

# 2024 Campus Policy Research Survey

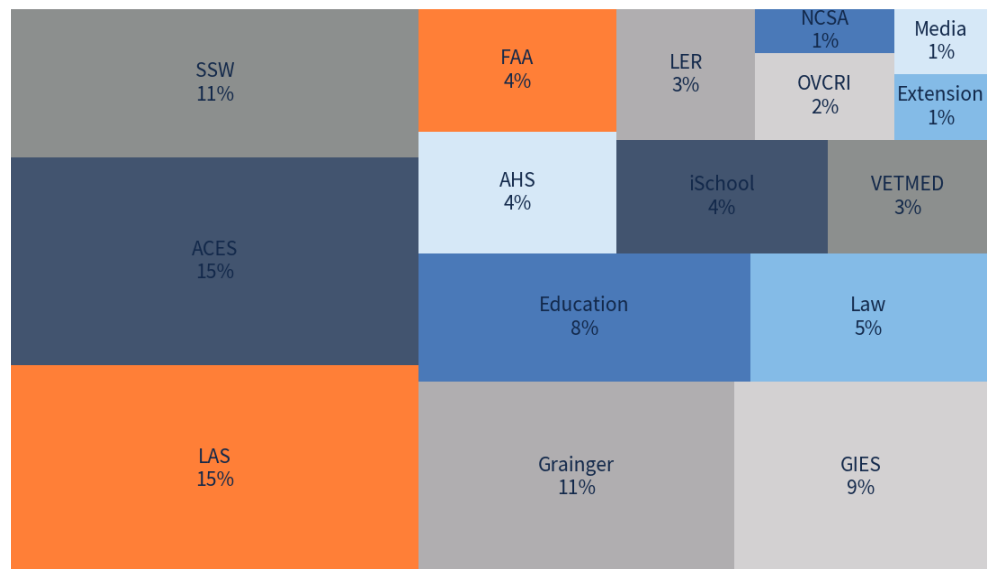
Center for Social & Behavioral Science  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

In the fall of 2024, the Center for Social & Behavioral Science (CSBS) launched a campus policy research survey open to all faculty and research staff at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). The primary goal of this survey was to **understand the current landscape of policy research and interests on campus**. Through this effort, CSBS aims to foster a more integrated and supportive environment for policy research at UIUC and identify opportunities for cross campus collaboration on research, programming, and administrative support in the University of Illinois System. This initiative underscores the university's commitment to its land grant mission, highlighting the importance of policy research in addressing societal needs and improving our communities.

A total of 92 researchers representing 16 colleges and other units on the UIUC campus responded to the survey, which closed on November 1. This broad participation is indicative of the inherent interdisciplinary nature of public policy research and the breadth of interest and expertise at UIUC.

## Survey Objectives

- Map the policy research landscape on campus.
- Identify collaborative opportunities to create a supportive environment for policy research in the future.
- Leverage research expertise to foster public partnerships and inform public policy.



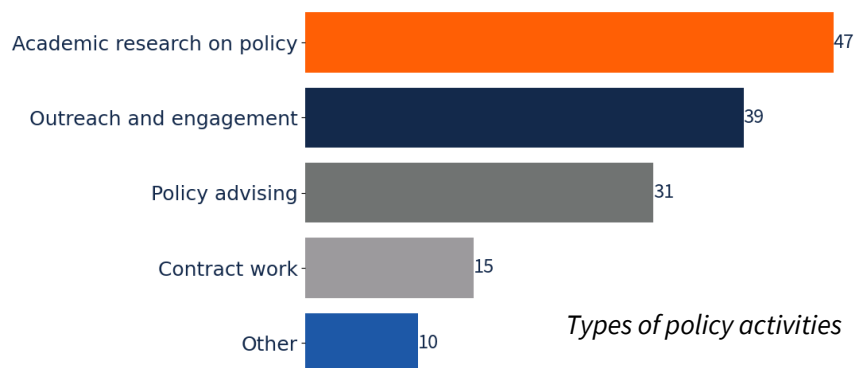
Respondent distribution by college and unit

## Findings

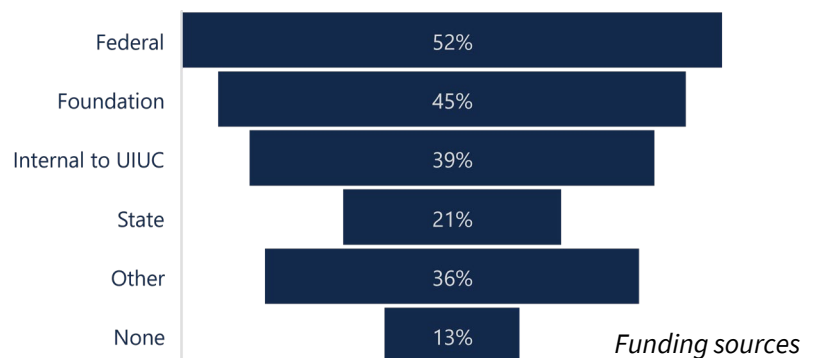
**62% of survey respondents are actively engaged in policy research** or working directly with policymakers.

Academic research and outreach and engagement are the most common ways in which campus researchers are engaged in policy involvement, with fewer engaged in advising or contract work.

Most researchers receive **funding via federal agencies (52%) and foundations (45%)**. Other funding comes from the university and the state of Illinois, with only 13% of active policy researchers never having received funding for their policy research.



Types of policy activities



Funding sources

## Research areas

There is a wide diversity of policy-relevant research at UIUC. The **environment**, **health**, and **education** were the most common research areas among survey respondents. Other common research areas included finance and economic development, technology, family policy and social welfare, and energy.



The survey also asked respondents to indicate areas of interest for future research. In keeping with current research areas, the top two areas that researchers indicated a future interest in were the **environment** and **health**, with **economic policy** (including labor market policies, unemployment insurance, parental leave and economic impacts of policies) being the third most common answer.

## Data and methods

Most survey respondents use **quantitative methods** in their policy research (91%), with fewer using qualitative methods, computational modeling, and historical analysis. Most respondents (71%) use multiple methods in their research. Common data sources for policy research include public and administrative data, surveys and public opinion data, and observational data.

## Programming

**Almost all survey respondents expressed interest in on-campus resources to facilitate policy engagement and research.** When asked to rank their preferred programming topics, respondents selected the following.

**Building partnerships** with public organizations and officials.

**Policy translation and communication:** Translating research to policy and communicating policy-relevant research to non-academic audiences.

**Governmental engagement:** Facilitating introductions to governmental agencies and policymakers and informational sessions on policy priorities.

**Research and data development:** Developing data streams required for public policy research and developing a policy-relevant research agenda.

**Applying for funding.**

## Future Directions

This survey and its large response from all areas of the UIUC campus demonstrate an active body of policy researchers at UIUC, and many more individuals who are interested in engaging in public policy research. There is ample opportunity to support these researchers and build collaborations both across campus and with public partners. This effort aligns with the university's land grant mission to address societal needs and translate research into solutions that benefit our communities. In the future, CSBS will work to develop programming that responds to the interests and needs expressed by survey respondents and to build partnerships with policymakers and other stakeholders.