

MONTHLY UPDATE



IDAHO POLICY INSTITUTE, FEBRUARY 2020

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

February is always a busy month for the Idaho Policy Institute (IPI). It is the month when the work for the Legislature is due and we are generally doing a lot of presentations. This February was no exception. A couple of examples; our work on the Statewide survey was distributed broadly as Dr. Jeff Lyons and I spent time on Boise Public Radio and other outlets talking about the survey. Matthew May, Cheong Kim, and Vanessa Fry presented our report on property tax to the Boise City Council, and Vanessa Fry and I participated in the Idaho Association of Counties conference. We are also actively working with the U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Boise, and regional Complete Count Committees to make sure the census goes off without a hitch. Lantz McGinnis-Brown and Gabe Osterhout created a [census prediction map](#) that is gaining a lot of interest with our community partners and should prove instrumental in helping the Census Bureau prioritize its resources. We also have some exciting projects that are starting, including our site diagnostic visits for Bluum and the transportation mode shift project with the City of Boise. A project in collaboration with Valley Regional Transit called [City Go](#) is also in full swing. Finally, Vanessa Fry and I both served on Boise Mayor McLean's transition teams for housing and transportation, respectively. It was an honor to be asked and I am excited that IPI's reputation as an objective source for information is leading to these great opportunities. I'm definitely excited for what March has to offer.

- DR. GREG HILL

UPCOMING PROJECTS

- Diagnostic Site Visits Research Design (sponsor, Bluum)
- Affordable Housing Policy Analysis (sponsor, City of Boise)
- Annual City of Boise Resident Survey (sponsor, City of Boise)
- Transportation Mode Shift (sponsor, City of Boise)

ONGOING SPONSORED PROJECTS

- Charter School Program Evaluation (sponsor, Bluum)
- SAMHSA Treatment and Transitions Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho Health and Welfare)
- New Path Community Housing Evaluation (sponsor, City of Boise)
- Idaho's Transportation Infrastructure Funding (multiple supporters)

ONGOING UNSPONSORED PROJECTS

- Advancing Informal STEM Learning Pre-Pilot Survey
- Foster Care in Idaho
- Downtown Mobility Collaborative (City Go)
- US Census Complete Count Committee
- MPA Employer Needs Assessment

PROJECTS IN PROPOSAL STAGE

- Boise School District Pre-K Program Evaluation (sponsor, City of Boise or Boise School District)
- Systems for Action (sponsor, RWJF)
- AISL partnership with the Peregrine Fund (sponsor, NSF)
- Statewide Eviction Study in Collaboration with Idaho Press (un-sponsored)

PROJECTS CLOSING

- Property Tax Burden in Boise (sponsor, City of Boise)
- Statewide Survey
- OSBE 2020 Evaluations (sponsor, State Board of Education)
- Peer Cities Analysis (sponsor, City of Boise)

PROJECT UPDATE

PEER CITIES ANALYSIS

In an effort to engage best practices and standardize the process when comparing policies and procedures to other cities, the City of Boise partnered with IPI to conduct a research study that would report on relevant peer cities. The report produced details a selection process used and suggests a set of peer cities for use across City departments. The next steps for the peer cities analysis include creating an online dashboard and profiles of each peer city, automating the updating process for variables and conducting a service-level comparison across the peer cities.

STATEWIDE SURVEY

The fifth annual Idaho Public Policy Survey concluded and its results were disseminated. The survey shows that the state's residents remain optimistic about the state's economic future, continue to cite education as the top priority for the state legislature and are concerned about rapid growth. The annual statewide survey focuses on important issues facing Idaho, including growth, education, taxes, and the environment. The 2020 survey was conducted by IPI Director Greg Hill and School of Public Service Assistant Professor Jeffrey Lyons.

IDHW PROGRAM EVALUATION

In February, IPI concluded its first year as evaluator and produced the first annual report for the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's (IDHW) Treatment and Transitions Program evaluation. The program serves individuals with severe mental illness and/or co-occurring disorders who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability. The project is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). As the Project Evaluator, IPI oversees all evaluation activities and works closely with IDHW program staff to design data collection strategies, monitoring, and reporting to measure the program's ability to meet its stated goals and objectives, and inform IDHW's decisions for program improvement.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

IPI concluded its second-year evaluation in February in partnership with the Idaho State Board of Education. IPI evaluated three statewide programs: the College and Career Advisors and Student Mentor Program, the Literacy Intervention Program, and Advanced Opportunities Program.

MONTH IN REVIEW

A NIGHT AT NECKAR COFFEE

Vanessa Fry participated in an eviction and homelessness panel discussion on Jan. 30. The discussion focused on the Treasure Valley housing crisis and its impact on our community. The panel also included a person with lived experience of homelessness, and Jesse Tree Executive Director Ali Rabe.

IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Vanessa Fry and Greg Hill attended the Idaho Association of Counties Conference on Feb. 4. Vanessa Fry presented to the association's transportation committee about the institute's study on the state of transportation in Idaho, in collaboration with stakeholders across the Treasure Valley. The project will be completed in June.

Greg Hill moderated two panels at the conference: one on growth and another panel that provided legislative overview including questions on Medicaid, property tax, and public defense.

PUBLIC SERVICE

On Feb. 4, Governor Brad Little proclaimed Feb. 4 as Red Cross Day in the State of Idaho. At the event, Vanessa Fry donated blood at the Idaho State Capitol. Vanessa sits on the Board of Directors for the American Red Cross of Idaho.

The Boise State Shared Leadership program concluded its second annual pet drive benefiting the Idaho Humane Society. Thanks to campus generosity, the group donated 429 pounds of food (and counting!), as well as toys, blankets, beds, and more. In addition, the Humane Society reported that \$240 was also donated online with reference to the Shared Leadership drive. The drive was led by Tasha Smagula, Administrative Assistant at the Idaho Policy Institute.



BIG TENT RADIO EPISODE

Greg Hill and Jeffrey Lyons sat down with Jen Schneider and Charlie Hunt for their latest episode of Big Tent Radio. Big Tent Radio is a public affairs show that airs at 3:30 p.m. Thursdays on RadioBoise (89.9/93.5fm) and is hosted by School of Public Service faculty. On the Feb. 13 episode, they discussed the School of Public Service's Idaho Public Policy Survey, including what the results mean for current and future growth in the Treasure Valley and beyond.

[Listen to the Feb. 13 episode of Big Tent Radio on Soundcloud.](#)

PROPERTY TAX PRESENTATIONS

On Feb. 11, Matthew May, Cheong Kim, and Vanessa Fry presented the findings of IPI's City of Boise Property Tax Analysis study to the Boise City Council in a public work session at City Hall. The study addressed two research questions:

- 1) What are the drivers of property tax growth in Boise?
- 2) What policy decisions can impact commercial and residential tax burden?

Following that work session, the research team received a request to also present their findings to the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) Commission and staff. May, Kim, and Fry again presented their findings during a Feb. 19 work session at ACHD's headquarters.

MCALLISTER HALL DEFENDED HER THESIS

McAllister Hall, graduate assistant at the Idaho Policy Institute, successfully defended her thesis on Feb. 21 for her Masters of Arts in Education, Curriculum, and Instruction. McAllister is IPI's expert on educational policy and research and is on both the Charter School Program Evaluation project and the Diagnostic Site Visit project.



UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS PRESENTATION

On Feb. 20, Vanessa Fry presented the Ending Family Homelessness in Ada County, Idaho report to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. The report was originally a project conducted with the City of Boise.

IN THE NEWS

Feature: [“New member profile: Idaho Policy Institute”](#) *AUBER*. January 7, 2020.

Quote: [“We’re the fastest-growing state — again. Could that mean another Idaho voice in Congress?”](#) *Idaho Statesman*. January 15, 2020.

Survey Cite: [“What this new survey of Idahoans says about growth, California transplants and schools”](#) *Idaho Statesman*. February 1, 2020.

Survey Cite: [“Report: Idahoans split on breaching the four lower Snake River dams”](#) *The Spokesman Review*. February 9, 2020.

Project Cite: [“Analysis: Another thing we don’t know about Idaho’s young readers”](#) *IdahoEdNews*. February 20, 2020.



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