



About the Nebraska Legislature's Planning Committee

Established in 2009 through LB653, the Nebraska Legislature's Planning Committee was created to ensure a long-term, data-driven approach to policymaking. The committee's charge includes "...maintaining a future focus on the priorities of the State to assure continuity of policy and achieve long-term goals" by collecting and analyzing data, identifying priorities, setting long-term goals, and establishing benchmarks. The committee emerged in response to term limits, which heightened the need for continuity and planning.

The committee's work includes:

- Collecting and analyzing data on demographics, workforce, education, wages, taxes, revenue, natural resources, and government efficiency;
- Identifying long-term issues significant to the state;
- Issuing an annual report on findings; and
- Prioritizing legislation.

Since its inception, the committee has partnered with the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Center for Public Affairs Research (UNO CPAR) for data access and analysis, consistent with the vision of Senator John Harms, who introduced the legislation (see: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/101/PDF/Intro/LB653.pdf>).

UNO CPAR was selected due to its expertise and cost-efficient approach. As the lead agency for the Nebraska State Data Center Network with the U.S. Census Bureau, UNO CPAR has extensive experience in analyzing key datasets to inform this work, including the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey. Additionally, UNO CPAR works with a range of state and local agencies to bring together experts and data from across the state to address the committee's questions.

Today, UNO CPAR continues to support the Planning Committee. One key resource is an interactive dashboard at cpar.unomaha.edu/policy that presents demographic data for every legislative district and county in Nebraska from 2012 to 2023. Additionally, UNO CPAR serves as a resource for all state senators, staff, and state agencies, including the legislative research office, regularly responding to requests for data and sharing insights as part of their Data and Research for Community Impact Series. At the request of the Planning Committee, UNO CPAR has conducted in-depth research on a wide range of topics of importance to senators, including housing, aging, education finance, workforce development, economic development, water quality, and government finance. Much of this research has resulted in grants and contracts with other state agencies, including the Governor's Office, to provide additional research.

“ CPAR's formal relationship with the U.S. Census Bureau gives it first-hand knowledge about the decennial census and ongoing survey efforts. CPAR helps Nebraskans learn about the latest population trends and new data products, provides engagement opportunities, and generates statewide connections/collaborations between elected officials, planners, educators, the business community, media, policymakers, and others. We are so thankful for their creative, top quality, and team approach while serving as a key driver in the 2020 Census leading Nebraska to the 4th best self-response in the country. ”

*Blanca Ramirez-Salazar
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