



**KENNESAW STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

# **BURRUSS INSTITUTE**

OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND RESEARCH

## **2021 Year in Review**

---

[www.burruss.kennesaw.edu](http://www.burruss.kennesaw.edu)



# About the Institute



## Our History

For over thirty years, the Burruss Institute has provided applied research services to organizations throughout the state of Georgia and nationally. The Institute is a founding member of AASRO (the Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations), an organization committed to promoting excellence and integrity in the conduct of survey research, and CUPSO (the Consortium of University Public Service Organizations), a network of university based public service institutes whose work informs state and local governments, nonprofits, business organizations and the media on a range of issues and challenges.

The Institute houses a group of skilled researchers with many years of experience designing and conducting research projects that meet client needs and expectations. The Burruss Institute offers a wide range of services capable of meeting the demands of the most challenging research projects. Research design and data collection services are provided using scientific methods that conform to industry standards and best practices. Organizations can be confident in using data prepared by the Institute for planning, evaluation, or reporting purposes.

The following pages contain examples of projects the Institute completed during the 2021 fiscal year, as well as descriptions of services the Institute provides. The Institute can provide turn-key services from start to finish or tailored services at each phase of the project.

## Our Mission

The mission of the A L Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research at Kennesaw State University is to mentor students and collaborate with faculty to enhance the ability of governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations to make informed decisions for the public good by providing relevant data, technical resources and skill development.

## Services

Descriptions of the types of services provided by the Institute are presented below. Because the Institute offers a variety of services, staff are able to develop customized research plans that maximize efficiency and generate the specific data necessary to answer a client's research questions. Many local organizations and KSU faculty rely on the Institute to provide applied research services.



### Survey Research

Planning, designing, and conducting surveys is one of the main functions of the Institute. Staff develop surveys based on client input and use best practices to ensure that questions measure what they are intended to measure. Surveys can be administered using several methods including paper and pencil, online, and telephone. A combination of survey methods may be used to increase response rates or to increase the representativeness of the sample.



### Needs Assessments

Government and nonprofit agencies need accurate and current information about the needs of their community to effectively plan and deliver services. Grant applications may require data to substantiate a community need. In addition, community needs may change over time based on demographic shifts or due to other social, cultural and economic changes. Needs assessments also give a voice to the public, service recipients, and other community stakeholders to ensure services are welcomed by the community and not duplicated.



### Training and Facilitation

The Institute is able to provide training for organizations on various issues by drawing on faculty from the university who are knowledgeable and current on the latest developments and industry best practices and standards. The Institute also offers meeting facilitation services to ensure that meetings progress smoothly and are productive.



### Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is vital to ensure your organization or funded program is meeting its goals and mission. Evaluation helps organizations know whether a program is functioning as intended, and if program outcomes are achieved. Successful program evaluations can identify which aspects of a program are working well and areas for improvement. Institute staff work with program staff to develop evaluation plans and track progress at prescribed intervals to ensure that programs are achieving their goals. The Institute provides status reports throughout the year to help measure progress and summative evaluation reports that detail a program's success. Institute staff are also available to consult with KSU Faculty members to develop evaluation plans for inclusion in research grant proposals.

# 2021 Project Highlights

## Telephone Surveys

The Institute conducts telephone surveys of citizens, government officials, and members of nonprofit and professional associations on a host of public issues, both locally and nationally. We conduct public opinion polls for newspapers, magazines and other media, on critical issues facing the citizens of Northwest Georgia.

The Burruss Institute has a state-of-the-art telephone survey lab with 23 networked stations. All stations are equipped with Dell PCs and use the latest Windows 10 operating system connected to uninterruptible power supplies and backup for data security and protection. Supervisors are always on-site while a survey is in progress and can access any interview in progress at any time. Training is customized for each project and includes pre-testing the instrument, continuous supervision, role-taking, and periodic review. In addition, our survey software provides excellent sample management, including the generation of detailed daily and cumulative productivity reports providing ongoing assessment of the survey administration.

### **METRO ATLANTA SPEAKS SURVEY**

For the sixth consecutive year, the Institute conducted the Metro Atlanta Speaks Survey on behalf of the Atlanta Regional Commission. A total of 4,404 adult residents across ten counties in the metro area were included in the 2020 survey. The survey incorporated both landline and cellphone telephone samples and, for 2020, online surveys were included as part of the overall survey strategy. Survey participants were asked about their experiences and opinions regarding a number of quality of life issues and other special topics, including racial discrimination, equality, policing and COVID recovery. Each year, the public release of the survey's results coincides with the State of the Region breakfast hosted by the ARC. The results are disseminated in various media outlets, and the ARC creates an extensive interactive online tool which can be used to review results for specific questions across selected geographies and demographic subgroups using data tables provided by the Institute.



## Community & Online Surveys

The size and complexity of large communities makes them a challenge to accurately represent in surveys. However, the Institute utilizes multiple methods to reach groups of people that are historically hard to reach. Employing multiple methods of data collection allows the Institute to capture responses that otherwise may have gone unheard. This ensures that diverse populations are well represented, and resulting analyses are accurate representations of the opinions of community members.

### **2021 BREMEN PARKS AND RECREATION ASSESSMENT**

In the spring of 2021, the A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research at Kennesaw State University to conduct a survey of residents of the City of Bremen (GA) to obtain their feedback on a number of issues related to the City's Parks and Recreation programs and facilities. The results of this survey will be used to assist the city in developing its 2021 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update.

Mail surveys were the primary method of distributing the survey to city residents. Surveys were mailed to a random sample of 2,400 addresses believed to be located within the city limits. Approximately one week after the surveys were mailed, a postcard was mailed to each address with a reminder to complete the mail survey. In order to improve the response rate as much as possible, the postcard also provided a URL and a scannable QR code that provided access to an online version of the survey in case a potential respondent felt more comfortable completing the survey online. At the same time this reminder postcard was mailed to the households in the original sample, a similar postcard was mailed to an additional 470 addresses not included in the original random sample so that residents in those households would have a chance to participate in the survey.

# Online Surveys

The Burruss Institute uses Qualtrics, one of the most highly respected and secure applications available, to author and host its online surveys. Qualtrics allows for complex and variable-dependent branching and/or filtering within questions. Questions may be filtered based upon answers directly provided by respondents, data imported from a database prior to survey administration and uniquely linked to each respondent, or from information based upon responses to a combination of questions. Surveys are programmed to assure that only those responses which are appropriate for each specific question are accepted; for instance, it will not accept multiple responses to single-response questions. For questions that are vital to the analysis of data or, in the case where a response determines follow-up questions, the question can be programmed to be mandatory. When a question programmed as mandatory is skipped by the respondent (respondent elects not to answer that question), they receive a prompt instructing them that a response is required, thus reducing item nonresponse. For lengthy surveys, a "Save" function can be added to a survey, allowing respondents to save his or her responses and return at a later time to complete and submit their survey. Qualtrics enables users to take a survey using computers, tablets, or cell phones.



## KSU POLS 1101 CLASS OMNIBUS STUDENT SURVEY

The Burruss Institute is working with the School of Government and International Affairs (SGIA) at KSU to field a survey covering various political and social topics. The survey is distributed to all students taking POLS 1101 during the current semester. The coordinators of the study are political science faculty members, Ben Taylor and April Johnson. The survey is conducted each semester and SGIA faculty members are given the opportunity to add questions to the survey and receive the data collected from their questions along with standard demographics. Data was most recently collected from 882 students during the Spring 2021 semester. The intent of this omnibus survey is to allow each participating faculty member to generate data enabling them to publish in various academic journals. The Institute has conducted the POLS 1101 survey each semester since the spring of 2019.

## COBB WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP 2020 UPDATE - SURVEY OF LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PARTNERS

This study was designed to analyze current trends in workforce development in Cobb County. The study enabled the Cobb Workforce Partnership to update their mission statement and direction for future development to ensure Cobb County produces workers with skills that are in demand.

To complement the information generated by various industry councils, the Cobb Workforce Partnership surveyed local business and industry partners, as well as educational and training partners, to obtain their opinions on a number of issues related to workforce development. The online survey was conducted by the A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research at Kennesaw State University. The Chamber provided the Institute with the email addresses of the partners to be invited to participate in the survey. Approximately 500 partners were invited to participate. The Institute emailed the original invitation to participate in mid-June 2020, and two follow-up invitations were sent approximately seven days apart after the initial invitation. The survey also examined the impact of COVID-19 on the partners responding to the survey.



## MULTI-CAMPUS FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENT SURVEY ON CAMPUS EXPERIENCES AND POLICIES THAT ALLOW GUNS ON CAMPUS

The Burruss Institute worked with faculty members Jennifer McMahon-Howard, Heidi Scherer, and James McCafferty in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice to design and implement a study of experiences and policies that allow carrying guns on university campus. The survey was distributed to faculty, staff, and students at the University of Georgia, Georgia State University, Middle Tennessee State University, and University of Tennessee. 680 students completed the survey across the four university's, while over 2400 university employees participated in the surveys. Faculty and staff were contacted directly, via university email addresses. Students were notified of the survey by their instructors and by flyers posted throughout the each university.

# Education Program Evaluation Projects



The Burruss Institute provided formative and summative evaluations for the 2020-2021 school year for several academic programs in Georgia. These programs have a variety of different purposes and goals, but typically include measurable outcomes related to student achievement, youth development, and family engagement. The Institute used data from site visits and school records, as well as youth, parent, teacher, and afterschool staff surveys. Feedback provided to program staff included recommendations for best practices and professional development. The table below includes the education programs the Institute evaluated, the purpose of the program, and the goals associated with each program.

Program Title	Purpose	Goals
<b>CORE Kid City 21st CCLC Evaluation</b>	Serves students and their families in grades K-5 from six elementary schools.  The program is held at the faith-based City of Refuge organization in Dalton, Georgia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve student achievement</li> <li>Foster youth development</li> <li>Improve family engagement</li> </ul>
<b>After School Academic Program (ASAP) III 21st CCLC Evaluation</b>	Serves students in grades K-5 and 9-12 at two elementary schools and one high school in Covington/Oxford Georgia (Newton County School System)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve student performance in the areas of math, reading/English/language arts, and science</li> <li>Foster youth development</li> <li>Provide students with opportunities to participate in a variety of enrichment activities</li> <li>Provide support to participating families</li> </ul>
<b>Marietta 21st CCLC at Youth Empowerment through Learning, Leading, and Service, Inc. (YELLS) Evaluation – Awarded 2017</b>	Serves elementary school students in grades K-5 and high school students in grades 9-12 in the Franklin Gateway community of Marietta, Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help youth achieve academic success</li> <li>Promote youth development (i.e., improve self-efficacy and soft skills)</li> <li>Promote family engagement</li> </ul>

Program Title	Purpose	Goals
<b>Next Level Community Camp Zion Development Center 21st CCLC Evaluation</b>	Serves students in grades K-5 from six elementary schools and is held at the Mount Zion First Baptist Church in Macon, Georgia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve student academic performance in the areas of math, reading/English/ language arts, and science</li> <li>Improve achievement levels in enrichment activities</li> <li>Foster family involvement</li> </ul>
<b>Cobb County School District Reach for the Stars 21st CCLC Evaluation – Awarded 2016</b>  <b>Leadership Academy and Innovation Academy</b>	Serves elementary school students in grades 2-5 from elementary schools in Acworth and Kennesaw, Georgia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve academic performance in the areas of math, reading/ language arts, science, and social studies</li> <li>Improve classroom behavior and enhance family involvement</li> </ul>
<b>Columbus State University Empowered Youth of Columbus 21st CCLC Evaluation – Awarded 2016</b>	Serves elementary, middle, and high school students via five elementary schools, one high school, and two Boys & Girls Clubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expose students to the arts</li> <li>Provide college and career exploration activities to help raise standardized test scores and increase graduation and attendance rates</li> <li>Improve academic achievement for students participating in the program</li> <li>Reduce indicators for future criminal activity</li> <li>Involve adult family members by having them participate in education activities which encourage planning for their child's future</li> </ul>
<b>Douglas County School District 21st CCLC Evaluation-CHAMPS – Awarded 2017</b> <b>SOAR – Awarded 2017</b> <b>SMART – Awarded in 2019</b> <b>Factory Transition – Awarded in 2019</b>	Serves elementary, middle, and high school students via six elementary schools, two middle schools, and three high schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve academic achievement</li> <li>Foster youth development</li> <li>Improve family engagement</li> </ul>



# Program Evaluation Projects

---

In addition to school systems and education focused nonprofits, the Institute provides program evaluation services to a variety of organizations. These organizations provide prevention education and services to meet various needs including drug and alcohol use and abuse, human trafficking, and communicable diseases. In each respect, the projects offer their own unique challenges. The following project descriptions outline the work the Institute conducted to ensure the success of each evaluation.

## DRUGS DON'T WORK PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Drugs Don't Work (DDW) program in Georgia is a statewide effort to reduce drug and alcohol use in the workplace. It is a program of The Council on Alcohol and Drugs, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. DDW provides educational and training services to employers throughout Georgia. In turn, employers are able to become certified drug free workplaces, thus contributing to the reduction of drug and alcohol use. The Burruss Institute evaluated the Drugs Don't Work program throughout 2020 by collecting and analyzing data from multiple observations of program presentations, an online survey of chamber of commerce members, and a telephone survey of participating businesses. The Institute has provided evaluation services to the Drugs Don't Work program since 2011.



## THE COUNCIL ON ALCOHOL AND DRUGS: EVALUATION OF ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The Council for Alcohol and Drugs (TCAD) contracted with the Burruss Institute to conduct an evaluation of their Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Program (ASAPP) activities in four Georgia counties: Cherokee, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gordon. The goals of the ASAPP programs include reducing the early onset of alcohol use and access to alcohol among 9-20-year-olds. Burruss has been providing evaluation services for the Council's prevention programming since 2006.

## STREET SMART YOUTH PROJECT PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Institute has worked with Street Smart Youth Project (SSYP) since 2016 to evaluate several programs provided by the nonprofit organization. SSYP works with minority youth in order to involve, prepare and empower them for growth and healthy living as adults, with an emphasis on prevention regarding delinquency, substance use, and HIV. The data collected during evaluation periods is used to provide SSYP with results of the outcomes of their programs.

## WELLSPRING LIVING PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Burruss Institute worked with Wellspring Living, a nonprofit organization that delivers services and provides restoration programs for survivors of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, to update their evaluation plan and assess the impact of their residential and community programs, including the development of logic models for each program. Burruss employs a utilization-focused approach to ensure the evaluation process and findings are useful to program staff and funders. In addition, the Burruss Institute provided a fiscal year annual report in August of 2019 and a calendar year report in May 2020 to assess progress on program goals and objectives.

## ATLANTA HARM REDUCTION COALITION (AHRC) PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Institute assisted the Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition (AHRC) in the evaluation of two grants in 2020. AHRC works with individuals who engage in high-risk behaviors by providing access to wellness and health services. The Healthcare Georgia Foundation grant evaluation measured whether a program for African-American women in the Atlanta area increased HIV awareness, increased the number of HIV positive African-American women identified and linked to care, and increased access to HIV prevention knowledge and skills for high risk African-American women. The second grant program, ViiV Positive Action Community Grants, provides organizations with the means to reach people not currently benefitting from existing HIV support services or programs. The Institute conducted an evaluation of AHRC's Mobile Health Unit, community events, and drop-in service center.



# Campus Engagement

## How We Help

The Burruss Institute houses a skilled group of researchers with experience and knowledge that are assets to the campus community. The staff at the Institute often collaborate with faculty members, departments, and colleges at KSU to provide services and expertise to enhance research projects and grant proposals. Examples include survey questionnaire or methodology assistance, programing and conducting online surveys, IRB compliance review prior to submission, dashboards, GIS analysis, data analysis, and grant or proposal development. Providing these resources enables the Institute to aid the KSU community in its efforts to become a premier R2 institution.

The Institute also provides opportunities to students who attend KSU. Through internships and paid student assistant positions, the Institute gives students the ability to work hands on with staff members while participating in data collection, data analysis, and reporting results. These opportunities enhance students' education by reinforcing the skills they have developed in the classroom by working with real world data on sponsored research projects.

### Colleges and Departments

The Institute is part of the Office of Research and able to provide support to faculty, departments, and colleges across the campus. To the right are some of the departments we worked with in 2020.

- WellStar School of Nursing
- School of Government and International Affairs
- Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
- Bagwell College of Education

Number of faculty members assisted

24

Online surveys conducted as part of faculty research

10

Research grants supported

13

Survey design and development

8



## Student Opportunities

### Dr. Tavishi Bhasin

Associate Professor - School of Government and International Affairs

*"The Burruss institute is an invaluable resource for the School of Government and International Affairs, aiding us in our research endeavors and assessment of teaching. The research specialists at Burruss, like Paul Vaughn, have helped many faculty members refine survey research questions, administer surveys and provide us with the results for data analysis in multiple formats. Our assessment work in the school also relies on the institute's experts for administering our exit exam each semester, following up with our POLS and IA undergraduate students and ensuring the results of the close-ended and open-ended questions are easily accessible. My colleagues and I have published multiple SoTL articles using data collected with the help of our colleagues at Burruss. When I need research assistance with any aspect of survey research, designing or completing assessment reports, I know I can rely on our Burruss experts to provide us with timely, high-quality" assistance.*



The Institute provides students with the opportunity to work on authentic research projects. Students are trained in research methods and develop skills that enable them to interview participants and accurately record responses.

Students engaged in research at the Institute conducted research in the Burruss telephone survey lab working on a variety of different projects. Students experience the rigor of data collection and some go on to analyze and report



Internships provide students the opportunity to work on client sponsored research projects while under the supervision of staff. Interns can complete up to 20 hours a week and earn class credit during a semester.

Several externally funded projects provided opportunities for students to apply the knowledge and skills they obtain in the classroom on real world research activities as part of their educational experience at KSU.



# KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY

A.L. BURRUSS INSTITUTE OF  
PUBLIC SERVICE AND RESEARCH

*Contact the Burruss  
Institute to learn how  
we can help implement  
your research needs.*

## CONTACT

---



(470) 578-6464



[burruss@kennesaw.edu](mailto:burruss@kennesaw.edu)



3333 Busbee DR MD 3302  
Kennesaw, GA 30144



[www.burruss.kennesaw.edu](http://www.burruss.kennesaw.edu)