

# Institute of Public Policy

Truman School of Government and Public Affairs  
University of Missouri–Columbia

Annual  
**Report**  
Fall 2021



# welcome



*Since its establishment within the Truman School,* the Institute of Public Policy has provided high value engagement, outreach, and academic, practice-centered research to the community and the state. IPP's research on projects such as the Department of Corrections Community Re-entry Initiative, the Missouri Preschool Development Grant, and the Missouri Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program evaluation has improved public policy in the state of Missouri.

IPP provides an opportunity for faculty and students to connect their research to the needs of the state and engage with community stakeholders. Through IPP, our faculty conduct research on important policy questions.

This includes projects on issues related to public policies that have far reaching impacts such as more coordinated early childhood education and Medicaid expansion. Many of the students in our Masters of Public Affairs and Ph.D. programs have worked in IPP as interns or as graduate student research assistants. For students in the Truman School, IPP has been an extremely valuable resource to learn skills to conduct applied research, manage projects, and communicate with clients from the public and nonprofit sector. Numerous graduates have told me that their experience as IPP interns or research assistants has been key to their career success in public policy and public administration.

IPP is an incredible resource for the Truman School, and we are so pleased to be a part of it.

*Cordially,  
Lael Keiser*

## *My first day as Director*

of MU's Institute of Public Policy was September 1, 2020. It has been quite a year! Before IPP, I was in MU's Department of Human Development and Family Science and, more recently, Nutrition and Exercise Physiology. I also served from 2016-2019 as Faculty Fellow in MU's Office of Research and Economic Development. My research centers on young children's health and development and policy approaches to child care. Currently, I'm studying preschoolers' understanding of number and ways to improve math learning environments.



My first year with IPP has been terrific. The staff are so capable; they did not skip a beat during the campus shut-down and transition to remote and hybrid work.

We successfully met our funders' expectations, established new campus collaborations, and took on expansive, multi-year projects. We broadened our capacity by adding more analysts to our team and welcomed a record-breaking sixteen graduate students this semester. Introducing students to the workings of government and public policy is essential to IPP's mission and we are pleased to be able to connect them with this real world experience. It has been a very rewarding first year.

I am honored to serve as Director, MU Institute of Public Policy. IPP has a strong reputation for thoughtful and rigorous evaluation and analysis. Together with IPP staff, I hope to expand our reach into activities with greater visibility and influence on how others think about, shape, and apply public policy.

*Best,  
Sara Gable*

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*The Institute of Public Policy conducts independent, non-partisan research and analysis to inform public policy and benefit all Missourians.*

**Accountability**— We value accountability to ensure careful evaluation and assessment of policy issues.

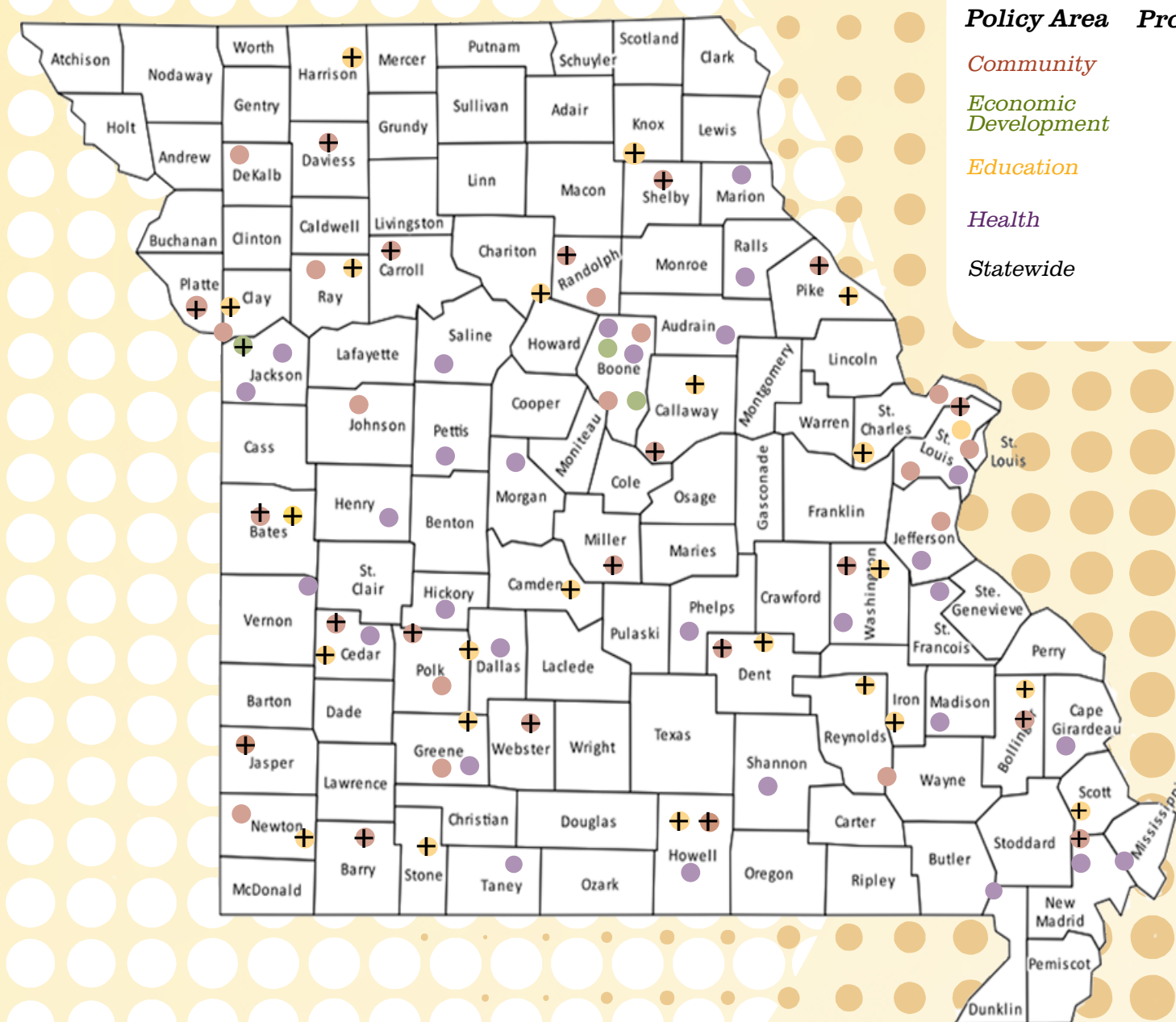
**Collaboration**— We value interdisciplinary collaboration among academic and government institutions to share the Institute’s talents and resources with the broader community.

**Engagement and Outreach**— We value engagement and outreach and are committed to sharing knowledge to promote understanding of public policy.

**Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity**— We are committed to inclusion, diversity, and equity in our organizational practices, research, and service delivery.

**Integrity**— We provide honest, complete, and professionally presented information with a commitment to ethical conduct.

**Research**— We value the advancement of knowledge about public policy issues through academic, practice-centered research.



The MU Institute of Public Policy (IPP) collaborates with community groups throughout Missouri to evaluate programmatic initiatives and provide needed information. The partner organizations include youth-focused agencies, local groups helping individuals on probation or parole, and local and county government.

For the past 13 years, IPP has provided program management and evaluation services for the **Missouri Department of Corrections' Community Reentry Initiative**. This initiative awards microgrants to non-profit agencies across Missouri to help individuals on probation or parole to reenter their communities. A 10-year analysis of the program indicated that receipt of employment, housing, and substance abuse treatment services were crucial to successfully completing a two-year period of probation or parole.

The Institute recently concluded a partnership with the **Youth Community Coalition** in Boone County, Missouri. The coalition aspired to improve the quality of life for youth in Boone County. IPP provided annual reporting services that summarized member organizations' activities and assessed their collective impact on youth well-being and youth-related issues in the county.

The Institute worked with community partners to build and maintain the **Boone Indicators Dashboard**, an online resource that displays

up-to-date information drawn from credible sources about community safety, affordable housing, maternal and child health, and educational achievement. This information is used by community stakeholders to inform program planning and management, decision-making, and resource allocation.

## Community Resilience Issue Briefs

**Zach Buckler, IPP Research Analyst, and Chastity Haxton, IPP Research Assistant and Master of Public Affairs student, co-authored two issue briefs that update our understanding about community resilience. Public Health and Pandemics provides helpful updates to thinking about resilience plans, specifically in relation to public health emergencies. What strengths does a community need to cope with a health-related crisis?**

**Equity and Resilience describes how community groups can use an equity lens when developing plans to enhance community resilience. An "equity lens" is a method for analyzing how a specific policy may affect groups differently within a community and finding solutions to reduce barriers and avoid differential outcomes.**

“**Despite the program's wide political support, documented outcomes, and substantial benefit to low-income families, only about 4 out of 5 eligible households actually receive the (EITC) credit.**”

<sup>1</sup>Retrieved from the IRS website and is for Tax Year 2017. <https://www.eitc.irs.gov/etc-central/about-eitc/about-eitc>  
Source: “The national EITC participation rate is 78% (TY2017),”—estimated in cooperation with the Census Bureau.

During 2020-2021, the Institute examined the diverse economic needs of Missourians. In November 2020, IPP released an updated report on the **Status of Women in Missouri**, funded by United Women's Empowerment, that highlighted employment and income, health, education and childcare, and leadership. Since IPP's first Status of Women Report in 2015, health care coverage for Missouri women has increased and fewer women over age 65 are living in poverty. However, the number of women holding elected positions in state government has decreased and the wage gap between men and women remains largely unchanged.

Identifying policy solutions that improve the financial standing of low-income workers in Missouri is a first step to lifting families out of poverty. One example is the **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**, a federal program that targets low-wage workers, especially those with children, to receive tax credits. In 2020, the average amount of EITC received nationwide was \$2,476 per family, making it one of the largest antipoverty programs of the federal government.

The Institute is collaborating with MU Extension to evaluate outreach efforts geared toward increasing family participation in the EITC. The project, led by Graham McCaulley, Marco Pantoja, and Andrew Zumwalt, from the Center for Economic and Financial Education in the Trulaske College of Business and Irma Arteaga, Associate Professor in the Truman School, will evaluate relations among outreach efforts, receipt of EITC, and a range of life events that can affect parents and their children. This undertaking will advance understanding of the short- and long-term benefits of the EITC on Missouri families.

Effective and accessible public education is crucial to Missouri. Education builds the foundation for citizens to be thoughtful and active participants in our increasingly complex world. The Institute undertakes a range of projects about the state's education system.

The **Missouri Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five** aims to build a comprehensive and better coordinated early care and education system. IPP is the lead evaluator of this multi-year, federally-funded initiative. Additional projects include identifying kindergarten readiness assessments, designing a tool to measure child care quality, and examining the benefits of Parents as Teachers. Early evaluation results indicate that during the first two years of the project, state policymakers' support increased for building a comprehensive

and better coordinated system of early care and education.

The Institute also conducts annual surveys with school personnel and parents for internal reporting and quality improvement efforts. The **First Year Surveys**, administered to new teachers, administrators, and school counselors, provide the state with feedback on how to better prepare K-12 professionals. The **Special Education Parent Survey** asks family members about the special education services their children, ages preK through grade 12, receive at school. IPP also consulted on the **Missouri School Climate and Culture Survey**. This survey will ask students, parents, and teachers to share their opinions about school safety, the presence of bullying, how student misbehavior is handled, and student-teacher relations.

**Project RESTORE** (Reconciliation and Empowerment to Support Tolerance and Race Equity), prepares school personnel and students to use restorative justice practices. With the St. Louis County Health Department, IPP provides technical assistance and evaluation services for Project RESTORE. This effort involves teacher training and professional development, classroom mediation and supports for student behavior, and peer leadership and mentoring. School personnel said that using restorative justice practices improved student-teacher communication and strengthened relationships among participants.

The Institute also studies other care and education settings. For the **Missouri**

**Afterschool Network**, IPP uses surveys, classroom observations, and program practice reviews to evaluate the quality of federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers. These afterschool programs help students who begin the school year with poor grades to improve in reading and math, and important social and self-regulation skills, as the school year progresses. Additionally, as part of IPP's collaboration with the **National Workforce Registry Alliance**, extensive information gathered from state's early childhood and after-school workforce registries are summarized to describe characteristics of the individuals who work in these settings.

*In 2019-20, 21st Century Community Learning Centers served over 7,000 youth who were at-risk for academic problems. During 2019-20, 85% of youth maintained or increased their grades in reading, 84% did so in math, and 85% in science.*

—Dr. Wayne Mayfield

## COVID-19 and the Child Care Workforce

Examining child care workforce data from the year before March 31, 2020 to the year after (ending March 31, 2021) in Ohio, which requires child care providers to enroll in a state registry, IPP found that center-based lead teachers with bachelor's degrees were nearly six times as likely to leave the early childhood workforce compared to center-based lead teachers whose highest education level was less than an Associate's degree. This means that early childhood classrooms in Ohio are currently staffed by teachers with less education, which affects the quality of child care. The impact of COVID-19 on individuals employed in child care has notable policy implications for states in their recruitment and retention of this essential yet undervalued workforce and for maintaining quality in child care settings.

Health covers many aspects of individual well-being including physical, emotional, and relationship health. Local public health agencies, schools, and other community organizations are key sources of credible health information and education. IPP has long partnered with these organizations to evaluate efforts to improve health-related outcomes.

The MU Institute of Public Policy (IPP) recently entered its tenth year as the statewide evaluator for Missouri's teen pregnancy prevention program, **Personal Responsibility Education Program** (PREP). Using evidence-based educational materials, well-prepared health educators and teens talk about the choice to have sex or not to have sex, safe sexual health practices, and the

importance of effective communication skills for their intimate relationships. Some Missouri programs incorporate community service learning to encourage teens' community involvement. During 2020-2021, evaluators worked with communities to assess their level of readiness to address teen pregnancy. Communities that participate in Missouri's PREP are well-equipped to address teen sexual health and pregnancy prevention.

The Institute also partners with the **Boys and Girls Club of Columbia** (BGCC) to evaluate their Mental Health Programs. The Boys and Girls Club is a national organization that inspires youth to reach their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring individuals.

The local evaluation looks for improvements in youth self-esteem, positive actions toward self and others, and coping skills. IPP's services help the local BGBC refine their mental health programs and meet their overall goals for young people.

A new collaboration between IPP and MU's Department of Human Development and Family Science (HDFS) examines the benefits of relationship education. **ShowMe Healthy Relationships** (SMHR) provides relationship education to single-adults across Missouri. The educational program is led by Chelsea Garneau-Rosner, Assistant Professor, and

Melissa Herzog, Assistant Teaching Professor from HDFS and several community agencies in Missouri. IPP is conducting the impact evaluation with Irma Arteaga, Associate Professor in the Truman School. The evaluation will assess participants' knowledge of healthy relationships, parenting skills, personal well-being, and indicators of financial stability before and after the program and estimate the impact of a 6-month booster session. Stay tuned for future reports about the benefits of **ShowMe Healthy Relationships**.

## Missouri's PREP

A five-year analysis of **Missouri's Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)**, conducted by Kendal Lowry, Truman School graduate student, Claire Altman, Associate Professor in MU's Department of Health Sciences, and Andra Jungmeyer, MO Department of Health and Senior Services, indicated that youth improved their **knowledge, attitudes, and intentions regarding risky sexual behavior as a result of participating in MO PREP.**<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Lowrey, K., Altman, C., & Jungmeyer, A. (2021). Targeted high-risk youth in Missouri PREP: Understanding program impacts on youth sexual behavior intentions. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 50(3), 415-435.

## 2020-2021 Graduate Research Assistants

Mark Benton  
Darius Caffey  
Ikhee Cho  
Dinesh Dhakal  
Jeffrey Ehimuh  
Shakealia Finley  
Melissa Frieders  
Christal Hamilton  
Chastity Haxton  
Muinul Muhammad Islam  
Caroline Kelly  
Afiah Mohd Fozi  
Ann Obadan  
Jessica Overschmidt  
Tapas Paul  
Liam Redinger  
Andreas Sihotang  
Adam Thorp  
Jordan Weinberg

**IPP hosts  
over 10  
Graduate  
Students  
each  
semester.**

**Every semester, the Institute welcomes** students to work with IPP staff on projects. The students come from the Truman School of Government and Public Affairs, the Department of Economics, the School of Health Professions, and the College of Education and Human Development. They arrive at IPP with diverse backgrounds and are eager to learn about the policies that shape our communities, the state, and the nation.



## Student Spotlight Chastity Haxton

*Graduate Research Assistant,  
IPP Intern, and Master of  
Public Affairs Student*

“

*Working at IPP has allowed me to gain hands-on experience in regional and economic policy and program evaluation. My internship with IPP has given me the opportunity to build my professional skills, work with clients and analyze concerns within my community.*

”

*Working at IPP not only helped to improve my skill set, but also led to connections and opportunities that have positively influenced my career. My experience at IPP allowed me to attend federal research conferences, meet with stakeholders, present research, publish, and work closely with IPP mentors, all of which have facilitated a great amount of support and learning that has remained beneficial to me since graduating from the Truman School.*

*—Kendal Lowrey, MPA, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate, Pennsylvania State University*

*My time with IPP has been invaluable to my development as a researcher. Not only did I extend my evaluation skills by gaining practical experience working on client-based evaluation projects, but I also acquired experience in supervising others. As importantly, working with the Institute has allowed me to contribute to the improvement of Missouri's education system.*

*—Christal Hamilton, Post-doctoral fellow at Columbia University*

*I interned at the Institute in the summer of 2018 and continued in 2019 as a student employee. During my time at IPP, I worked primarily on the Missouri Teen Pregnancy and Prevention Program. While working on this project, I was trained to collect, manage and organize survey data. In my current role, these skills have proved to be invaluable. I continue to build and expand on them and would not feel as confident and proficient as I do without the support and educational excellence that IPP provided me with.*

*—Sariah Pereira, Telehealth and Show-Me ECHO Coordinator*



Much has happened in the period after beginning to write this Annual Report. The Institute was awarded new grants and contracts that expand our health policy focus and extend our opportunities and outreach. We welcomed additional analysts and research assistants to IPP and are excited to continue serving Missourians in an even greater capacity on important and emerging issues.

With funding from the Missouri Foundation for Health, IPP is conducting research on paid leave in Missouri and collaborating with MU's Center for Health Policy on an evaluation of Missouri Medicaid Expansion. IPP is also part of a Health Resources and Services Administration project being conducted by the MU School of Medicine's Office of Rural Health.

In collaboration with MU's College of Education and Human Development and the School of Social Work, IPP is evaluating ParentLink's Kinship Navigator Program. This project builds from the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2019, pivotal federal legislation for child welfare.

Over the summer of 2021, IPP welcomed two new Research Analysts (Ryenne DeSpain and Liam Redinger) and a dedicated Data Analyst (Manda Tiwari, Visiting Assistant Professor, MU Department of Economics). We also reconfigured the IPP administrative support position to include communications.

The future holds much promise for the MU Institute of Public Policy.

## **Boone County Children's Services Fund**

*Boys and Girls Club Mental Health Project Evaluation;  
Youth Community Coalition Evaluation*

## **City of Columbia, Boone County, and Heart of MO United Way**

*Boone Indicators Dashboard*

## **Heart of MO United Way**

*Impact of United Way Funding in Boone County*

## **MO Afterschool Network**

*Statewide Evaluation of Afterschool Programs*

## **MO Department of Corrections**

*Community Reentry Project Evaluation, Year 13*

## **MO Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

*Preschool Development Grant: Birth to 5 Program Performance Evaluation; First Year Teacher, Administrator, and Specialist Surveys; Survey with Parents of Students with Special Education Needs; and, School Climate and Culture Survey Development*

## **MO Department of Health and Senior Services**

*MO Teen Pregnancy and Prevention Project Evaluation, Year 10*

## **MO Foundation for Health and MU Center for Health Policy**

*Medicaid Expansion Evaluation Project*

## **MO Foundation for Health**

*Research on Paid Leave in Missouri*

## **MO Department of Social Services, MU College of Education and Human Development, MU School of Social Work, and ParentLink**

*Kinship Navigator Program Evaluation*

## **National Workforce Registry Alliance**

*COVID-19 and the ECE Workforce*

## **US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families and MU Department of Human Development and Family Science**

*Show-Me Healthy Relationships Program Evaluation*

## **US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health and MU Extension**

*Earned Income Tax Credit Outreach Program, Research and Evaluation*

## Director, Truman School of Government and Public Affairs

Lael Keiser, Professor, Truman School of Government and Public Affairs

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