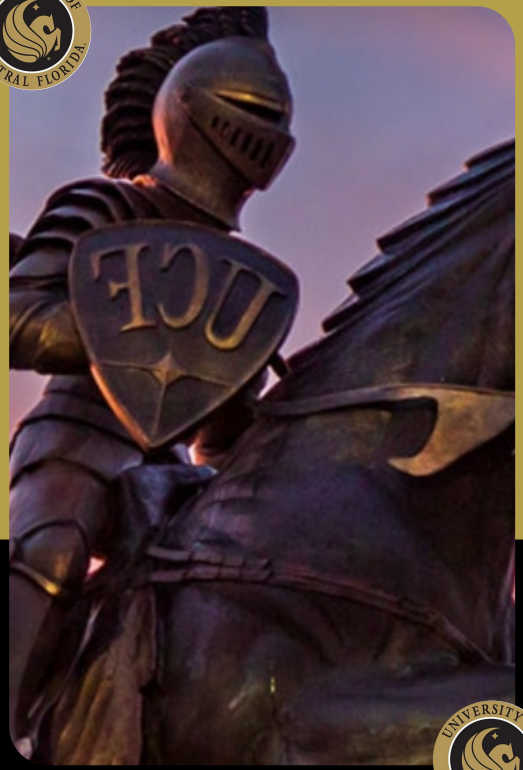
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE



"To make discoveries, to better our lives, to change our world."

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ABOUT UCF ISBS

The UCF Institute for Social and Behavioral Science (ISBS), housed in the Department of Sociology, engages in community-centered research spanning the social and behavioral science disciplines. To date, we have partnered with over 75 agencies, governments, and municipalities to conduct studies using a variety of social research methods including quantitative methods such as surveys, secondary data analysis, and policy/content analysis, qualitative methods, including interviews, focus groups, and participant observation, and spatial analysis. We primarily conduct multi-method studies with community partners throughout the state of Florida.

ISBS is led by Director, Dr. Amy Donley, working alongside a team of 5 graduate students and 25 undergraduate research assistants. Graduate students are selected for positions at ISBS based on their research skills, areas of interest, and dedication to applied science. They are funded to work with ISBS throughout their academic programs to ensure continuity on projects. Together, we work collaboratively on all projects, and team members are encouraged to provide their thoughts and perspectives. Our collaboration and different perspectives inform the intersectional approach we take to research, including the data collection and analysis techniques we use.

OUR APPROACH

At ISBS we partner with you to develop the best study to address your needs and respect your budget and time constraints. We specialize in mixed-methodological studies allowing us to leverage the strengths of different methods to produce fuller and richer results.

MIXED METHODOLOGY

Mixed methodology, also known as mixed methods research, is an approach to research that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach seeks to leverage the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a particular research question or phenomenon. Mixed methodological studies have several advantages as compared to studies relying on a single method:

1. Comprehensiveness: Mixed methodology allows for a more comprehensive understanding of a research question or phenomenon by combining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

2. Triangulation: By using multiple methods, mixed methodology allows for triangulation, or the use of multiple sources of data to confirm findings.

3. Flexibility: Mixed methodology can be adapted to suit a variety of research questions and contexts.

4. Validity: Mixed methodology can enhance the validity of research findings by using multiple methods to explore a particular research question or phenomenon.

When appropriate, we design mixed-methodological studies that best address the research questions. However, in many circumstances, we rely on a single methodology to accomplish this. Over the next several pages we explain the methods that we use in our work.

WHAT WE DO

GEOSPATIAL ANALYSIS

Geospatial analysis is a technique that involves examining and interpreting geographical data to gain insights and make informed decisions. It involves processing and analyzing data that has location information, such as GPS coordinates, address, or postal code, and creating visual representations of that data in the form of maps, charts, or graphs.

Geospatial analysis is useful because it allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the spatial relationships between different variables and how they interact with each other. By analyzing the location of specific events or phenomena, geospatial analysis can provide insights into patterns, trends, and relationships that might not be immediately apparent from looking at the data in a traditional tabular format. To conduct geospatial analysis, we use ArcGIS.

Example:

Analysis of High Overdose Rate Census Tracts in Orange County, FL (2021)

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical analysis is the process of collecting, processing, and interpreting data using statistical methods to draw conclusions from the data. This method provides a way to objectively analyze and interpret data, reducing the potential for biases. Statistical analysis allows for the quantification of relationships between variables, providing a way to make more precise predictions or estimate effects and can be used to make inferences about larger populations based on a sample of data.

We have extensive experience in compiling and analyzing data from various sources including large publicly available data sets and internal program records. To conduct analysis, we use several software programs including SPSS, STATA, and R. We are trained in advanced analysis techniques including regressions, time series analysis, and longitudinal analysis. We also have experience in conducting costs analyses.

Examples:

The Cost of IPV in Miami-Dade County (2023)

Social Return on Investment for United Against Poverty (2017)

IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

In-person qualitative interviews are a type of research method in which a researcher conducts one-on-one interviews with participants to gather in-depth insights into their attitudes, experiences, and perspectives. Unlike surveys, which typically involve standardized questions and response options, in-person qualitative interviews are flexible and allow for follow-up questions and exploration of responses.

We have conducted hundreds of interviews both in-person and virtually with stakeholders and residents on a variety of topics. During the interview process, we follow a grounded theory approach, where we analyze the data as we go, allowing us to amend the interview guide as needed to explore important concepts that are being raised by participants. In this way, we allow participants to determine what is important. To analyze the data, we follow Charmaz's two-step coding process where we begin by analyzing the transcripts line by line to develop open codes and then go through the data again to develop focused codes. Depending on the scope of the project, we often utilize analysis software.

Example:

The Cost of IPV in Miami-Dade County (2023)

WHAT WE DO

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are a type of qualitative research method in which a small group of people are brought together to discuss a particular topic, product, or service. The group is usually moderated by a facilitator who asks open-ended questions and encourages participants to share their opinions and experiences.

Focus groups are typically used to gather in-depth insights about consumer attitudes, preferences, and behaviors. They can be particularly useful for exploring complex or sensitive topics that are difficult to capture through other research methods, such as surveys or interviews.

Some potential advantages of using focus groups as a research method include the ability to ascertain nuanced insights into participant attitudes, behaviors, and experiences. The group format also allows participants to build on each other's responses, leading to a more interactive and dynamic discussion.

Example:

The Cost of IPV in Miami-Dade County (2023)

ONLINE SURVEYS

Online surveys are a type of data collection method that allows us to gather feedback from a large number of people quickly and efficiently. We will work with you to develop an original survey questionnaire and administer this survey via the online surveying platform, Qualtrics. We can provide you with the survey data or we can create a full report based on the statistical analysis of the responses.

There are several advantages of online surveys over telephone surveys. First, they are most cost-effective as they do not require printing, postage, or manual data entry. Second, online surveys can be completed at any time and from any location, making them a convenient option for both survey respondents and administrators. Finally, online surveys can be customized to meet the specific needs of the survey administrator, allowing for greater flexibility in question design and response options.

Examples:

Survey of Seminole County government employees (2022)

FWC analysis (2022)

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Needs assessment is a systematic process of gathering information about a particular problem or issue to determine the best way to address it. It is typically used to identify gaps in services or resources, and to determine what actions are needed to meet the needs of a particular population.

Needs assessment can help ensure that interventions or programs are tailored to the specific needs of a population and can also help guide the allocation of resources to areas of greatest need. Needs assessment often involves engaging stakeholders, including community members or service providers, in the process of identifying needs and developing solutions.

Examples:

Gap Analysis of Substance Use and Mental Health Treatment in Volusia County, FL (2023)

Gap Analysis of Substance Use Treatment in Orange County, FL (2022)

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WHAT WE DO

IN-PERSON SURVEYS

In-person surveying is a research method in which a researcher administers a survey to participants face-to-face. This method allows for a more personal interaction between the researcher and participant and can be particularly useful when the target population is difficult to reach through other means, such as online surveys.

Some key features of in-person surveying include:

1. Personal interaction: In-person surveying allows for a personal interaction between the researcher and participant, which can help build rapport and trust.

2. Structured questions: In-person surveys typically use structured questions with response options, allowing for standardized data collection.

3. Flexibility: While the questions are structured, the interviewer can provide clarifications or ask follow-up questions if needed.

4. Higher response rates: In-person surveying can result in higher response rates compared to other survey methods, as participants may be more willing to respond to a personal request.

5. Data quality: In-person surveying can result in higher data quality compared to other methods, as the interviewer can ensure that the participant understands the questions and answer options.

Examples:

Survey of UCF Students Measuring Experiences with Food Insecurity and Homelessness for KnightsPantry (2021)

Survey of Clients of Christian Service Center: Ocoee Campus (2021)

WHAT WE DO

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Program evaluation is the systematic assessment of the design, implementation, and effectiveness of a program or intervention. It involves collecting and analyzing data to determine whether the program is meeting its intended goals and objectives, and whether it is having the desired impact on the target population.

Program evaluation is an important tool for ensuring that programs are meeting their intended goals and objectives, and that they are having a positive impact on the target population. It can also help to identify areas where improvements can be made and to guide future program development.

There are several types of program evaluations that can be conducted to assess the effectiveness of a particular program or intervention. Some common types of program evaluations include formative, process, outcome, impact, and cost-benefit analysis.

ISBS has conducted dozens of program evaluations and can work with you to develop an evaluation plan for a program you are going to be launching soon, or we can work with you to design an evaluation of a program that has been up and running for a long period of time.

Examples:

Evaluation of Intimate Partner Violence in Miami-Dade County (2023)

Evaluation of adherence to treatment modalities on behalf of Children's Home Society (2019)

Meet Our Team

Dr. Amy Donley, PhD, Director

Dr. Amy Donley, ISBS Director, has been conducting community-based research across Florida for over fifteen years and has led over 80 unique studies to date. She is well-versed in all major social research methods and specializes in designing mixed-methodology studies.

Jacquelyn Fernandez-Reiss, MA, Senior Project Manager

Jacquelyn Fernandez-Reiss, MA, Senior Project Manager, specializes in developing evaluation plans and mixed-methods social research, including quantitative, qualitative, and geospatial methods. Jackie's research focuses on social determinants of health.

Caroline Austin, MA, Senior Project Manager

Caroline Austin, MA, Senior Project Manager, specializes in survey construction, conducting interviews, and participatory research. Caroline's research focuses on social inequalities, specifically poverty, and precarious work.

Jonzelle Bell, MA Candidate, Assistant Project Manager

Jonzelle Bell, BS, Assistant Project Manager, specializes in qualitative interviews and Geographic Information Systems. Her research interests include medical sociology and social inequalities, specifically women's access to healthcare.

Alexandria McClarty, MA Candidate, Assistant Project Manager

Alexandria McClarty, BA, Assistant Project Manager, specializes in secondary data analysis and Geographic Information Systems. Her primary research interests include crime and deviance, spatial sociology, and public policy.

OUR PARTNERS & CLIENTS

Cities, Counties, and Towns

Town of Ponce Inlet
City of Cape Canaveral
City of Casselberry
City of Deltona
City of Eatonville
City of Eustis
City of Maitland
City of New Smyrna Beach
City of Orlando
City of Winter Park
City of Winter Springs
Marion County
Miami-Dade County
Orange County
Osceola County
Seminole County
Volusia County

Regional Initiatives

ACCESS-LYNX Paratransit Service
Central Florida Commission on Homelessness
LYNX/LYMMO
Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission
Metroplan Orlando
Myregion.com
Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce
Southwest Florida Water Management District
SunRail

Local, State, & Federal Agencies

Centers for Disease Control
Department of Justice
Florida Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Florida Dept. of Transportation
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Miami-Dade Domestic Violence Oversight Board
National Science Foundation
Orange County Sheriffs Office
Orlando Housing Authority
Orlando Police Department
Seminole County Sherriff's Office
U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs

Non-Profit Agencies

Apopka Family Learning Center
Applied Ecology, Inc.
Childrens Home Society
Career Source of Central Florida
Catholic Charities of Central Florida
Center for Independent Living
Christian Service Center
Christian Sharing Center
Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida
Florida Blood Centers
Harbor House
Heart of Florida United Way
Help Now of Central Florida
Homeless Services Network
HOPE Helps of Oviedo
IDignity
Informed Families
Jobs Partnership, Inc.
Lighthouse of Central Florida
Meals on Wheels of Seminole County
Orlando Area YMCA/YWCA
Osceola County Council on Aging
Safehouse of Seminole County
Salvation Army of Orange County
Salvation Army of Seminole County
Second Harvest Food Bank
Senior Resource Alliance
Seniors First
United Against Poverty

Foundations

AARP Foundation
Community Foundation of Central Florida
The Annie E. Casey Foundation-Kids Count
Winter Park Health Foundation

Universities

Florida Atlantic University
University of Central Florida
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

Private Industry

EJP Consulting Group
Global 5 Communications
LEGOLAND
NCAA
NutriSlice
Thompson, Wolfe and Wesley