



# POLICY TALK

The Latest in Public Policy  
Center News and Events

NOVEMBER 2021

## Featured News



### Nebraska Strong Project Continues Through December

The **Nebraska Strong Recovery Project** is continuing to provide outreach support for Nebraskans coping during the pandemic through late December. The project is a collaboration of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, and the state's six behavioral health regions. [Read more.](#)

## Events

### Working with Mental Health and Criminogenic Factors in Justice-Involved Populations

FREE ON ZOOM



### Part 1: Thurs, Dec. 9 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. (Central)

A two-part training series with Dr. Mark Lukin will provide Mental Health and Criminal Justice Professionals with an integrated approach to dealing with consumers with mental health and substance use disorders who are involved in the Criminal Justice system. [Learn More.](#)

Register  
Today

## PPC Works with Vibrant Emotional Health to Document Transition of Call Centers



Earlier this year, the **PPC** collaborated with **Vibrant Emotional Health** to document the rapid transition of 200 call centers around the U.S. to remote work during the pandemic. The PPC served as research lead on online surveys, interviews, and resource reviews to assess operational challenges, communication obstacles, and self-care practices during the transition period.



## Political Map Drawing: Insights and Lessons from Nebraska's Redistricting Process

FREE ON ZOOM / UNL CITY CAMPUS



**Tuesday, Dec. 7  
12 p.m. – 1 p.m. (Central)**

Every ten years in state capitals across the country, lawmakers undertake the constitutional requirement to redraw district boundaries given population shifts. State Senators Wendy DeBoer and Matt Williams join University of Nebraska-Lincoln political scientist John Hibbing for a discussion of Nebraska's redistricting experience, and its implications for the state and nation. [Learn More](#).

Register  
Today

## Partner Highlight

### Dr. Jolene Palmer - School Safety



Dr. Jolene Palmer, School Safety Director for the Nebraska Department of Education, has been a longtime partner of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center. Over the past year, Dr. Palmer and her team, along with Dr. Mario Scalora and Dr. Denise Bulling, have been leading efforts to provide threat assessment training to Nebraska schools.

This collaborative effort is providing virtual K-12 school team training around the state and working with the Safe2Help reporting line, which was made possible by the Nebraska Legislature. These efforts aim to help schools form or enhance teams focused on identifying, assessing, and managing the risk/threat of targeted violence posed by students, staff, and community members towards the school community.

Read more about how Dr. Palmer is working with the PPC to improve school safety. [go.unl.edu/partner2](http://go.unl.edu/partner2)

## Center News

### Center Welcomes New Research Staff

This fall, we had several new staff members join our team. **Luisa Del Castillo** joined the PPC as a research coordinator. Previously, Luisa worked as an Administrative Assistant for Region V Systems after graduating from law school in Mexico and working for the State Congress for seven years. **Lindsey Duke** joins us as a senior research specialist. Lindsey previously worked as an attorney in Texas and a college instructor at Texas Tech. She completed her PhD in business management this Summer and her recent work focuses on organizational management and qualitative research methods.

### Faculty Fellow Addresses Climate Resilience Issues for Agriculture

University of Nebraska Public Policy Center faculty fellow **Dr. Craig Allen**, a professor in the UNL School of Natural Resources and director of UNL's Center for Resilience in Agricultural Working Landscapes, is teaming up with Dr. Tala Awada, associate dean and director of UNL Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources' Agricultural Research Division and a professor of Plant Ecophysiology. Their collaboration aims to develop innovative research approaches and an international network to address issues of climate resilience for agriculture in North America. [Read more](#).

### Center Staff Facilitate THIRA Workshop at Memorial Stadium

Center staff facilitated a Threat & Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) workshop with Lincoln/Lancaster County this Fall. The event was hosted by University of Nebraska-Lincoln athletics at Memorial Stadium. Center researchers are partnering with Emergency Management and the Athletics Department to ensure that the University has effective THIRA, particularly in relation to game day events.

## Preparing Parents to Engage in Special Education

Drs. Jacqueline Huscroft-D'Angelo, **Jennifer Farley**, Alex Trout, Kristin Duppong Hurley, and Matthew Lambert have a publication about preparing parents to engage in the special education process, which has recently been accepted to *Exceptionality*, a Special Education Journal.

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## Honorable Mentions

- In October, senior research specialist **Tarik Abdel-Monem** presented on the use of climate data by micropolitan communities in the Lower Missouri River Basin at the American Association of Geographers 2021 Annual Meeting for the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain Region. Co-authors include Martha Shulski (Nebraska State Climatologist), Natalie Umphlett (UNL School of Natural Resources), Zhenghong Tang (UNL Community and Regional Planning), and Frank Uhlarik (City of Lincoln).
- Senior research director, **Dr. Denise Bulling**, spoke at the Nebraska School Safety and Security Summit about the difference between a report line and mental health crisis line on Oct. 19.
- **Tarik Abdel Monem** led a presentation on research methods and topics with Muslim communities at Fatoni University, with international students from countries such as Thailand. The event was hosted by the Faculty of Education at Fatoni University.
- On November 16, **Dr. Denise Bulling** provided the keynote address to the Region 3 American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) in Indianapolis, Indiana. She highlighted strategies to prevent and manage behavioral volatility related to the pandemic.
- We welcomed undergraduate research assistant, **Ashlyn Dickmeyer**. Ashlyn is majoring in health sciences and public policy through an individualized program of study at UNL and serves on the executive team for the club MEDLIFE.
- We welcomed two student copy editors to our staff. **Ellie Woody** is a Spanish and political science major and works at the writing center at UNL. **Megan Buffington** is majoring in journalism with a minor in political science at UNL.
- Congrats to **Aline Abayo**, on her summer internship with Land O'Lakes Inc. As a research plot technician, Aline learned farm equipment preparation and operations, managing research plots, and maintaining the data collection sites.

## Community Resources

### Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention

**Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention** is working to decrease the suicide rate among

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

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](#)

## Nebraska Strong Recovery Project

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. The hotlines provide free and confidential support for all Nebraskans experiencing difficulty during the events surrounding COVID-19.



[Visit Our Website](#)

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

## Rural Response Hotline

**1-800-464-0258**  
(M-F from 8AM-5PM)

## Nebraska Family Helpline

**1-888-866-8660**  
Free 24/7 confidential support for all Nebraskans.

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