

## Why the Center's work matters

The New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies in 2015 enjoyed another year of original research, robust public engagement, and service as a vital source of insight and information for decision-makers across the state. We maintained our focus on our core areas of research, such as the state budget, demographics, and the economy. In addition, we broke ground on a new policy area: New Hampshire's water use and infrastructure. We shared our research with leaders from New Hampshire's business, non-profit, local government, educational and other sectors. We worked hard to strengthen our reputation as an unbiased resource for leaders and concerned citizens across the state. No other organization in New Hampshire performs such a service.

True to its original charge, the Center is improving the quality of public policy debate in New Hampshire. In an era where civic discourse is dominated by spin, the Center's thoughtful, non-partisan analysis is an increasingly important foundation to enable rational public policy debate. In short, the Center has provided, and continues to provide *information that matters*.

This was a year when the hard work of the Center was recognized again and again. At the New Hampshire Business and Industry Association's Annual Meeting, the Center received the New Hampshire Advantage Award which honors businesses, organizations or projects that enhance New Hampshire's special character and quality of life. Executive Director Steve Norton and the Center also received the Cotton Mather Cleveland Leadership award. This award is given to a graduate and/or supporting organization whose professional and community activities best exemplify the goals and aspirations of Leadership NH.

This was also a time of great loss at the Center, with the deaths of long time board member Martin Gross and the Center's economist, Dennis Delay. The Board and Staff of the Center take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible contributions they both have made to public policy in New Hampshire.

## Our work in 2015

Here's a quick snapshot of our activities in 2015, by the numbers:

- We produced **8** original reports on a range of topics (including **6** "policy notes") and wrote **3** columns for state media outlets summarizing our original research for a broad readership.
- We delivered **85** presentations across the state to business, non-profit and governmental groups.
- We scaled back our social media efforts, producing four original products (2 Blogs, Webinar, Website Initiative)
- We appeared on **11** radio or TV programs, discussing our work or providing analysis.
- We earned more than **41** appearances in state and national media that featured our work.

But these numbers do not tell the full story of our reach last year. Our ongoing research and analysis on some of the fundamental questions for New Hampshire's future – including the impact of an aging population, and the state's long-term finances – continue to inform an ever-widening circle of policy debate.

While we have evolved considerably from an organization primarily known for producing reports aimed at the Legislature, we continue to seek to broaden our reach and accessibility to new audiences, arming more people with more information so they can make good decisions for the state's future.

We now spend over half our resources sharing our work with audiences across New Hampshire, and we continue to improve our communication methods. In addition, we are regularly consulted by the state's media outlets to help them shape their long-term thinking about coverage of New Hampshire policy issues. We are frequent guests on statewide programs dedicated to coverage of public policy – including New Hampshire Public Radio's "The Exchange" and WMUR's "Close Up" and "New Hampshire's Business."

### ***Collaborations***

Since our founding, we have striven to develop strong partnerships with like-minded organizations focused on New Hampshire's future. Those partnerships and collaborations help us expand our influence and amplify our work beyond the circle of policymakers who might ordinarily be our core audience. Some of our long-standing key partners including Leadership New Hampshire (and the various leadership groups across the state) the New Hampshire Forum on the Future, the Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire, the Endowment for Health, and the New Hampshire Coalition for Business and Education.

### **Our funding**

The Center relies on a broad base of donors and research grants to support our mission. By design, at least half of our funding comes from unrestricted donations, ensuring our independence and our ability to respond quickly to changing policy needs in the state. Your support helps guarantee the kind of thoughtful research and analysis we're known for, well into the future. For information about supporting the Center, visit our website: [nhpolicy.org](http://nhpolicy.org).

### **Our priorities**

The Center's research agenda has evolved over the years, as circumstances change in the policymaking arena. We also elevate important issues that are not receiving sufficient attention. Here is an overview of some of our current areas of focus.

#### **Aging and demographics**

Our research helps policymakers and others understand the impact of New Hampshire's changing demographics, including our aging population and the effect that will have on a range of key policy questions. Our research has fundamentally reshaped the public discussion on this critical topic. We are currently building on that work with new partnerships with other organizations interested in understanding the state's shifting demographics. Executive Director Steve Norton is often asked to talk to statewide non-profits, corporations, and other leaders to share the current status of New Hampshire's demographics and policy making environment.

#### **New Hampshire's economy**

Many state businesses look to our analyses to help them better understand the trends underlying the economy. Our "Tailwind to Headwind" work, which examined the shifting trends in the state's economic model, upended long-term policy thinking across New Hampshire's business, non-profit

and public sectors. Our economic monitoring continues to focus on the evolving issue of opportunity – whether in terms of economics, education, or healthcare – facing Granite Staters.

### **The state budget**

We have consistently monitored both the spending and revenue sides of New Hampshire's state budget and are regularly asked by legislators and agency leaders to provide forecasts and analysis. We prepared updated analysis of revenue for the House and Senate Ways and Means committee. In addition, we continued to be a resource for House and Senate committees as they grappled with difficult public policy questions such as the financial implications of expanding the state's Medicaid program and reducing the state's corporate tax rates.

### **Education**

Our work in New Hampshire's education systems has been varied – from our landmark work analyzing the state's high school drop-out rates, to more recent work on school facility spending and public higher education. In 2014, our analysis of the trends shaping the school system and student well-being in Manchester helped spark conversation, new thinking and policy change in the state's largest community. In 2015, our work turned to focus on the implications of declining enrollment on the cost of, and potential consolidation among, New Hampshire's schools.

### **Health policy and finance**

New Hampshire's healthcare systems have been at the core of our work since our founding. National healthcare reform and state reform (including the elimination of the state's Certificate of Need program) have introduced a level of uncertainty into the healthcare market here in New Hampshire, and the Center has provided analyses of the changes in market competition to New Hampshire legislators as well as the US Department of Justice. In addition, in both 2014 and 2015, the Center worked with policymakers to help them understand the variables involved in expanding the state's Medicaid program.

### **Municipal government**

Our annual summary of trends in local finances has helped municipal leaders understand the impact of the recession on their budgets.

### **New Hampshire's environment**

Our work on the state's water resources, including surface water, drinking water, and water infrastructure, has sought to connect these issues to other policy concerns, such as municipal finance and demographic change.

## Community outreach & support

Producing original research and analysis is the foundation upon which all our work rests. But we are also committed to sharing this information with as wide a range of audiences as possible. We are regularly consulted by New Hampshire's leaders in the public, private and non-profit sectors who seek our insight and expertise as they navigate their own strategic questions.

Among the audiences we served in 2015:

- **New Hampshire Non-Profits**
  - Providing strategic presentations to (among others):
    - Hospital CFO annual meeting
    - New Hampshire Public Television board of directors
    - New Hampshire College of Healthcare Administrations
    - NH Association of Senior Centers
    - AARP Leadership
    - Endowment for Health
    - New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
  - Responding to data requests from (among others):
    - Northern Forest Center
    - Community Development Finance Authority
    - New Hampshire Public Radio
    - Community College System of New Hampshire
    - New Futures
  - Collaborating with others in the policy arena to amplify our research:
    - We are participating in the Forum on the Future CEO roundtable as content providers
    - We continue to try and bring quality data to the Business and Industry association regarding various policy initiatives, including workforce development, and tax structure changes.
    - We are a core member of the New Hampshire Coalition for Business and Education, a group dedicated to improving the quality of the state's education system.
    - We are a member of the New England Public Policy Center's technical advisory board.
    - We continue to partner with the New Hampshire Women's Foundation, providing data for their "Gender Matters" publications which focus on issues related to gender in New Hampshire.
  - Educating the state's Leadership Groups:
    - We presented overviews of New Hampshire's economy, state budget, education system and health care systems to Leadership New Hampshire, and various regional Leadership groups, throughout the year.
- **New Hampshire Businesses**
  - Educating businesses regarding the state's economy, including (among others):
    - Lake Sunapee Bank
    - Fidelity Investments

- New Hampshire Bankers Association
- Salem Chamber economic development team
- **New Hampshire Civic Leaders**
  - We provide regular speaking appearances for:
    - Local select boards, city councils, budget committees, etc.
    - Chambers of commerce
    - Local political events/political groups
    - Voter/candidate forums
  - We receive regular requests from town/city administrators and elected officials for data on municipal finance, crime, education and demographic trends.
- **New Hampshire Political & Policy Leaders**

Officials in the legislative and executive branches are among our most important points of contact for influencing good policy in the state. We are consulted by legislators, their staff, agency directors, and members of the Executive Branch for our analysis of various topics. In 2014, that included:

  - Providing overviews of major state budgetary issues to committee leadership in the House and Senate.
  - Meeting with the Governor and staff to discuss long-term trends in the state.
  - Meeting with senior leadership in the state Department of Health and Human Services to discuss state health policy.
  - Sharing our work on public education with legislative leaders.
  - Serving on the Governor's Consensus Panel on Revenue Estimates.
  - Providing data and analysis for the Representative Neil Kurk's Committee created to review demographic trends and New Hampshire policy.

## Staff

**Stephen A. Norton, Executive Director.** Mr. Norton joined the Center in October 2005. Between 1998 and 2005, he worked for the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services in a variety of capacities. Prior to that, Mr. Norton was a research associate at the Urban Institute, a non-profit think tank, in Washington, DC.

**Daniel R. Barrick, Deputy Director.** Mr. Barrick has been with the Center since December of 2010. His work focuses on the state budget and education policy. He was previously a reporter and editor with the Concord Monitor.

**Dennis C. Delay, Economist.** With the Center since 2006, Mr. Delay was also the New Hampshire Forecast Manager for the New England Economic Partnership, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing objective economic analyses and forecasts.

**Cathleen K. Arredondo, Office Manager.** Ms. Arredondo joined the Center in June 2005. She has nearly 30 years of experience in business and customer service.

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