



# POLICYTALK

The Latest in Public Policy  
Center News and Events

SEPTEMBER 2021

## Featured News



### Nebraska Rolls Out Statewide Suicide Prevention Campaign

The "Nebraska Needs You" statewide suicide prevention campaign is working with suicide prevention groups around the state to help raise awareness and help people know the warning signs for suicide. The campaign originated from Nebraska Extension's Rural Family Stress and Wellness Workgroup after the historic 2019 Nebraska floods. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nebraska Extension's Holly Hatton-Bowers and PPC's Quinn Lewandowski spoke about continuing the campaign utilizing existing resources to increase the campaign reach. In honor of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, a new statewide multimedia campaign led by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health is intending "to

## Events

### THE PPC IS HIRING!



The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center is now hiring a post-doctoral research fellow 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 post-doctoral position on or before **September 30 (apply here)**.

*Note: Position will remain open until filled, so interested applicants can apply as long as the post is active.*

remind Nebraskans that there is help and hope readily available all across the state, no matter how bleak things might seem."

**Read more about the campaign.**



## **School Safety Basic Threat Assessment Efforts Continue**

The Public Policy Center and the Nebraska Department of Education are continuing their efforts to provide threat assessment training to Nebraska schools. This virtual K-12 school team threat assessment training supports the Safe2Help report hotline, which has been funded by the Nebraska Legislature. It aims 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. To date, more than 1,100 individuals from school districts around the state have completed the training. **Learn More.**

## **GREAT PLAINS ATAP CONFERENCE**



**Great Plains**  
CHAPTER

The 2021 Great Plains Association of Threat Assessment Professionals Conference is October 7 & 8. This year's theme is Multidisciplinary Threat Assessment Teams: Stability in Crisis. You can attend in person or online. **Learn More** about the conference.

**Register  
Today**

## **Partner Highlight**

### **Working to Extend Mental Health Access to Nebraskans Through SAMHSA Funded Grant**

Beginning this month, the Public Policy Center will be featuring partner highlights to shine a light on some of the impactful work being done by our project partners and collaborators.



Our first partner highlight is **Kerri Peterson** of Region V Systems. Kerri is project director of the SAMHSA Nebraska Disaster Recovery Adults Project, which was awarded in April of 2020 to Region V Systems. The project serves adults in 23 Nebraska counties with a presidential disaster declaration of individual assistance from the 2019 flooding. As of June 20, 2021, the effort has made a total of 9,100 crisis counseling contacts and distributed a total of 66,192 project materials.

Read more about how this grant-funded effort has helped expand the capacity of services and mental health treatment for Nebraskans. [go.unl.edu/partner1](https://go.unl.edu/partner1)

## Center News

### Center Welcomes New Research Staff

We have several new staff members joining our team this month. **Kurt Mantonya** joins us as a senior research specialist. Previously, Kurt served with Nebraska Extension as a rural prosperity Nebraska educator. **Taylor Smith**, a graduate student in the Public Administration program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, joins us as a research specialist. **Dylan Saunders**, who previously worked as a program analyst with the Nebraska Department of Corrections, joins us as our new research coordinator.

### Dr. Sarah Michaels Named Fulbright Canada Distinguished Research Chair

Congratulations to **Dr. Sarah Michaels**, professor of Political Science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a University of Nebraska Public Policy Center faculty fellow, on being named Fulbright Canada Distinguished Research Chair in Environmental Science at Carleton University to study flood management. [Read more.](#)

### Article Looking at Teacher Perspectives Published by Journal of At-Risk Issues

**Dr. Jennifer Farley** from the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, Jacqueline Huscroft-D'Angelo, Kristin Duppong Hurley, and Alex Trout, from the Nebraska Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders, and Angelique Aitken at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, have a publication about Teacher Perspectives on Information Sharing and Parent Knowledge of Special Education, which has been accepted to the Journal of At-Risk Issues.

## Honorable Mentions

- This month, **Dr. Mario Scalora** assumes his role as Treasurer of the National Association of Threat Assessment Professionals.
- Senior research specialist, **Dr. Lisa PytlikZillig**, has been invited to join a roundtable breakfast for "What the Public's Lack of Understanding of Alternative Dispute Resolution means for practice and ethics." The event is presented by the Association for Conflict Resolution-Great New York Chapter and CUNY Dispute Resolution Center at John Jay College.
- **Dr. Denise Bulling** participated in a roundtable for the Nebraska Mental Health and Aging Coalition to discuss the role of the PPC and ways participants can have a voice and help shape federal, state, and local policy.
- Congratulations to **Liz Green** on being accepted into the Master's of Public Administration graduate program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.
- Congratulations to **Dr. Lindsey Duke**, our newest research specialist, on receiving the Jerry S. Rawls Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award at Rawls College of Business at Texas Tech University.
- Welcome to our newest undergraduate students, **Sophie Brendel** and **Bhagya Pushkaran**. Sophie is majoring in psychology and management and Bhagya is majoring in political science and mathematics with a minor in leadership and communications, both at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
- Congratulations to undergraduate research assistant, **Zack Cheek**, on being selected as a University of Nebraska-Lincoln homecoming royalty finalist.

## 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 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](#)

## 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.

**University of Nebraska  
Public Policy Center**

215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 401  
Lincoln, NE 68588  
402.472.5678 | [ppc.unl.edu](http://ppc.unl.edu)

**Connect with us**

