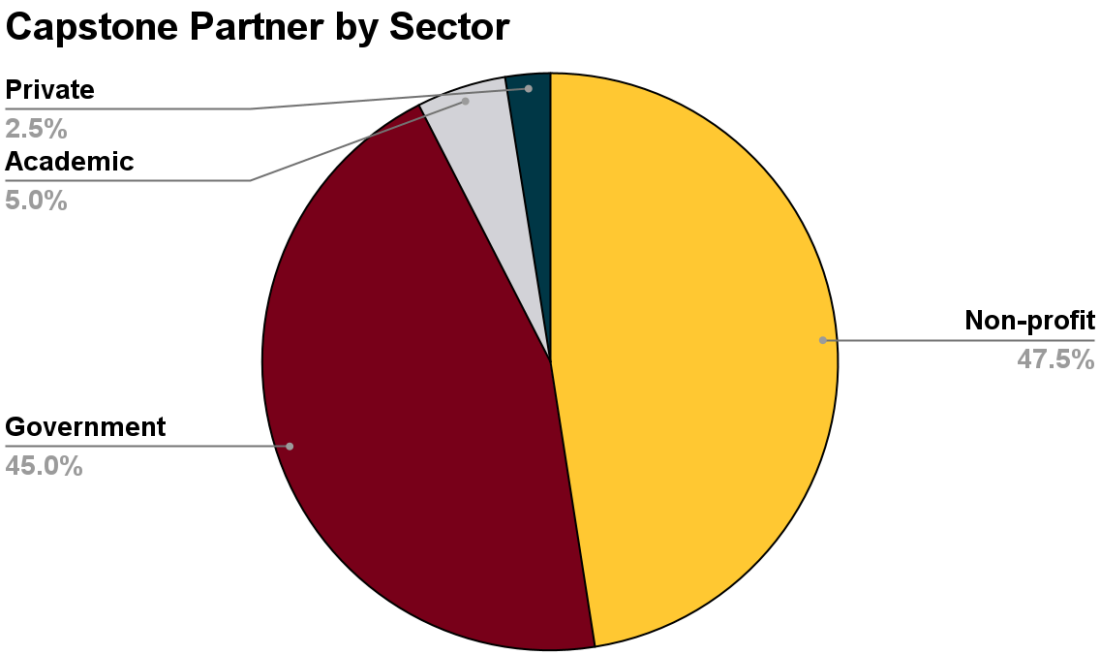
2019-2020 Capstone Project List

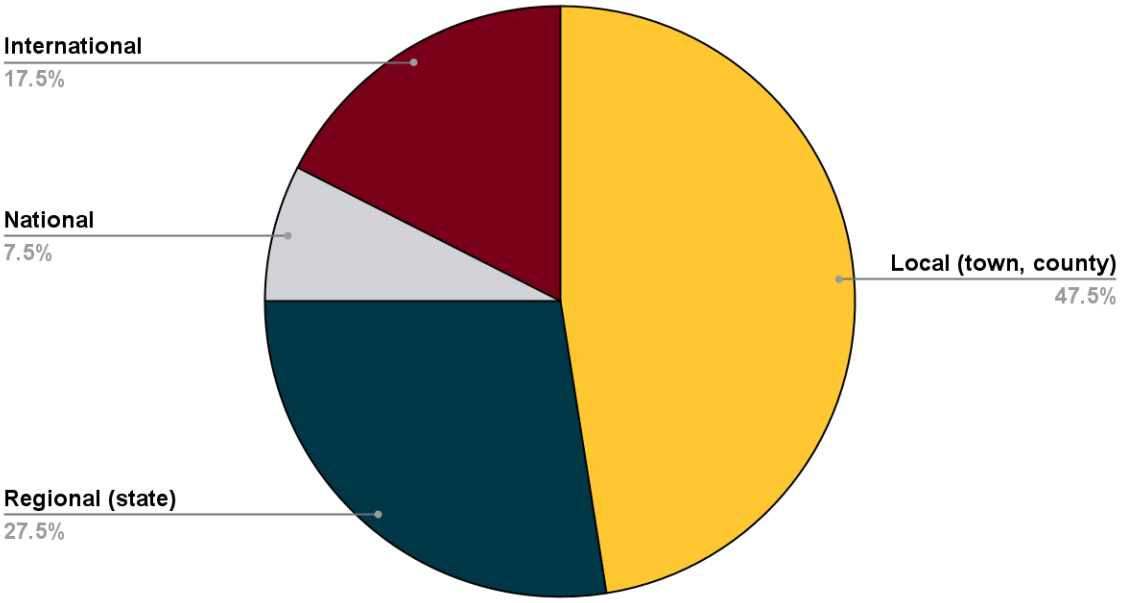
Summary:

The Capstone Program at the Humphrey School in academic year 2019-2020 (summer, fall, spring)

- involved **13** HHH faculty,
- overseeing **36** capstones,
- involving **136** students,
- collaborating with **38** distinct partners.



Capstone Partner by Scope



The following Capstone Projects encompassed **17,136** minimum hours of student-led work.

Summer 2019

Leading Organizational and Community Change

Faculty: Kevin Gerdes and Robin Phinney
Projects: (3)

My work - Our work: Creating a culture of collaboration through knowledge sharing

Examining Hennepin County public health programs and initiatives to identify opportunities for greater collaboration among its community engagement programs.
Community Partner: Hennepin County Public Health Department
Team: Sara Barrow (MPA), Jackie Corral (MPP), Anna Lavanger (MPP)

Forging a new path: Opportunities to lead on small business health insurance

Researching the legal, political, and economic conditions and realities for opportunities to lessen the burden of health care costs for small businesses while maintaining consumer protections and quality of the plans being offered by St Paul's small businesses.
Community Partner: Office of the Mayor of St Paul
Team: Nathan Coulter (MPA), Jack Dickinson (MPA), Ben Miles (MPA), Elizabeth Richardson (MPP)

Equity in Minnesota farming and Farm to School programs

Examining reasons behind Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color (BIPOC) underrepresentation in farming and Farm to School programs in Minnesota and around the U.S., and what can be done to improve their representation.
Community Partner: University of Minnesota Extension Farm to School Program
Team: Tara Olds (MPA), Molly Schned (MPA), Matt Gill (MPA), Penny Norquist (MPA)

Fall 2019

Occupational Licensing: Theory/Evidence to Policy

Faculty: Morris Kleiner
Project: (1)

Occupational licensing: Assessing state policy and practice

The Consortium, which consisted of the National Governor's Association (NGA), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and The Council of State Governments (COG), received funding from the U.S. Department of Labor to gather, evaluate, and disseminate information about how to better assess state occupational licensing policy and practice. The Consortium generated a list of issues to include Board Composition, Occupational Licensing Legal Information, and the Evolution of Licensure. The class, using mixed methods, generated new information that has been disseminated to all member states on how to better develop occupational licensing policies.
Community Partners: National Governor's Association (NGA), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and The Council of State Governments (COG)
Team: Tyler Boesch (MPP), Andrew Durkot (MPP), Drew Garner (MPP), Mary Pat Ladner (MPA), Aaron Sepulveda (MPP), Aaron Westling (MPP), Kelly Wilder (STEP)

Independent Study
Faculty: Lauren Martin
Project: (1)

Reimagining Expungement
The project grew out of work from the course Research and Policy with Marginalized Groups. It investigates systemic barriers to expungement of prostitution-related charges for individuals who have been sexually exploited. Without expungement, such charges can create significant barriers to housing, employment, and more.
Community Partner: The Family Partnership
Team: Sasha Hulsey (MPP/MPH), Kshitiz Karki (MPP), Liv Reyes (MPP), Alyssa Scott (MPP/MPH)

Spring 2020

Global Public Policy
Faculty: Bob Kudrle
Projects: (3)

Effectiveness of the U.S. Global Magnitsky Act
Human Rights First seeks to understand what impact US human rights and anti-corruption targeted sanctions have on protecting and promoting human rights, fighting corruption, and other U.S. interests. Additional questions posed include: What trends related to respect for human rights can be identified in cases where the US government has either acted through sanctions, warned that it might act through sanctions, explicitly said it will not act through sanctions, or remained silent? and To what extent can we extrapolate concerning the impact of these trends in future years?
Community Partner: Human Rights First
Team: Joy Hammer (MHR), Sarah Allis (MHR), Steph Hallgren (MPP)

Women's Economic Empowerment in Jordan, Oman and Tunisia
Proposing a framework for analysis of the topic that will include: an overview of women participating in the labor force, a literature review of laws, governance barriers, and cultural institutions that shape women's economic participation, and an overview of laws and tools that enabled women's economic empowerment. A literature review within the proposed framework will be conducted for three countries of the MENA region: Oman, Jordan, and Tunisia.
Community Partner: International Republican Institute
Team: Zhamin Yelgezekova (MDP), Rayan Deeb (MDP), Jonathan Tvedt (MPP)

The FDI National Security Database Project: Emerging Issues in Foreign Direct Investment & National Security
The TTS FDI-Security Database will catalog the specifics of national regulatory and procedural requirements for reviews of FDI across the world, and attempt to discern the

implications for investment, technology-sharing, and corporate compliance in various technology sectors.

Community Partner: Stimson Center

Team: Soren Stevenson (MDP), Elexis Trinity Williams (MHR), Matthew Dakken (MPP), James Hartnett (MPP), Brynna Schmidt (MPP)

Global Public Policy

Faculty: Mary Curtin
Projects: (3)

Evaluation of Duluth model of Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to domestic violence

Working in partnership with Global Rights for Women and the Domestic Abuse Intervention Program (DAIP), the students will provide an advocacy plan to assist GRW and DAIP in ensuring broad understanding of the CCR model and how it can be adapted and applied in other communities and cultures. Students will provide a review of academic literature and journalistic reporting on the CCR, review the data collection system maintained by DAIP, and provide an advocacy plan to promote better understanding of this innovative response to domestic violence.

Community Partner: Global Rights for Women

Team: Channing Bendtsen (MHR), Karen Chonofsky (MHR), Yasmine Mansour (MDP), Esraa Mahmoud (MDP)

Assessment of immigrant community concerns and service providers in Minneapolis

Changes in federal immigration, refugee, and asylum policies since 2017 led the City of Minneapolis to create the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) to address concerns of the immigrant and refugee community. OIRA has asked the Humphrey School to assist it in meeting those needs by: providing a deeper understanding of and mapping of the immigrant and refugee communities in the City of Minneapolis (including how they relate to communities in inner ring suburbs), mapping out the key service and affinity organizations in the city that either are composed of members of immigrant groups or provide services to those groups, and to advise OIRA on how the office might better and more strategically address the most important needs of the community and its component parts.

Community Partner: City of Minneapolis Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA)

Team: Tonje Boerresen (MHR), Catherine (Katie) Burke (MHR), Christina Licari (MDP), Hannah Shireman (MHR)

Economic sustainability of a community water system in southern Haiti

The students, who have been engaged with Tree of Hope over several years, will develop a strategic plan to assist the NGO in transitioning Tree of Hope Haiti's (TOHH) existing water storage and filtration system into a self-sustaining, income generating operation in the community of Grand-Goâve, Haiti. Students will provide an assessment of the current project, and recommendations for the transition based on best practices and comparable projects.

Community Partner: Tree of Hope

Team: Sarah Funkhouser (MDP), Michele Girard (MDP)

Capstone in Development Practice (MDP 5200)

Faculty: David Wilsey
Projects: (4)

Sumak Kawsay (Living Well): Youth activism, environmental stewardship and indigenous rights in Amboro National Park

The capstone team will work with ETTA Projects to (1) conduct a comprehensive environmental scan/literature review of environmental education (EE), (2) analyze the latter-mentioned environmental scan/literature review to create a 10-week EE training program that is developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive for 25 youth from the municipality of Buena Vista, Bolivia, and (3) conduct a series of virtual (and potentially in-person) interviews and focus group sessions to assess what specific assets the environmental leaders and educators from the municipality of Buena Vista have and how they would like the EE program to be implemented.

Community Partner: ETTA Projects

Team: Jamee Elsayad (MDP), Diarra Brooks (MPP), Gonxhe Kandri (MHR)

Global Mamas capstone report

The capstone team was invited by the Global Mamas to transform their monitoring and evaluation systems to better track and measure the impact of the programs on the lives of the women entrepreneurs (the Mamas), both over time and/or benchmarked against relevant publicly available comparison data.

Community Partner: Global Mamas

Team: Zoe Masterpole (MDP), Nasiba Nurmatova (MDP), Kidist Dimore (MDP), Gunnar Carlson (MPA), Darryl Scarborough (MPA)

Exploring new and emerging markets for Ramon Nut

The Rainforest Alliance is an international non-profit organization working at the intersection of business, agriculture, and forests to make responsible business the new normal. We are an alliance of companies, farmers, foresters, communities, and consumers committed to creating a world where people and nature thrive in harmony. We aim to create a better future for people and nature by making responsible business the new normal. By bringing diverse allies together, we are making deep-rooted change on some of our most pressing social and environmental issues. Together, we amplify the voices of farmers and forest communities, improve livelihoods, protect biodiversity, and help people mitigate and adapt to climate change in bold and effective ways. Rainforest Alliance has been working in the MBR for over 20 years. All of our staff in Guatemala are from Guatemala and all of our Petén based staff are from the Petén. We work closely with local organizations, the community concessions and other social and conservation focused projects in the MBR.

Community Partner: Rainforest Alliance

Team: Emily Teleposky (MDP), Joshua Thompson (MDP), Vishal Jamkar (MDP), Ellie Lee (MURP)

Duluth's creative economy: A comprehensive assessment

This new initiative strives to realize the full potential of the creative economy in the Duluth (Twin Ports) region by helping to create a shared understanding of the concept, by developing methods and tools to identify and engage regional actors, and by

communicating the concept, "craft", and conclusions to participants, stakeholders and key decision-makers. Mini Grant funds will help to make possible this cross-disciplinary, cross-campus, and community-engaged endeavor. Students and faculty in UMD's Cultural Entrepreneurship program will gather preliminary data for seven sectors of the creative economy and will begin to frame a Story Map-style visualization with stories from about 100 organizations. Capstone students from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs will connect with the UMD-CE program to help bring the Story Map from concept to reality, and then to bring that reality to community leaders with potential to shape and enable the sector's growth and impact.

Community Partner: University of Minnesota, Duluth Cultural Entrepreneurship Program / LISC / Zeitgest Arts

Team: Sara Zaghloul (MDP), Josh Swanson (MPP), Kia Her (MDP)

Transportation Planning and Policy

Faculty: Lyssa Leitner

Projects: (3)

Effective Community Engagement Strategies for Implementing Transit Advantages

The challenge of urban transportation is providing mobility for all, in a sustainable and fair way, under the constraint of limited street space. Cities that want to prioritize moving people, not vehicles, through their streets will solve this challenge in part by facilitating transit use. When considering implementing such a change, an agency or city rightly wants to understand the opinions of the community. There will be two groups of people responding: those acutely, negatively impacted by the removal of previously enjoyed lane of parking or travel; and those diffusely, positively benefited by a reduction in travel time through a corridor. How should cities and agencies approach this situation? What strategies, engagements, and analyses should be done? Is the savings of a few minutes per trip for a lot of people worth the inconvenience of a few? How should the responses of residents and business be understood, or influence any decisions? What if those benefiting are from another ward, district, or city, from those experiencing the pain?

Community Partner: Metro Transit

Team: Benjamin Tomhave (MURP), Eric Molinari (MURP), Forrest Steinhoff (MURP), Leslie Gale (MPA)

Vision Zero Minneapolis: Crash Data Analysis and Traffic Calming Program Recommendations

The City of Minneapolis recently adopted a Vision Zero Action Plan that identifies priority steps the city will take over the next three years to make progress toward the goal of eliminating traffic deaths and severe injuries. This project will support implementation of the Vision Zero Action Plan. It will include two important components: analyzing the most recent traffic crash data and making recommendations that inform planning and engineering efforts; and evaluating and making recommendations around one or more Vision Zero strategies, which may include safety treatments on high injury streets, automated traffic enforcement, communications around street safety projects, or ongoing evaluation of street safety treatments.

Community Partner: City of Minneapolis Public Works, Transportation Planning & Programming

Team: Galen Ryan (MURP), Emily Houser (MURP), Cassie Fitzgerald (MPP)

Secure bicycle parking at Transit Facilities

Metro Transit provides bicycle racks at most rail stations, BRT stations, park-and-rides, and transit centers. Recently, shared scooters have put additional pressure on these spaces in many locations. For longer-term, more secure bicycle parking, Metro Transit also rents single-user bicycle lockers at selected transit facilities (https://www.metrotransit.org/bike-lockers). Metro Transit would like to improve the availability and quality of secure bicycle parking at transit facilities to improve access to transit for existing and new transit customers. This project will ask students to develop a methodology to assess bicycle parking demand at high volume transit locations and to prioritize areas for investment in secure bicycle parking facilities.

Community Partner: Metro Transit

Team: Lynda Chao (MURP), Jeffrey Holland (MPA), Ari Del Rosario (MURP)

Planning and Public Affairs

Faculty: Greg Lindsey

Projects: (5)

GPS::45::93 Housing Assessment

This project will identify the housing needs for these East Central Minnesota communities (the members of GPS::45::93), and the policy tools available to these communities to address those needs. To provide GPS::45::93 and its members with the tools to address the housing needs of their communities.

Community Partner: East Central Regional Development Commission

Team: Hannah Burns (MPP/STEP), Ian Corder (MURP), Henry Parker (MPP), Benjamin Schneider (MURP)

Responding to the Opioid Epidemic: Identifying Actionable Approaches for Cities in Minnesota

The opioid crisis is reaching epidemic levels and it is an increasingly pervasive issue in cities in Minnesota. Cities in the state are looking for ideas, best practices, and resources to shape their own programs and policies related to opioid misuse and overdose. The League of Minnesota Cities is developing an online toolkit for city officials to learn about what is working in other jurisdictions, find model policies, and identify other resources that may be available.

Community Partner: League of Minnesota Cities - Resilient Communities Projects, CURA

Team: Mara Daly (MPP/STEP), Kaitlyn Schmaltz (MPP), Ashleigh Walter (MPP)

Qualitative Assessment of Vulnerability to Climate Change

MnDOT will be receiving data later this year, which will show the predicted vulnerability of their assets to changing precipitation patterns based on quantitative data models. MnDOT suspects that the forthcoming data may have some gaps that could pose unknown risks to MnDOT and to local communities. The goal of this project is to develop and pilot a methodology that will assist MnDOT in collecting this critical knowledge from district staff.

Community Partner: Minnesota Department of Transportation, Office of Sustainability

Team: Martha Allen (MURP), Nicola Dixon (MPA), John Fleming (MURP), Alexander Johnson (MURP), T.J. Melcher (MPA)

Propagating Partnerships: A Stakeholder Analysis for SLP Seeds

Students will assist SLP SEEDS in developing a clear internal vision of the systems and strategies they will use to advance a refined mission and measure impact given their current capacity. How is SLP SEEDS leveraging partnerships and stakeholders to move their mission forward? Which systems/templates for quantifying and measuring impact would be most helpful to support SLP SEEDS' current and future capacity? What are best practices for food-based nonprofits to move from vision to action?

Community Partner: SLP SEEDS

Team: Tyler Foley (MPP), Thomas Liepold (MPP/STEP), Emily Reno (MURP), Lisa Wong (MPP)

St. Paul Cultural Destination Areas: Selby Avenue

To inform St. Paul's future small area development and the cultural destination areas initiative, the City seeks 1) current information on the economic, social, locational, and cultural characteristics of the three identified neighborhood nodes (Selby/Dale, Selby/Western, Selby/Milton) and 2) an understanding of neighborhood cultural corridor policy precedents at the national level.

Community Partner: Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development

Team: Corrin Bemis (MURP), Gwendolyn Jenkins (MURP), Elliot Mohler (MURP), Gabriela Olvera (MURP), Roberto Partida (MURP), Alexander Webb (MURP)

Public Engagement

Faculty: LisaBeth Barajas
Projects: (3)

Strengthening Community Engagement to Move Public Health Equity Data to Action

Working together with Scott County Public Health and the Resilient Communities Project (RCP) through the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), this project strives to identify community-driven solutions to increase physical activity and healthy eating habits among Somali and Latinx residents in Savage. Community engagement will thoughtfully and intentionally be integrated into all aspects of this project to ensure that community needs are being met. Ultimately, we hope to develop community-driven solutions and propose recommendations that can be implemented at the county level to advance public health equity work.

Community Partner: Scott County Public Health

Team: Faiza Mahamud (MPA), Sydney Hobart (MPP/MPH), LaLinda Xiong (MPP), Ali Grimes (MPP)

Expanding YEP!'s curriculum to include those most impacted by planning and civic engagement

We have an opportunity to expand YEP!'s existing curriculum and engagement opportunities to include k-12 youth who have experienced systemic poverty, racism, and colonization in the Twin Cities and nationwide. Our purpose is to provide YEP! with more inclusive curriculum and engagement activities to underserved and underrepresented k-12 youth focused around urban planning and civic participation.

Community Partner: Youth Engagement Planning – YEP!

Team: Rabiic Omar (MPA), Angela Tona (MSW), Maggie Heurung (MPP/Health Equity)

County Park Agency & School District Connection: Developing Civic Infrastructure to Support Youth and the Regional Park System

There is an opportunity to meaningfully engage youth in planning processes for the metro regional park system. How could the regional park system design programming and inform families and teens of this programming, especially with populations currently underserved by the parks and trails? The project will identify tools that could be used to provide engagement to outdoor enthusiasts across race, ethnicity, income, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation and ability, as well as to new users.

Community Partner: Metropolitan Council

Team: Bridget Callaghan (MPP), Mike Lund (MPP), Diana Vega Vega (MPP)

Science, Technology and Environmental Policy (STEP)

Faculty: Fred Rose

Projects: (4)

Met Council 4d Housing & Energy

The purpose of this study is to highlight the potential financial, human welfare, and environmental benefits of jointly investing in energy efficiency, distributed solar, and affordable housing policy at naturally occurring affordable housing multi-family properties. Specifically, we hope to illuminate how implementing these programs concurrently could address competing incentives between energy upgrades and maintaining affordable housing, and decrease involuntary housing displacement as well as the number of energy burdened homes in the Metro area.

Community Partner: Metropolitan Council

Team: Courtney Overby (MPP-STEP), Matt Jones (STEP), Lilly Richard (MPP-STEP), Brianne Whitcraft (MPA)

One Tree, One Person, One Step Forward: Recommendations for the Improvement and Support of Saint Paul's Urban Canopy

The purpose of this study is to work with the City of St. Paul to address the decline of the city's urban canopy, with a particular focus on private lands. This decline has proven negative economic and health outcomes for residents. We will work to identify neighborhoods of high need, coordinate with community leaders, and analyze how the city might most effectively support tree planting programs within those areas.

Community Partner: St. Paul Urban Forestry

Team: Joe Amerman (MPP), Nicholas Atherton (MPP), Daniel Mock (MURP/MPH), Koehl Simmons (MURP)

Building Energy Resilience: Building Resiliencia Energética Fotovoltaica Comunitaria (ReEnFoCo), A Solar Project For Puerto Rico's First Energy Cooperative

The project aims to assist Puerto Rico's first energy cooperative with their on-bill financing model. This will allow them to deploy 5MW of grid-tied, rooftop photovoltaic systems for the member-owners of the cooperative to improve the electrical resiliency of residents in central Puerto Rico. The student team will also create informational resources for the cooperative to educate and engage the public.

Community Partner: Unidos por Utuado and the Cooperativa Hidroeléctrica de la Montaña

Team: Shannon Evans Engstrom, (MURP), Lauren Fisher (STEP), Anindya Panda (MPP), Megan Reineccius (MURP)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions and Housing Affordability in Minnesota: Opportunities for the Residential Sector

Achieving affordable, resilient housing infrastructure and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions in buildings – How can we achieve both? The purpose of this project is to look at the implications of future demographics within Minnesota, as well as projected housing stock to explore the intersection and implications of demographics and GHG reduction goals on new and existing housing infrastructure.
Community Partner: Minnesota Department of Commerce
Team: Mike Milnar (STEP), Kristen Peterson (STEP), Daniel Wolski (STEP), Rachel Mezey (STEP)

Program Evaluation

Faculty: Emily Kalnicky
Projects: (2)

Evaluation of Lifeworks' Progression Tool

Lifeworks is interested in evaluating their process for administering their progression tool to understand where they can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the process. The research product will provide clear recommendations for how Lifeworks can improve their progression tool based on our research.
Community Partner: Lifeworks Services, Inc.
Team: David Ambuel (MPP), Rachel Wilson-King (MPP)

"It is a lifeline to understanding what we are experiencing right now." Hearing from the Guthrie Theater audience during a pandemic

Evaluation of how the Guthrie's current, internal community engagement processes work to build long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with community partners. If the Guthrie better understands how community partners view the community engagement practices now, and how their own internal processes work, they will be better informed to adapt their processes to make their community engagement practice more mutually beneficial.
Community Partner: The Guthrie Theater
Team: James Clinton (MPP), Ganokporn Soisuwan (MPP)

Social Policy

Faculty: Maria Hanratty
Projects: (3)

A Win-Win: Reducing Food Waste and Food Insecurity through County Partnerships

Too much edible food from retailers ends up in landfills in Second Harvest Heartland's service area, rather than being diverted in ways that maximize benefit for the environment, society, and economy. The capstone team will provide a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the environmental, societal, and economic costs and benefits of composting and food rescue. This information will be used to provide recommendations to the client for seeking future investment in their food rescue programs.

Community Partner: Second Harvest Heartland
Team: Bryan George (MPP), Ellen Nikodym (MPP), Samantha Messina (MPP), Rachel Sosnowchik (MPP)

A Mixed-Methods Analysis on the Teaching Profession in Minnesota and how Perceptions of Teacher Pay and Conditions Impact Prevalence of Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers

This project will assess the extent to which current understandings of teacher compensation levels in Minnesota create a barrier to entering and remaining in the teaching profession by potential teachers of color. The project will include an evaluation of current data on Minnesota on levels of compensation for public teachers, by race, as well as a synthesis of research on the factors determining the decision to enter the teaching profession in Minnesota.
Community Partner: Minnesota Education Equity Partnership
Team: Robert Menge (MPP), Temilola Ogurinde (MPP), Sara Parke (MPP), Jackson Pineau (MPP), Mikayla Smith (MPP)

"Missed Opportunities" in the Pathway from Referral to Housing: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Success, Timeliness, and Disparities in Hennepin County's Coordinated Entry System

In the Hennepin County continuum of care, households experiencing homelessness are assessed for, referred to, and housed in units designated for homelessness. To ensure racial equity as well as system efficiency and effectiveness, this project will evaluate who is getting into housing, the speed at which they are doing so, and the retention of that housing. The project will also include interviews with providers of housing to determine their perspectives on the effectiveness of the housing referral system.
Community Partner: Hennepin County
Team: Jordon Barthel (MPP), Adil Bashir (MPP), Erin Danielson (MPP), Taylor Diles (MPP), Lara Griffin (MPP), Cara Letofsky (MPP), Dana Mach (MPP)

A Sample of Professional Papers from 2020

Various Advisors

Gender Mainstreaming in City Comprehensive Plans: A Transportation Focus

This paper discusses the existing gendered disparities in transportation, and then evaluates these disparities against city comprehensive plans in Minnesota. Deployed in this paper, gender mainstreaming is a way to evaluate policies and goals to ensure equity by gender. This paper evaluates four city comprehensive transportation plans in the metro area and provides recommendations for policy makers and planners to improve the comprehensive plans and the gender disparities in transportation.
Ania McDonnell (MPP)
Faculty Advisor: Frank Douma

Formerly Employed Need Not Apply: An Analysis of the Ubiquity of Non-Compete Agreements, their Impacts on Workers, & Policy Solutions

Recent research is highlighting the impacts that non-compete agreements have on workers' income and mobility; they are, however, woefully undercovered. This paper offers a

comprehensive view and evaluation of the literature surrounding non-compete agreements and collects policy options for states in one place. This paper is designed for concerned citizens and advocates implementing reforms that will restore worker power within employment contracts.

Nick Stumo-Langer (MPP)
Faculty Advisor: Maria Hanratty

Understanding the Contrasting Manufacturing Trends of Egypt and Bangladesh

Manufacturing sectors in Egypt and Bangladesh have taken two different paths in their trajectory over the last two decades. The two sectors differ starkly in terms of their dominance in the economy, constituent industrial mix, specialization, and the way two economies incorporate themselves into global trade. Specific industrial and monetary policies contributing to the difference can be traced.

Sohel Rana (MPP)
Faculty Advisor: Ragui Assaad