



L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory

Founded in 1982, the Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory is a research-affiliated laboratory within the Center for Public Policy, housed in Virginia Commonwealth University's L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. We provide research and evaluation services to state and local government agencies, nonprofits, and academic units. Our researchers are trained in methodologies for the social and behavioral sciences and have extensive experience in field research. Our senior staff provide expertise in evaluation methods including survey design and execution, interviewing, and both quantitative and qualitative analysis. We will work with you to design the best methods of data collection and sampling strategies for your study.

Research and Field Capabilities

- Developing research plans
- Creating research tools (i.e., databases, survey instruments)
- Sampling and weighting
- Survey design and implementation (telephone, mail, internet, and face-to-face)
- Focus groups
- Cognitive Interviewing
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis
- Panels
- Recruitment, design, facilitation, recording, transcription, and analysis of interviews and focus groups
- Mixed methods approach
- Literature reviews

Database Management Capabilities

- Design and build databases to meet specific needs of research partner
- Database maintenance
- Data reporting
- Data management
- Quality assurance data assessments
- Web-based data entry systems
- Web-based reporting systems

Evaluation Capabilities

- Process and impact evaluations
- Development of program evaluation plans
- Mixed methods approach
- Qualitative and quantitative analyses
- Program measurements, monitoring, and impact assessments
- Literature reviews
- Focus groups
- Logic modeling
- Guidance mapping (purposeful program theory)
- Development of all evaluation tools
- Recruitment, design, facilitation, recording, transcription, and analysis of one-on-one interviews and focus groups
- In-person or telephone interviews
- Formative and summative reporting

Deliverables

- Clean and fully documented data sets
- Methodology statements
- Transcripts
- Frequency tables
- Training manuals
- Databases
- PowerPoint presentations on major finding highlights
- Research Summary Report (highlights major findings of the project, survey methodology, final disposition for all cases, response rate, questionnaire content, frequency tables on all survey items, and a list of verbatim responses)
- Full Research Report (includes all aspects of Research Summary report plus, frequency tables of all question items for each survey, cross-tabulations of survey items by demographic variables (or other variables) that have been selected by the client and a written interpretation of these tables, qualitative analyses on open ended/other specific questions)

Examples of Present and Past Clients

- National Science Foundation
- Howard Hughes Medical Institute
- National Institutes of Health
- United States Department of Health and Human Services
- Supreme Court of Virginia
- Virginia Department of Health
- Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services
- Virginia Community Colleges
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Commonwealth University Police Department
- Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
- Virginia Science Museum

Examples of our Work

The Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory's overall mission is to examine public issues and social problems through applied research and evaluation techniques to broaden and improve public discourse and decision-making. It has been creating collaborative research and evaluation partnerships with public and private entities at the Federal, state, and local levels since 1982. It tailors its services to meet the unique needs of each client, which often include both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. In all of its work, the goal is to provide the attention and expertise required to deliver credible and actionable information.

Results from our efforts have positively affected the lives of individuals, especially Virginians. In the past three years, we have achieved this in the following ways:

Judicial Performance. Managing the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program for the Supreme Court of Virginia. Each year about 175 judges are evaluated. We reach out to more than 28,000 attorneys and several thousand jurors, court reporters, and other court personnel. Each judge receives a confidential report for self-improvement. In years where the judge is up for reappointment, the Virginia General Assembly receives a report as well.

At Risk Youth. Providing evaluation support to Virginia Commonwealth University's Medical Campus Risk and Prevention Team as they design resources and services for high-risk youth in Richmond, to create a more positive developmental trajectory.

STEM. Conducting both process and impact evaluations to assist the grant teams from the National Science Foundation and the other Howard Hughes Medical Institute with their planned initiatives in improving the experience of diverse women faculty and non-traditional students experience in STEM fields at VCU.

Rape Prevention. Partnering with the Virginia Department of Health to expand the evaluation capacity of agencies in Virginia receiving rape prevention education funding. We created an evaluation toolkit for agencies to use with their employees and are working individually with the agencies to ramp up their evaluation capacity.

Peer Recover Specialist. Conducting research for the Virginia Department of Health designed to assess and strengthen the Peer Recovery Specialist program throughout Virginia.

Opioid Surveillance. In partnership with the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Commonwealth University's Wright Center for Clinical and Translational Research, studying medical chart data for opioid-related emergency department admissions as way to validate nonfatal opioid overdose surveillance data, thus ensuring the proper deployment of public health resources to combat the opioid epidemic in Virginia.

HIV/AIDS Medical Care. Providing technical assistance for the Virginia Department of Health on the Ryan White Care Act/Title II project, we help ensure that Virginians living with HIV/AIDS receive the medical care and supports they need to live as healthy and well as possible. We collect, manage, and report data to make sure the national standards of care are met for each person receiving care.

Science Museum and Local Problems. Collaborating with the Science Museum of Virginia in creating an evaluation tool for a program created to engage the community to solve local problems using tools from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Police Safety Initiatives. Creating and administering an in-depth survey examining the perceptions of Virginia Commonwealth University's Police Department. It is conducted yearly and used by the department to determine what safety initiatives to invest in and how to deploy current safety initiatives.

Safety at Rest Areas. Reporting out on survey feedback from safety/rest area visitors for the Virginia Department of Transportation to gather feedback so that travelers in Virginia receive the best service when they stop at one of Virginia's Safety and Rest Areas

Other Examples. Other evaluations have covered topics such as resources available to traumatic brain injury survivors and caregivers throughout Virginia; initiatives to increase diverse women faculty in the STEM field; a major mapping effort to successful transition student in STEM and Humanities and Arts majors from community colleges to Virginia Commonwealth University; gap analysis of resources available to homeless population within the Tri-Cities region; examination of training needs for individuals who work as home visitors for mothers and infants throughout the state of Virginia; employee engagement surveys for the Virginia Department of Corrections; the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University; Departments of Police and Parking at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Contact us

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