Smith grant.

## Center News

**Assisting Prevention of Domestic Violence Extremism in Nebraska**

The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center was awarded a \$345,000 grant by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency to assist in the prevention of domestic violent extremism in Nebraska. The grant is among those recognized as top sponsored awards for March 2022 by the UNL Office of Research and Economic Development [here](#). Director **Mario Scalora** and Senior Research Director **Denise Bulling** worked on the grant.

## Policy Scholars Undergraduate Program Mentors Students in Policy & Research

Our first class of Policy Scholars just wrapped up this May with a talented group of individuals: Jenna Prochnau, Claire Jumper, Will Green, and Brandon Collins. Focused on sparking students' interest in policy-based work, each student was paired with a mentor to help them become more engaged and confident about their place in policy and research. This month, Claire Jumper will continue her journey at the PPC as an undergraduate research assistant. [Learn more.](#)

## Hundreds of Professionals Trained at April's Violence Risk Assessment Workshops

**Dr. Mario Scalora** and **Dr. Lynn Van Male** lead workshops that aimed to enhance and promote statewide clinical expertise in violence risk and threat assessment in Nebraska in April. Over 300 professionals were trained across the workshops in Kearney (April 12), Elkhorn (April 14), and via virtual training (April 13).

## Honorable Mentions

- The May issue of *Alternatives to the High Cost of Litigation* newsletter features the article "**Never Assume What Your Clients Know About Mediation & Arbitration**," co-authored by Blankley (UNL College of Law), Votruba & Bartz (UNL Law-Psych Program), & **Lisa PytlikZillig** of the PPC.
- **In National News:** Faculty fellow **Eric Thompson**, economics, director of the Bureau of Business Research, appeared in an April 1 **New York Times article** on Nebraska's low unemployment rate, which he said might be caused by the labor market rebalancing.
- **In National News:** Faculty fellow **Mark Svoboda**, director of the drought center, appeared in an April 27 **NBC News story** on how dry conditions in Nebraska will intensify wildfire season.
- Faculty fellows **Leen-Kiat Soh** and **Eve Brank** were awarded named professorships from the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. [Learn more.](#)

# 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 1-800-273-8255

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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