

The Institute of Public Policy & The Ferguson Commission

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Summary

The Ferguson Commission was appointed by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon in November of 2014 to conduct a “thorough, wide-ranging and unflinching study of the social and economic conditions that impede progress, equality and safety in the St. Louis region.” The death of Michael Brown Jr. on August 9, 2014 and the subsequent unrest in Ferguson prompted the Governor to form the Commission and local community members to answer his charge.

In April 2015, the Institute of Public Policy, Truman School of Public Affairs was contracted by the Ferguson Commission to provide data and policy analysis in support of the work of the Commission. The Institute worked with the Commission until December 2015 when the Commission sunset. At that time, the Commission handed over the responsibilities of implementation, monitoring and evaluation to a community-selected implementation organization.

Introduction

The Institute of Public Policy, Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri was contracted to provide data and policy analysis and support to the Ferguson Commission. The Institute supported specific data and policy analysis requests from the Commission to provide added capacity and vigor to the research-informed Commission process. The Institute also provided diverse consulting services, research support to Commissioners and staff and an in-depth evaluation of the Ferguson Commission process.

On September 14, 2015, the Ferguson Commission released its report, “*Forward Through Ferguson: A Path Toward Racial Equity.*” The report highlights the calls to action and the signature priorities of the Commission. The calls to action are grouped into four main categories: Justice for All, Youth at the Center, Opportunity to Thrive, and Racial Equity. The report was released in a digital-first format and can be accessed at: <http://forwardthroughferguson.org/>. The Ferguson Commission report is the result of months of community input, research, data gathering, expert testimony and thoughtful discussion. The Institute of Public Policy is proud to have played a role in the process and final product of the Ferguson Commission.



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The Ferguson Papers

IPP Scope of Work

The Institute provided the following services, support and products to the Ferguson Commission during their nine months of contracted service.

Administrative Support

- Attended weekly team meetings with the Ferguson Commission staff to set goals, assign tasks, align priorities and manage deliverables.
- Attended Ferguson Commission meetings and working group meetings to provide support to staff and facilitators, provide updates when required and to receive research requests.
- Consulted with the Commission through strategy meetings for the multiple stages of the Commission process including: prioritization of calls to action, transition to implementation and ongoing evaluation and monitoring.

Working Group and Staff Support

- Designed and implemented a strategy and methodology for supporting working groups through:
 - Data collection and analysis
 - Policy research and analysis
 - Literature review, examination of root causes and historical context
 - Identifying best practices and model programs
 - Determining the feasibility of proposed recommendations

Evaluation Planning, Support and Design

- Developed a strategy and designed an evaluation of the Ferguson Commission's entire process including community engagement activities. The Institute implemented the evaluation to measure performance and track outcomes.
- Worked with staff to outline a long term evaluation strategy for the recommendations of the Commission.
- Engaged with other evaluation resources and experts to facilitate the strategy and design of ongoing evaluation.

Policy Recommendation Support

- Managed the workflow related to prospective policy recommendations in the priority areas consistent with the charge of the Commission.

IPP Products

The Institute produced the following products during their contract with the Ferguson Commission:

- Racial and historical research for four issue areas:
 - Citizen-Law Enforcement Relations
 - Municipal Courts and Governance
 - Economic Opportunity
 - Education



- Research summaries for the Economic Opportunity and Inequity working group on the following topics:
 - Apprenticeship Programs
 - Arrears Forgiveness Programs
 - Children’s Development Accounts, Individual Development Accounts and Family Development Accounts Summaries
 - Community Reinvestment Act Summary
 - Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit Summary
 - Job Training Program Attributes
 - Minimum Wage Summary
 - Public Banking and Community Development Financial Institutions
 - Tax Credit Review Summary
 - Transitional Jobs Placement

- Research summaries for other topics as assigned:
 - Social Media
 - Collective Impact Models
 - Poverty Rates
 - Infant Mortality
 - Trauma-Informed Approach
 - Working Poor Definitions
 - Community Scorecard
 - Ongoing Evaluation and Monitoring

- Racial disparities indicators for the Ferguson Commission’s signature calls to action

- Produced the report *The Ferguson Commission: A Process Evaluation*, a document which provided an in-depth look at the Ferguson Commission process, detailed specific documentation of the process and highlighted metrics that were collected by the Commission to evaluate their work

Impact

This project provided the Institute of Public Policy a great opportunity to conduct work in line with the goals of the Institute: policy analysis and dissemination, research and data collection and outreach to practitioners. The Commission, staff and contractors were forced to work under a very aggressive timeline and were required to design and implement the strategy at the same time. Ultimately, high quality data, policy analysis and support was provided in a timely fashion to the working groups and Commission that improved their ability to strategically address the needs of the Commission and the community and craft research-informed calls to action. The Institute will release a special web publication series beginning in February 2016, highlighting some of the IPP’s Ferguson Commission products at ipp.missouri.edu.