

NORC at the University of Chicago

California's trusted source for
understanding data, public opinion,
and evidence-based policymaking.



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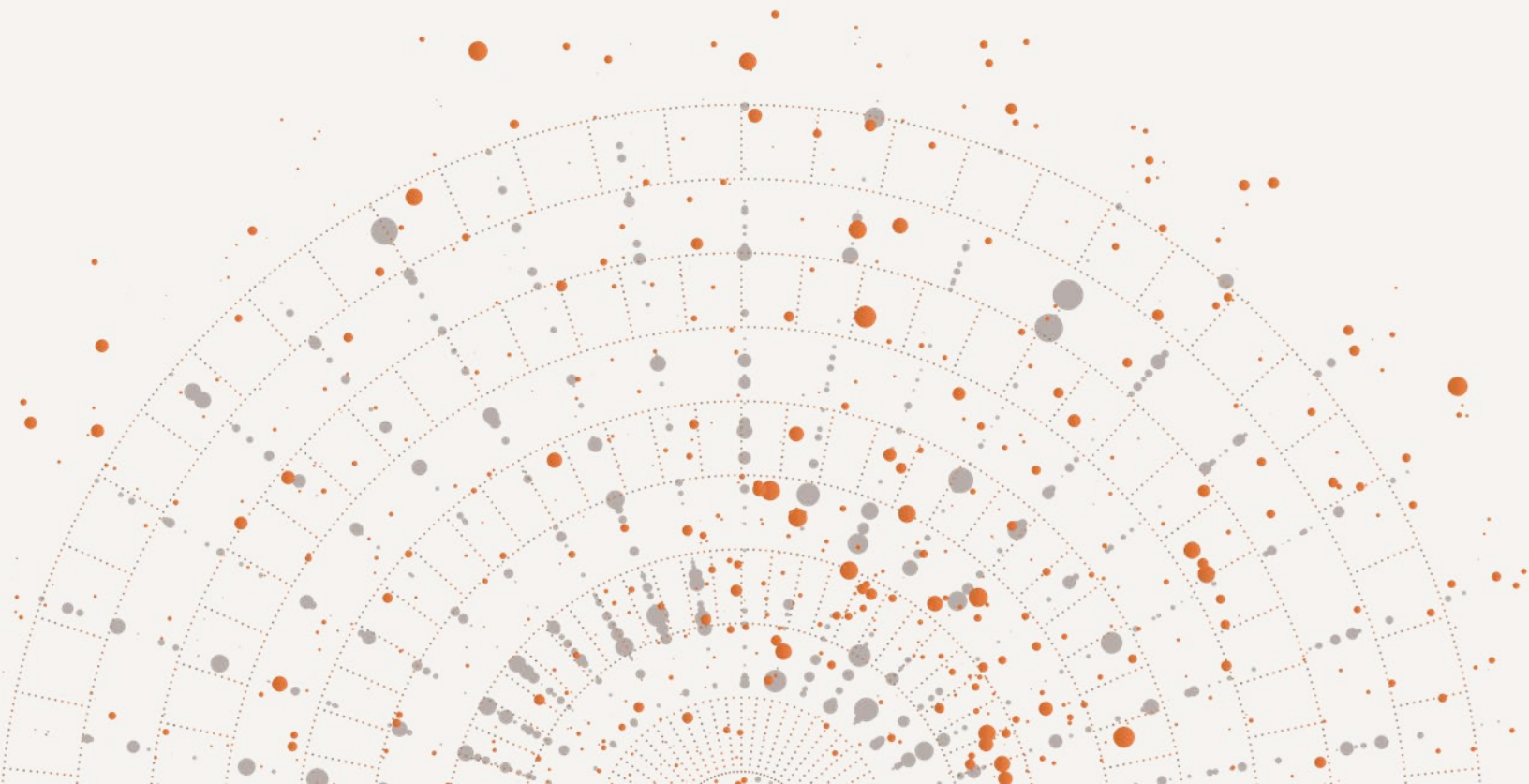


Table of Contents

Introduction	1		
NORC at the University of Chicago	1		
NORC’s Leadership	2		
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NORC Divisions & Experts	3		
NORC Health	3		
Selected NORC Projects in Health	4		
Informing Covered California’s Marketing Strategies and Policies*	4		
Supporting the California Master Plan on Aging*	4		
Working to Decrease Health Care Costs and Increase Quality of Care in California* ..	4		
Developing California’s Behavioral Health Workforce* ..	4		
Examining How Health Insurers Use AI for Utilization Management.....	5		
Collecting Data on Mental Health and Health Care Access Among Rural Latinos*	5		
Enhancing Health Care Quality and Access for Medi-Cal Beneficiaries in Sacramento County*	5		
Evaluating Healthcare Transactions for Market Impact and Affordability*	5		
Scott Leitz	6		
Rebecca Shore Catterson	6		
Alyssa Ghirardelli	7		
Prashila Dullabh	7		
Alana D. Knudson	8		
Lisa Shugarman	8		
Barbara Fernandez	9		
		NORC Education	10
		Select NORC Projects in Education.....	11
		Evaluating the Oakland Promise Brilliant Baby Program*	11
		Evaluating the Impact of Preschool Expansion in Tempe, Arizona.....	11
		Financing Early Care and Education.....	11
		Retaining Rural Science and Math Teachers	11
		Student Absenteeism.....	12
		Understanding University Campus Climates*	12
		Jennifer Hamilton	13
		Marc Hernandez	13
		Vi Nhuan Le.....	14
		Robert M. Goerge	14
		Matthew Stagner	15
		Sarah Kabourek	15
		NORC Public Affairs.....	16
		Select NORC Projects in Public Affairs	17
		Los Angeles Wildfire Recovery & Rebuilding*	17
		Strengthening Underserved Communities with High Climate and Disaster Risk*	17
		Spotlighting the Experiences and Views of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*	17
		Building Statewide Capacity for CalWORKs Performance and Accountability*	17
		Evaluating California Policy to Provide Youth with Early Access to Counsel*	18
		Reducing Recidivism in California*	18
		Understanding Public Perceptions of Climate and Energy Policy	18
		Ashani Johnson-Turbes	19
		Emily Alvarez	20
		Kate Bachtell	20
		NORC Research Science ...	21
		Select NORC Research Science Innovations & Solutions	22
		Providing Rigorous, Affordable, Rapid-Turnaround Survey Solutions	22
		Combining NORC’s Rigorous Research with The AP’s Journalistic Reach and Independence.....	22
		Jennifer Benz.....	23
		David Dutwin.....	23
		David Sterrett.....	24
		Susan Paddock	24
		<hr/>	
		Contact NORC	25
		Krishna Kumar	25

Introduction

NORC at the University of Chicago

Research you can trust. NORC at the University of Chicago is an objective, nonpartisan research organization that delivers insights and analysis decision-makers trust. For more than 80 years, we have provided data collection and analysis, technical assistance, and data science services to federal, state, and municipal government agencies, as well as business, academic and foundation partners. That work has spanned every presidential administration and every Congress since 1941.

An interdisciplinary staff of policy-focused subject matter experts and data scientists. NORC employs nearly 2,400 staff members from a variety of disciplines, including computer science, economics, education, physical sciences, political science, psychology, public health, public policy, sociology, and statistics. Their policy-relevant research findings frequently appear in the most respected peer-reviewed journals. NORC’s Senior Fellows are nationally recognized experts in multiple areas and are frequently consulted by policymakers and the media.

Headquarters in Chicago and D.C. with satellites across the country. NORC is headquartered in Chicago and maintains a substantial research and analysis presence in Washington, D.C., allowing easy access to federal agencies and many foundations and NGOs. We also maintain regional offices in California, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, and New Mexico.



Main Offices

- Downtown Chicago & UChicago Campus
- Washington, D.C.

Regional Offices

- Albuquerque
- Atlanta
- Boston
- Sacramento
- Silicon Valley
- Wichita

NORC's Leadership

The diverse and cross-cutting expertise of NORC's leaders keep our research and organization forward-looking and responsive.



Dan Gaylin
President &
Chief Executive Officer



Michael Davern
Executive Vice President &
Chief Research Officer



Angela DeBello
Senior Vice President &
Chief of Staff



Ron Jurek
Executive Vice President &
Chief Information Officer



Krishna Kumar
Executive Vice President &
Chief Research Officer



Greg Lanier
Senior Vice President &
Chief Communications Officer



Michele Nachbar
Executive Vice President &
Chief Strategy Officer

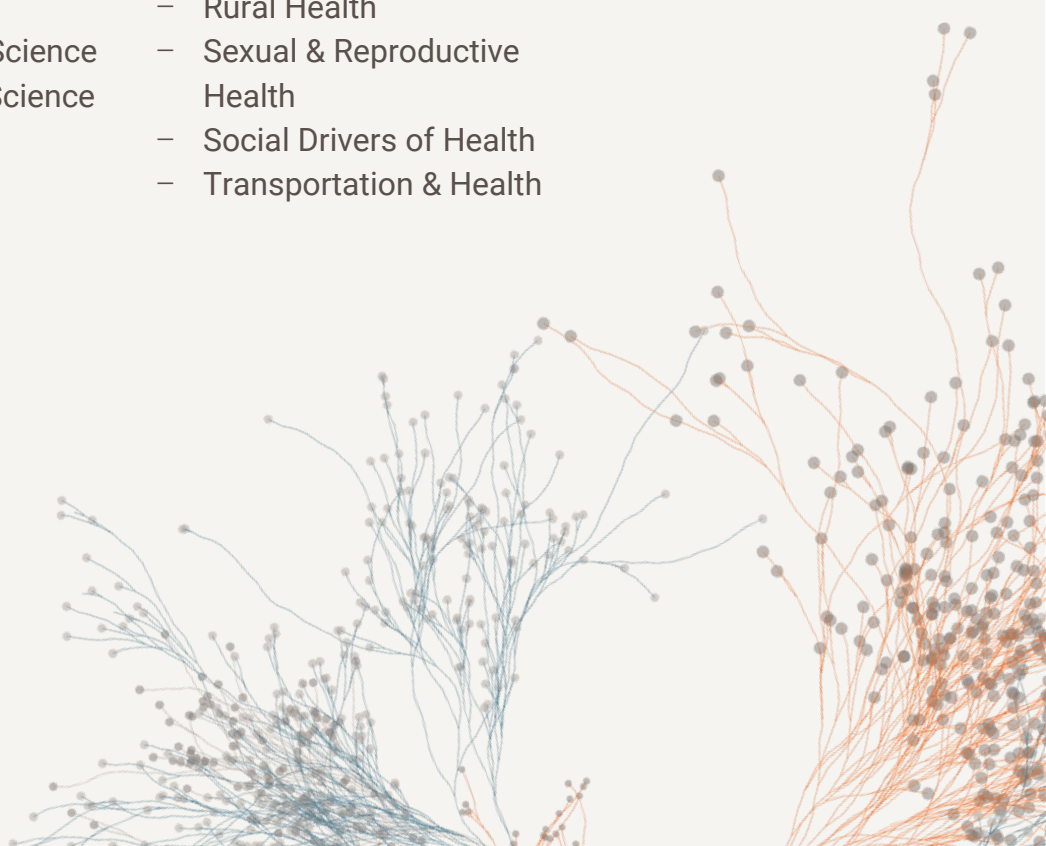


Susan Paddock
Executive Vice President &
Chief Statistician

NORC's rigorous examination of the many facets of health and health care informs decision- and policy-making in the United States and around the world. NORC has been a frequent research partner for California state agencies such as the California Department of Aging, California Health Care Access and Information, California Health Care Foundation, and Covered California, bringing our expertise to bear on California's health and health care challenges.

NORC explores:

- Aging & Health
- Applied Health Economics & Policy
- Behavioral Health
- Digital Health & Health Informatics
- Disease Surveillance
- Health Analytics
- Health Care Delivery & Payment Reform
- Health Communication Science
- Health Implementation Science
- Health Workforce
- Interpersonal Conflict & Violence
- Maternal Health
- Medicare, Medicaid & Private Health Insurance
- Patient-Centered Outcomes
- Prevention & Health Promotion
- Rural Health
- Sexual & Reproductive Health
- Social Drivers of Health
- Transportation & Health



Selected NORC Projects in Health

Informing Covered California’s Marketing Strategies and Policies*

NORC has been a key partner to Covered California since 2012, conducting dozens of quantitative and qualitative research studies to inform marketing and policy development. NORC has conducted the annual Covered California Member Survey since 2018 and conducted Covered California’s advertising tracking surveys annually during 2018–2020, as well as similar tracking surveys in the years immediately following the first open enrollment period in 2013–2014. NORC recently completed a multi-year mixed-methods study of the outcomes of the implementation of auto-plan selection mandated by SB-260, as well as projects to develop an evaluation plan for Covered California’s cost-sharing reduction (CSR) program and to provide consultation on data privacy and de-identification for the organization. (Ongoing since 2012)

Supporting the California Master Plan on Aging*

On behalf of the California Department of Aging, NORC evaluated eight programs that supported older adults and adults with disabilities. These programs aimed to improve social connections, bridge the digital divide, and address issues including nutrition, fall prevention and home modification, legal services, caregiver support, and community service employment. They included the Digital Connections Program, Access to Technology Program, and Older Adults Recovery and Resiliency Program. (2023-2024)

Working to Decrease Health Care Costs and Increase Quality of Care in California*

NORC is working with the California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) to deliver advanced healthcare analytics for the Health Care Payments (HPD) Program. This includes developing methodologies for advanced reports, conducting data quality investigations, analyzing policy and cost impacts, and providing training and actionable recommendations to improve data usability. (Ongoing, 2023-2026)

Developing California’s Behavioral Health Workforce*

NORC assisted HCAI in developing the new Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) position designed to transform the mental health ecosystem for youth in California. The CWC position expands the workforce and is part of the overall Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI). NORC conducted formative research to capture insights, challenges, and incentives for the new role, and evaluated the campaign’s overall effects. (2023-2025)

Examining How Health Insurers Use AI for Utilization Management

On behalf of the Consumer Representatives to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, NORC examined how health insurers use AI in utilization management and prior authorization decisions. Through a comprehensive literature review and stakeholder interviews with health plan executives, providers, consumer advocates, and regulators, we identified critical gaps in transparency related to AI-driven coverage decisions. Our findings demonstrate that AI is already impacting healthcare access, highlighting the urgent need for state regulatory oversight to protect consumers from potential harm. (2024)

Collecting Data on Mental Health and Health Care Access Among Rural Latinos*

NORC conducted a comprehensive survey of over 3,000 rural Latino adults across seven California and seven Arizona counties to understand health care access barriers and mental health concerns. Using probability-based sampling, we conducted phone and web interviews in both English and Spanish to gather critical data on Latino populations, informing policies that address health care access in rural communities. (2024-2025)

Enhancing Health Care Quality and Access for Medi-Cal Beneficiaries in Sacramento County*

NORC supports the Sacramento County Health Authority's (SCHA) oversight of Medi-Cal managed care plans through monitoring and analysis of publicly available data, engagement with the SCHA Commission and subcommittees on priorities for the county, and collection and analysis of more disaggregated data, with a focus on key populations and utilization including justice-involved populations, behavioral health, emergency department utilization, and homelessness. Our work responds to CalAIM and DHCS initiatives, emphasizing the analysis of disaggregated data to reduce health disparities and improve care quality across diverse populations. (Ongoing, 2025-2029)

Evaluating Healthcare Transactions for Market Impact and Affordability*

NORC supports California's Office of Health Care Affordability (OCHA) by reviewing material change notices of healthcare transactions, including mergers and acquisitions. Using qualitative and quantitative analysis of transaction documents and market data, NORC delivers timely, comprehensive reports that assess impacts on competition, affordability, and service quality, helping OCHA determine whether further investigation is warranted. (Ongoing, 2024-2026)



Scott Leitz

Vice President

Scott has over 25 years of experience working with states to improve their Medicaid programs, advance care delivery improvements, and improve health outcomes.

Vice president Scott Leitz is a leader in NORC’s Health Care Programs department. He directs numerous projects for the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. He also directed NORC’s work, funded through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to establish a Medicaid Managed Care Organization Learning Hub. In California, Scott oversees two NORC projects on behalf of the California Department of Health Care Access and Information. He directs work on the analysis of the Healthcare Payment Data and also leads NORC’s work on Cost and Market Impact Reviews. Before joining NORC, Scott served as CEO of MNsure, Minnesota’s state-based health insurance marketplace, where he oversaw its successful establishment and implementation. He has also served as Minnesota’s Medicaid Director and Assistant Commissioner for Health Care at the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Expertise

- Health Care Delivery & Payment Reform
- Medicare, Medicaid & Private Health Insurance
- Aging & Health
- Health Implementation Science
- Strategy & Planning

Education

MA

University of Minnesota

BA

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire



Rebecca Shore Catterson

Principal Research Director

Rebecca is a qualitative and survey researcher who focuses on understanding access to and quality of coverage and care.

Principal research director Rebecca Shore Catterson is leading several studies focused on access to and quality of coverage and care in California, including a mixed-methods study to understand the coverage status of Californians impacted by the Medi-Cal transition and how Covered California and the Department of Health Care Services can best serve this population. She is also directing the California Health Care Foundation’s annual statewide policy poll to understand California residents’ views on a variety of health care topics, including perceptions of Covered California.

Expertise

- Public Opinion & Attitudes
- Medicare, Medicaid & Private Health Insurance
- Research Design & Methodology
- Data Collection & Management
- Policy, Programs & Evaluation

Education

MPH

Johns Hopkins School of Public Health

BA

University of Pennsylvania



Alyssa Ghirardelli

Principal Research Scientist

Alyssa is dedicated to creating programs and communication strategies that enable people to live healthier lives, with 30 years of experience in population behavior change and public health research.

Principal research scientist Alyssa Ghirardelli is a registered dietitian based in NORC’s Sacramento office with expertise in qualitative and quantitative research. She has deep experience with formative campaign development and evaluation, and using community-level approaches to sample harder-to-reach populations. Ghirardelli led research to develop and evaluate communication strategies for the new Certified Wellness Coach program for HCAI, GIS sampling, and audience segmentation for the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program for the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, and the California Communities Mental Health Services Survey (CCMHSS) to identify disparities in accessing mental health services among historically marginalized populations.

Expertise

- Research Design & Methodology
- Data Collection & Management
- Policy, Programs & Evaluation
- Health Communications Science

Education

MPH

University North Carolina at Chapel Hill

BSPH

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Prashila Dullabh

Senior Fellow

Prashila is a nationally recognized clinical informatician and health researcher.

Vice president and senior fellow Prashila Dullabh leads NORC’s Health Sciences department and directs NORC’s Health Implementation Science Center. She brings more than 20 years of experience in digital health and health informatics, health implementation science, and patient safety and quality. She led seminal work to expand the use of electronic health records and multiple high-profile studies for federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dullabh leads NORC’s growing portfolio of implementation science projects to increase the quality, equity, and patient-centeredness of healthcare delivery.

Expertise

- Digital Health & Health Informatics
- Health Implementation Science
- Strategy & Planning
- Policy, Programs & Evaluation

Education

MD

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Certified Health Informatics Professional (ACHIP)

American Medical Informatics Association



Alana D. Knudson

Senior Fellow and Co-Director, NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis

Alana is a national leader in rural health research and capacity development.

Co-director of the NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis, Alana D. Knudson brings over 30 years of experience leading health services research projects and implementing and evaluating public health programs. She has deep expertise in rural health, public health, health services research, telehealth, workforce, and evaluation. Alana has conducted numerous health services and health policy studies and public health projects funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, among others. Her project findings have informed state, tribal, and federal health policy.

Expertise

- Rural Health
- Hard-to-Reach Populations & People in Vulnerable Situations
- Health Workforce
- Research Design & Methodology

Education

PhD

Oregon State University

EdM

Oregon State University

BA

Luther College



Lisa Shugarman

Senior Fellow

Lisa is a health services and health policy researcher whose work focuses on improving how publicly financed programs such as Medicare and Medicaid serve the public.

Senior fellow Lisa Shugarman is based in Los Angeles and has over 25 years of experience as a health policy and health services researcher in Medicare and Medicaid policy, publicly financed health care delivery, payment policy, serious illness and complex care, program implementation, and technical assistance, training, and learning systems. She is leading a project for the California Department of Aging's LTSS Financing and Affordability Initiative, which involves two surveys of California residents 50+ and an analysis of those data to understand the concerns of Californians as they age, how they are preparing for their LTSS needs, and what programs or policies they prefer to support them as they age. She is also leading the production of the Member and Health Needs Assessment and a Health Equity and Asset Map for CalOptima Health Plan in Orange County, CA.

Expertise

- Medicare, Medicaid & Private Health Insurance
- Policy, Programs & Evaluation
- Research Design & Methodology

Education

PhD

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

BA

University of California, Berkeley



Barbara Fernandez

Associate Director

Barbara has over 25 years of experience in health research, project and contract management, and business development.

Associate director Barbara Fernandez, based in San Diego, brings over 25 years of research experience. She leads and manages interdisciplinary research teams, executing quantitative and qualitative research studies, particularly in California. Recent projects include her leading eight mixed-method evaluations for the California Department of Aging to understand the allocation, use, and impact of program funds across eight programs that serve adults with disabilities and their caregivers, and a study of Hispanics who live in rural counties of California to understand their access and use of health care.

Expertise

- Survey Methods Research
- Prevention & Health Promotion
- Medicare, Medicaid & Private Health Insurance
- Data Collection & Management
- Research Design & Methodology

Education

MSPH

University of Colorado

BA

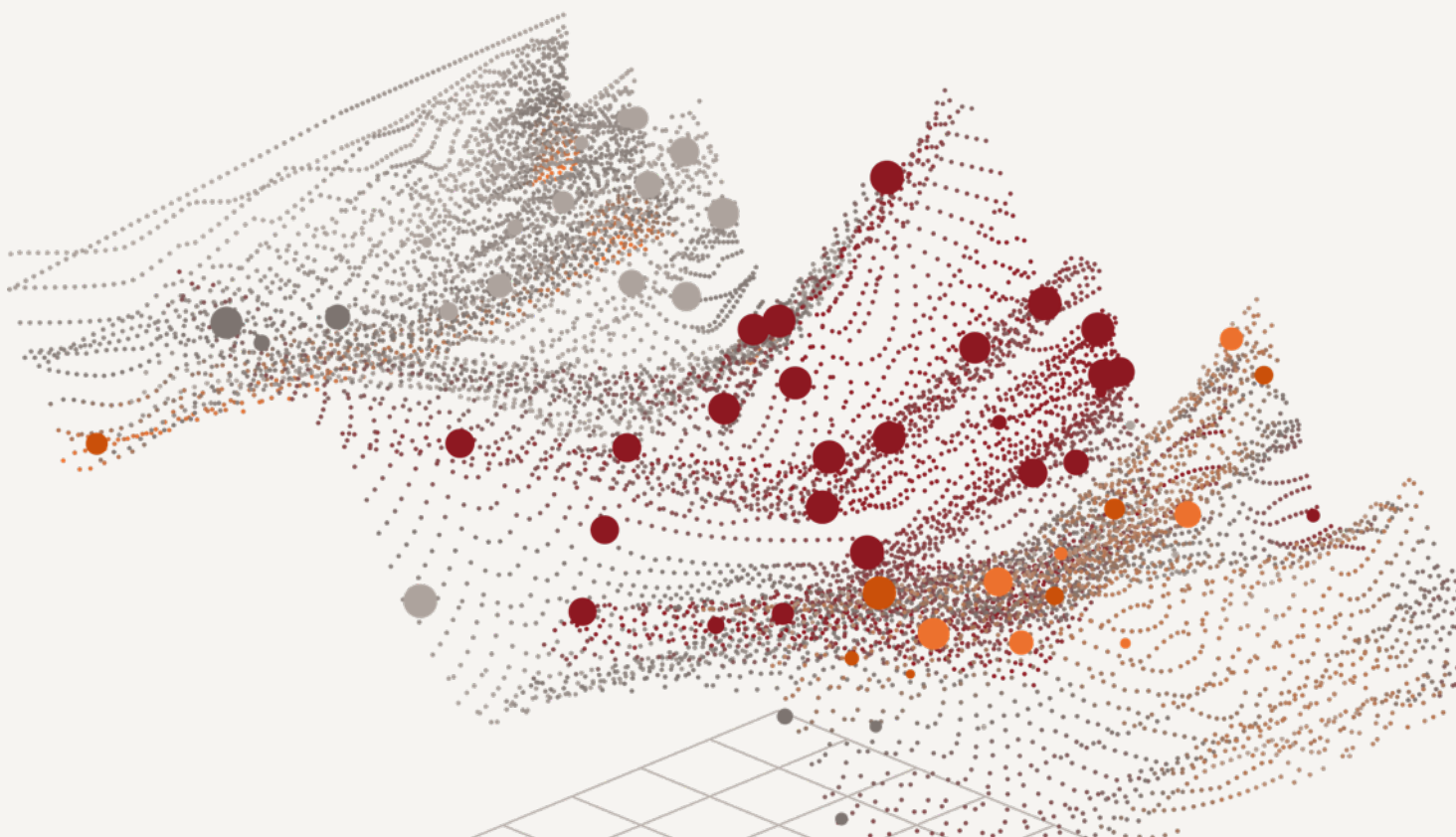
State University of New York at Albany

NORC Education

NORC's research provides vital information on the needs and experiences of learners of all ages, the nature and quality of the training and education resources available to them, and the impact education has made on all parts of their lives. In California, NORC has been an evaluation partner to Oakland Promise and the Kenneth Rainin Foundation.

NORC Explores:

- Adult Education & Workforce Training
- Campus Climate
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Civic Education & Engagement
- Early Care & Education
- Educational Equity
- Parent & Family Engagement
- Persistent Achievement Gaps
- Postsecondary & Graduate Education
- Rural Education
- STEM
- Teacher Workforce
- Universal Transitional Kindergarten



Select NORC Projects in Education

Evaluating the Oakland Promise Brilliant Baby Program*

NORC is conducting a longitudinal impact evaluation of the Oakland Promise Brilliant Baby program. This two-generation intervention gives \$500 college savings accounts to economically vulnerable children and provides their parents with financial coaching. NORC is also helping Oakland Promise evaluate the other components of its “cradle to career” program, including the Kindergarten to College, Future Centers, and College Scholarships & College Completion programs. The evaluation is funded by the City of Oakland Mayor’s Office. (Ongoing, 2023-2026)

Evaluating the Impact of Preschool Expansion in Tempe, Arizona

NORC partnered with the City of Tempe to evaluate the Tempe Preschool Resource Expansion (TPRE) program, an initiative designed to increase access to high-quality preschool for children from low-income families. Through a rigorous, multi-year evaluation, NORC assessed the program’s effectiveness in improving school readiness, supporting family engagement, and addressing barriers to early childhood education. The study included analysis of child outcomes, family experiences, and program implementation, providing actionable insights to inform local policy and guide future investments in early learning. (2018-2024)

Financing Early Care and Education

NORC is conducting the Financing Early Care and Education Study to examine how early care and education (ECE) programs are funded across the United States. Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, the study explores the sources and mechanisms of financing for ECE, including federal, state, and local investments, as well as private contributions. By analyzing funding streams and their impact on program quality, accessibility, and sustainability, NORC aims to provide policymakers and stakeholders with actionable insights for strengthening the ECE system. The study’s findings will inform efforts to ensure that all children and families have access to high-quality early learning opportunities. (Ongoing, 2022-2027)

Retaining Rural Science and Math Teachers

NORC is conducting the Retaining Rural Science and Math Teachers study to investigate strategies for supporting and retaining educators in rural communities. Funded by the National Science Foundation, the study examines the challenges faced by rural science and math teachers, evaluates the effectiveness of professional development and support programs, and identifies factors that contribute to teacher retention. Through comprehensive data collection and analysis, NORC provides insights to help policymakers and education leaders strengthen the rural teaching workforce and improve student outcomes in science and mathematics. (Ongoing, 2024-2027)

Student Absenteeism

NORC conducted the Student Absenteeism Meta-Analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to student absenteeism and the effectiveness of interventions designed to address it. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, this study systematically reviewed and synthesized findings from hundreds of research studies on absenteeism in K–12 education. The project examined a wide range of causes, including health, family, school climate, and policy factors, as well as the short- and long-term impacts of chronic absenteeism on student achievement and well-being. By evaluating the evidence base for various intervention strategies, NORC identified what works in reducing absenteeism and supporting student success. The study’s findings will inform educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to implement evidence-based solutions to improve attendance and educational outcomes nationwide. (2024-2025)

Understanding University Campus Climates*

NORC works with multiple California institutions to collect tailored campus climate data to help universities better understand their faculty and student populations. Since 2021, multiple California colleges, including 10 UC campuses, have participated in a climate assessment for their Jewish communities. Each institution receives insights to help improve the experiences of its student body. The surveys are funded by the Hillel Campus Climate Initiative. (Ongoing since 2021)



Jennifer Hamilton

Senior Vice President

Jennifer uses her research and leadership to improve the social, academic, and economic outcomes of marginalized youth.

Senior vice president Jennifer Hamilton uses her 30+ years as a methodologist to guide NORC’s Education & Child Development department. As a former public housing resident and first-generation college student, she brings a unique perspective to the role of principal investigator on studies ranging from kindergarten through post-secondary education. She specializes in elementary and secondary education, educational equity, civics education and engagement, research design and methodology, and advanced quantitative methods. She currently leads a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation effort to develop an ecosystem that helps educators access high-quality instructional materials to better meet the needs of Black and LatinX students and students experiencing poverty.

Expertise

- Transitional Kindergarten
- Achievement Gaps and Educational Equity
- Artificial Intelligence
- Civics Education and Engagement
- STEM Education
- Research Design and Methodology

Education

PhD

University of Maryland

MS

The George Washington University

BA

The George Washington University



Marc Hernandez

Associate Director

Marc is an applied developmental psychologist with expertise in cognitive development and early childhood and elementary education.

Associate director Marc Hernandez is the founding director of NORC’s Early Childhood Research & Practice Collaborative. He is an applied developmental psychologist with expertise in cognitive development and early childhood and elementary education, in both informal (home-based) and formal (school-based) educational settings. Marc is experienced in a range of methodological approaches, and his research and evaluation work focuses on evaluating program interventions and policies designed to improve early childhood outcomes. Marc is the co-principal investigator of NORC’s independent evaluation of Oakland Promise, a cradle-to-career program.

Expertise

- Early Care & Education
- Technical Assistance & Training
- Cradle to Career
- Parent & Family Engagement
- Policy, Programs & Evaluation

Education

PhD

University of Chicago

MA

University of Chicago

BS

University of Chicago



Vi Nhuan Le

Principal Research Scientist

Vi is a skilled survey methodologist and data scientist committed to improving the quality and impact of social science research.

Principal research scientist Vi Nhuan Le is based in Northern California and specializes in survey methodology, data collection, and statistical analysis for large-scale research projects. At NORC, Vi leads efforts to design and implement innovative survey solutions, ensuring data accuracy and reliability across diverse populations. Vi’s expertise includes questionnaire development, sampling strategies, and the application of advanced statistical techniques to address complex research questions. With a background in both academic and applied research, Vi supports projects that inform public policy and advance understanding in fields such as health, education, and social welfare.

Expertise

- Survey Methodology
- Data Collection & Management
- Statistical Analysis
- Questionnaire Design
- Sampling Strategies

Education

PhD

University of Michigan

MA

University of Michigan

BA

University of California, Berkeley



Robert M. Goerge

Senior Research Fellow

Bob is a nationally recognized expert in child and family policy, with a passion for using data to improve the lives of vulnerable populations.

Senior research fellow Robert M. Goerge is a leader in the development and use of integrated data systems to inform social policy and practice. At NORC, Robert directs projects that leverage administrative data to evaluate and improve programs serving children and families. He is a co-founder of the Integrated Data Systems for the Social Sciences (IDS4SS) initiative and has played a pivotal role in advancing data-driven decision-making in government and nonprofit sectors. Robert’s work has influenced policy at local, state, and national levels, and he is widely published on topics including child welfare, early childhood education, and social service delivery.

Expertise

- Child and Family Policy
- Integrated Data Systems
- Program Evaluation
- Social Service Delivery
- Data-Driven Decision-Making

Education

PhD

University of Chicago

MA

University of Chicago

BA

Stanford University



Matthew Stagner

Senior Fellow

Matthew is a nationally recognized expert on child and family policy, evaluation, and the use of evidence in policy settings.

Matthew is a senior fellow who studies child and youth development policies, evaluates programs to improve child and family well-being, and uses data and evidence to inform policymaking. Before joining NORC in 2024, he held leadership positions in the social policy research field, including as a vice president at Mathematica, executive director at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, and center director at the Urban Institute. His research portfolio includes understanding the role of fathers in child welfare, connecting at-risk youth to a healthy and productive adulthood, and improving the use of rigorous evidence to inform policy. Throughout his career, he has worked on numerous projects with California state and county agencies, including the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services and Kern County Department of Human Services. He also supported the state’s Lifting Children and Families Out of Poverty Task Force. He is a past president of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management.

Expertise

- Programs for vulnerable youth
- Child maltreatment and child welfare
- Early care and education
- Hard-to-reach populations

Education

PhD

University of Chicago

MPP

Harvard University

BA

University of Chicago



Sarah Kabourek

Senior Research Scientist

Sarah is a quantitative research expert studying policy impacts on children and families.

Sarah is a senior research scientist at NORC at the University of Chicago. She has extensive experience in quantitative and mixed-methods research design and analysis. She uses rigorous analytic approaches to study the experiences of children and families in early care and education and K-12 education systems. The goals of this work are to increase access to high-quality early childhood and educational opportunities.

Expertise

- Impact Evaluation
- Quantitative Methods
- Educational Equity
- Early Care
- Early Education

Education

PhD

Vanderbilt University

BA

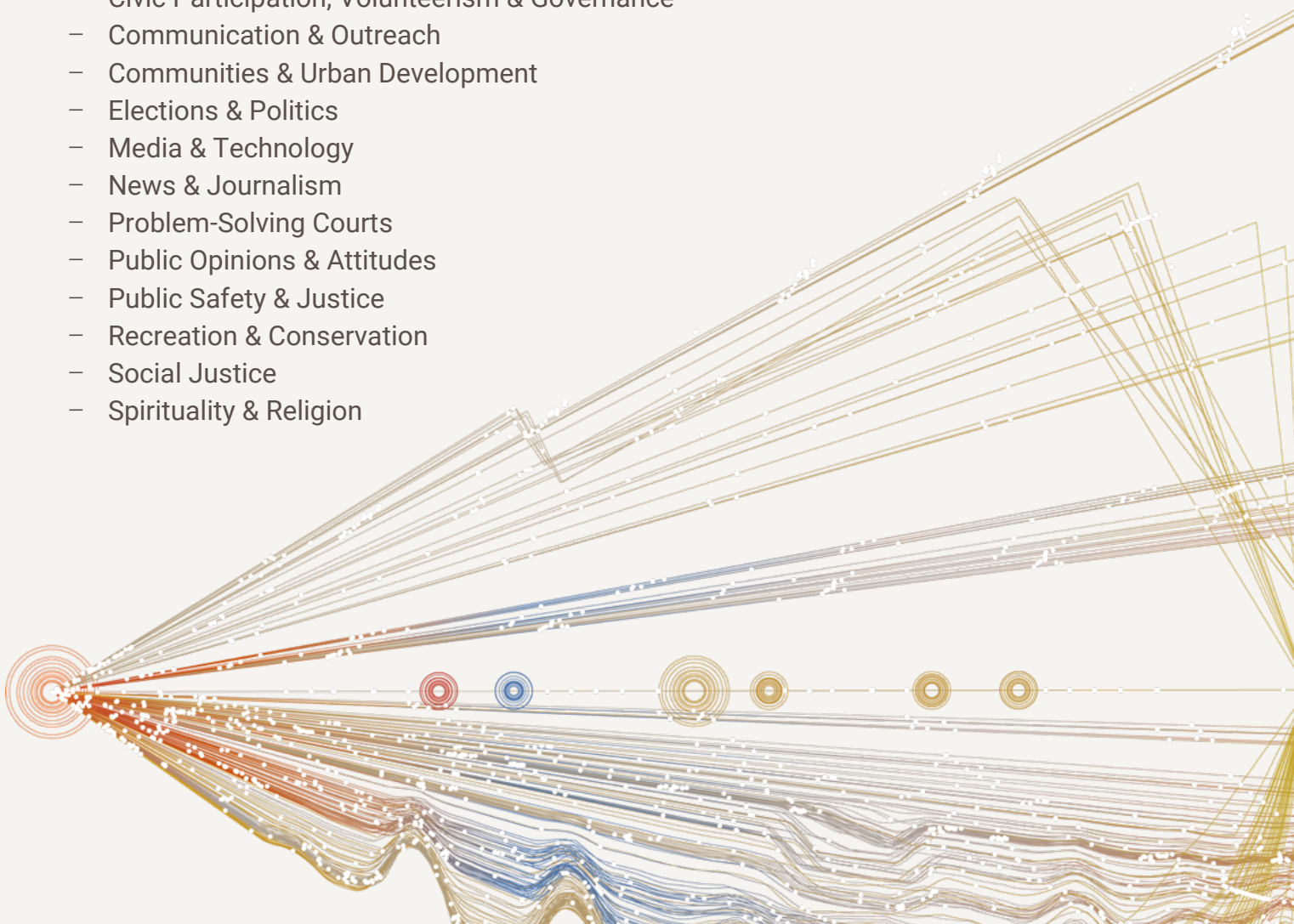
Princeton University

*NORC Public Affairs

Since our founding, NORC has been tapping into the public consciousness to provide government agencies and other organizations with the data and insights they need to understand and serve their constituents. Our work in California has included several projects related to public safety and justice and the attitudes and opinions of the state's Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, and we have a growing body of work related to climate change.

NORC Explores

- Arts & Culture
- Civic Participation, Volunteerism & Governance
- Communication & Outreach
- Communities & Urban Development
- Elections & Politics
- Media & Technology
- News & Journalism
- Problem-Solving Courts
- Public Opinions & Attitudes
- Public Safety & Justice
- Recreation & Conservation
- Social Justice
- Spirituality & Religion



Select NORC Projects in Public Affairs

Los Angeles Wildfire Recovery & Rebuilding*

NORC is partnering with the Pacific Palisades Community Council to conduct a study of residents' priorities and preferences for recovery and rebuilding after the January 2025 Palisades Fire. The project included focus groups and a large-scale community survey to understand the challenges residents face, such as financial barriers, insurance gaps, environmental concerns, and infrastructure needs. The study findings aim to provide insights for local, state, and national decision-makers to guide policies and investments that reflect the community's needs and vision for a resilient future. (Ongoing, 2025-2026).

Strengthening Underserved Communities with High Climate and Disaster Risk*

As part of the Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) Program with the California Volunteers (CV) office at the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), NORC built a web-based mapping tool to help identify California neighborhoods with high disaster and climate risk and focus and prioritize programmatic efforts. NORC surveyed audiences in high-risk neighborhoods to inform messages designed to increase neighborhood resiliency and volunteerism among residents. (2023-2024)

Spotlighting the Experiences and Views of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*

Using Amplify AAPI, the first-ever research panel designed to scientifically represent Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities, NORC has conducted two projects with a major focus on California. The first, funded by Stop AAPI Hate, looked at experiences of discrimination and its effects on mental health, relationships, and sense of belonging. The second, the AAPI Data/AP-NORC Monthly Poll, is a series of surveys on crucial issues ranging from financial well-being to civic engagement. It is conducted with the University of California, Berkeley. (Ongoing since 2023)

Building Statewide Capacity for CalWORKs Performance and Accountability*

NORC is collaborating with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to strengthen the state's ability to monitor and improve county-level participation in the CalWORKs program. By systematically extracting and integrating data from county Quality Improvement Plans, CalWORKs County Self-Assessments (Cal-CSA), and System Improvement Plan (Cal-SIP) reports, NORC is helping CDSS develop a comprehensive framework to capture and analyze county activities across key policy areas. This integrated approach supports robust analysis and innovation in county efforts, advancing the goals of the CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review (Cal-OAR) and empowering CDSS to drive continuous improvement statewide. (Ongoing, 2025-2026)

Evaluating California Policy to Provide Youth with Early Access to Counsel*

NORC conducted a study on the implementation of California Senate Bills 395 and 203, which require that youth under the age of 18 be able to consult with and be advised by an attorney before deciding whether to waive their right to remain silent. The study, the first of its kind in the country, was funded by Fair Trials. (2021-2023)

Reducing Recidivism in California*

NORC conducted a randomized controlled trial of a prisoner reentry program, including two large sites in California. The study explored participants' long-term outcomes, focusing on criminal recidivism, employment and earnings, and other indications of well-being, such as housing, family formation, substance abuse, and overall health status. The study was funded by the National Institute of Justice. (2021-2024)

Understanding Public Perceptions of Climate and Energy Policy

In collaboration with the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago, The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research has undertaken several studies that capture the public's understanding of climate change and energy policy, including the motivators and barriers to EV adoption, the willingness to pay for climate solutions, and the relationship between extreme weather events and climate attitudes. This partnership is one example of AP-NORC's research portfolio of public opinions on climate and the environment. (Ongoing)



Ashani Johnson-Turbes

Vice President

Ashani is a vice president leading work to refine and innovate methodological approaches to mixed-method research methods, including data collection, analysis, and democratizing data and research use.

Ashani is a nationally recognized leader in health communication science and a leader in NORC's [Center for Health Communication Science](#). She also leads the development, growth, and marketing of NORC's probability-based survey panel, [ChicagoSpeaks](#). She is an award-winning social scientist with over 20 years of experience conducting social science research, including rigorous evaluation of messages, materials, and campaigns that promote people's health, well-being, and thriving. Ashani brings a distinctive interdisciplinary lens blending her academic background in political science, political behavior, and public policy with years of work in health policy, public health, health marketing, communication, and mixed-method evaluation. She has expertise in participatory and deliberative models for community and partner engagement, engaging and recruiting people to research, including recruiting different groups of people to clinical research trials. Ashani specializes in designing quasi-experimental research studies, mixed-method research, and qualitative data collection and analysis. She also serves as President of the [Society for Health Communication](#) and is Adjunct Professor at [Emory University Rollins School of Public Health](#). Ashani presents at national and international meetings and conferences and is published in peer-reviewed journals. She is a sought-after thought leader and public speaker.

Expertise

- Health Communication Science
- Health Equity
- Social Drivers of Health
- Hard-to-Reach Populations & People in Vulnerable Situations
- Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

Education

PhD

Purdue University

MA

Purdue University

BA

Hampton University



Emily Alvarez

Senior Research Scientist

Emily is an experienced survey researcher specializing in questionnaire design, survey operations, and communicating complex findings to diverse audiences.

Emily Alvarez is a senior research scientist in NORC’s Public Affairs & Media Research department with experience in survey research design and analysis. She specializes in questionnaire design and survey operations, and has led studies on topics including outdoor recreation, teenage mental health, environmental policy, the COVID-19 pandemic, parenting, education, trust in government, and elections. Emily directs the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation and leads operations for the National Recreational Boating Safety Survey. She has managed projects for The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and served as survey operations lead for AP VoteCast.

Expertise

- Survey Research Design & Analysis
- Questionnaire Design
- Survey Operations
- Public Affairs & Media Research
- Research Communication

Education

MA

Northwestern University

BA

Southern Illinois University



Kate Bachtell

Senior Research Director

Kate leads large-scale, multi-mode data collection projects and is an analyst skilled in both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Senior director Kate Bachtell, based in San Diego, oversees research for federal organizations and agencies, including the Federal Reserve Board, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and the National Science Foundation, as well as academic partners. With over 20 years of experience, Kate manages all aspects of data collection, including questionnaire design, cognitive testing, interviewer training, participant recruitment, and data harmonization. Her recent methodological research focuses on the use of monetary incentives and adaptive survey design. Kate also has extensive experience conducting community-based, longitudinal research on child and family well-being. She currently serves as assistant project director for the Survey of Consumer Finances and has led major studies, including the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation and the Making Connections Survey.

Expertise

- Survey Methods Research
- Hard-to-Reach Populations & People in Vulnerable Situations
- Strategy & Planning
- Data Collection & Management
- Research Design & Methodology

Education

PhD

Loyola University Chicago

MA

Loyola University Chicago

BA

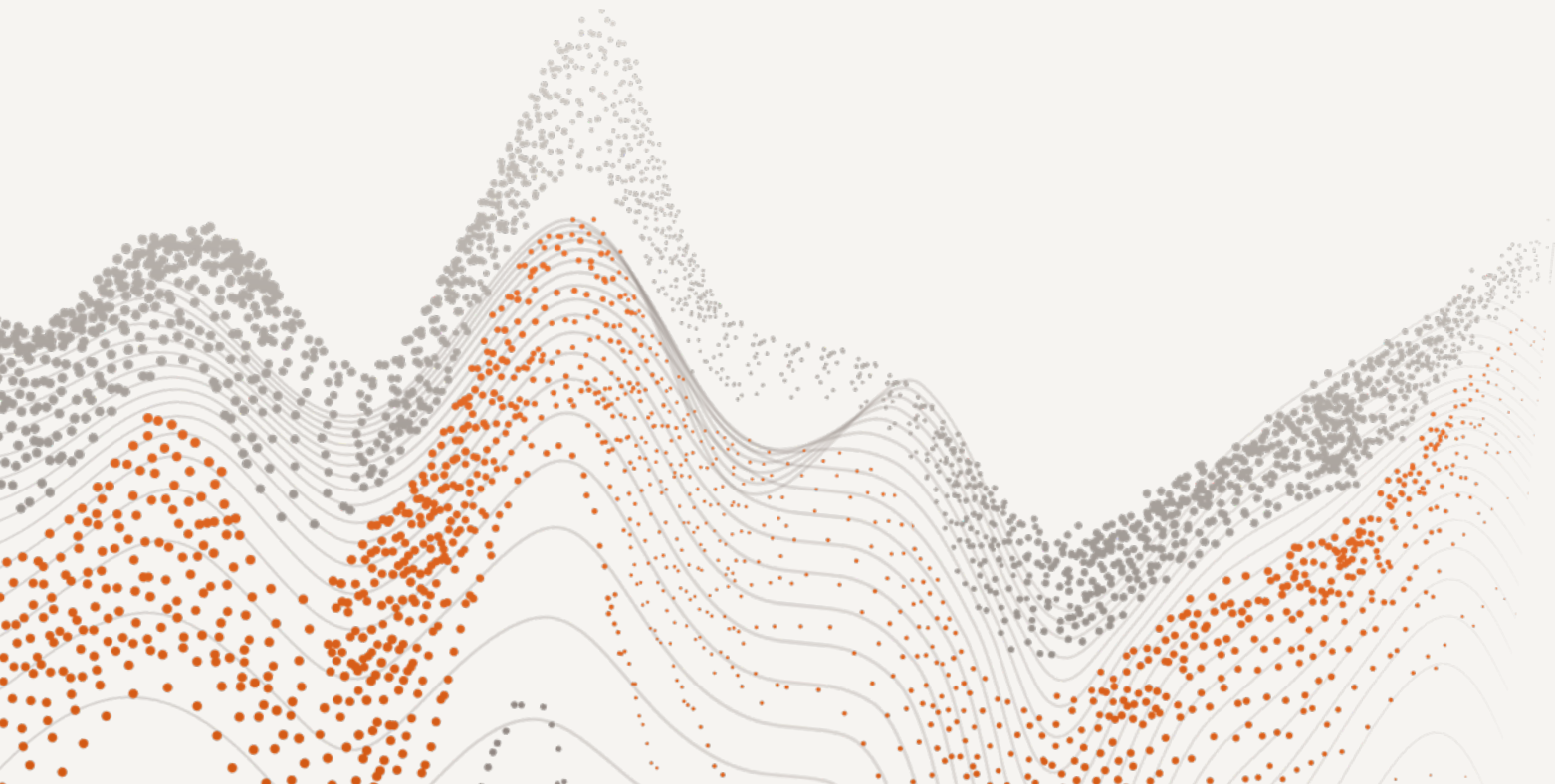
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

NORC Research Science

NORC's research and expertise in statistics, data science, survey methodology, and research dissemination are central to every project NORC conducts. NORC continually innovates in these areas to help make social science research ever more trustworthy. We develop and validate new ideas and approaches while finding new and efficient ways to apply tried-and-true practices.

NORC Explores:

- Advanced Quantitative Methods
- Combining & Integrating Data
- Data Engineering Research
- Data Science & Machine Learning
- Privacy-Preserving Methodology Research
- Research Dissemination
- Statistical Consulting & Training
- Survey Methods Research



Select NORC Research Science Innovations & Solutions

Providing Rigorous, Affordable, Rapid-Turnaround Survey Solutions

Over the past five years, [AmeriSpeak®](#), NORC's probability-based survey panel, has powered landmark research on health care access, legal services, mental health, and aging—providing California policymakers with the rigorous data they need to make informed decisions. NORC has expanded panel representation to include more Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander respondents through the [Amplify AAPI](#) initiative. Additionally, NORC has recently created the Veterans Insight Panel, a national data resource designed to capture high-quality data on the experiences, opinions, and well-being of Veterans across every branch and era of service. This investment in inclusive sampling ensures that policy research reflects California's full demographic diversity—from the state's aging population to its multilingual immigrant communities—providing the foundation for policy decisions that benefit all across the nation's most populous state.

Combining NORC's Rigorous Research with The AP's Journalistic Reach and Independence

The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and high-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and around the world. With our rigorous, objective research and AP's unbiased journalism, we have conducted more than 250 studies on critical issues, including trust in the media, health care, and the economy.



Jennifer Benz

Senior Vice President

Jennifer’s research focuses on public opinion and elections, survey methodology, and media attitudes.

Senior vice president Jennifer Benz is deputy director of The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. She also directs AP VoteCast, NORC’s electoral polling solution, and is principal investigator of the Media Insight Project, AP-NORC’s research collaboration with the American Press Institute. Jennifer has conducted survey research on a variety of topics, including the public’s priorities and attitudes toward government, trust in news and attitudes toward journalism, and race and ethnicity. With a background in political science, social psychology, and public health, she successfully distills complex research for different audiences, including journalists, policymakers, and the public.

Expertise

- Democracy & Governance
- Elections & Politics
- News & Journalism
- Public Opinion & Attitudes
- Survey Methods Research

Education

PhD

University of North Carolina

BA

American University



David Dutwin

Executive Director and Senior Vice President, AmeriSpeak

David is a nationally recognized expert in survey methodology and public opinion research, leading AmeriSpeak, NORC’s probability-based panel.

As executive director and senior vice president of AmeriSpeak, David Dutwin oversees the development and management of NORC’s probability-based panel, which provides high-quality data for research across a range of topics. David’s expertise includes survey methodology, questionnaire design, sampling, and data collection. He is a past president of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and has published widely on survey methods and public opinion. David is committed to advancing the science of survey research and supporting the work of researchers and policymakers.

Expertise

- Survey Methodology
- Questionnaire Design
- Sampling
- Data Collection
- Public Opinion Research

Education

PhD

University of Pennsylvania

MA

University of Washington

BA

University of Pennsylvania



David Sterrett

Principal Research Scientist

David is a political scientist dedicated to advancing the understanding of public attitudes, survey methodology, and news consumption habits.

Principal research scientist David Sterrett leads major projects at The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, where he specializes in designing and managing complex multi-mode surveys and pioneering innovative approaches to survey methodology. David directed the methodological redesign of the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation and serves as the methodological lead for the upcoming 2027 National Survey. He is also project director for the 2026 National Recreational Boating Safety Survey for the U.S. Coast Guard, spearheading a comprehensive redesign of its methodology.

Expertise

- Political Attitudes
- Survey Methodology
- Public Opinion & News Habits
- Research Design & Methodology
- Media & Technology

Education

PhD

University of Illinois at Chicago

BS

Northwestern University



Susan Paddock

Chief Statistician

Susan oversees NORC's statistics, survey methodology, data science, and artificial intelligence capabilities.

Susan Paddock is NORC's chief statistician and executive vice president. She is responsible for NORC's study design and analytic methods. As a member of NORC's Executive Council, Susan advances NORC's corporate research and development enterprise, focusing on NORC's core cross-functional capabilities in statistics, survey methods, data science, analytics, and artificial intelligence. Susan is a nationally recognized thought leader with over 20 years of statistical methods innovation and application to topics of societal and policy importance, including evaluation of behavioral health interventions, health services research, health care quality, Medicare payment policy, public opinion research, public policy, and veterans' health care.

Expertise

- Research Design & Methodology
- Analytics & Data Science
- Advanced Quantitative Methods
- Survey Methods Research
- Policy, Programs & Evaluation

Education

PhD

Duke University

MS

Duke University

BA

University of Minnesota

Contact NORC

For more information, please contact:



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