



**Northeastern  
University**

## **PUBLIC EVALUATION LAB**

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### **Message from the Program Director**

*The Northeastern University Public Evaluation Lab (NU-PEL) began in 2018 through the support from a Tier 1 grant from the Northeastern University Office of Research Development, Bouvé College, and the College of the Social Sciences and Humanities (CSSH). Faculty from the Institute for Race and Justice came together with faculty from the Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research to create a Lab that brings together faculty, staff, and students from across the Northeastern University campus with an interest and commitment to developing community partnered evaluation efforts.*

*NU-PEL draws upon a wide range of evaluation strategies and research but share common commitments to promoting health equity and social justice through high-impact, community engaged research. We have brought together more than 23 students from multiple undergraduate majors, the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs (SPPUA), the Public Health Program, and doctoral programs in both colleges to develop and provide community-engaged classroom learning, training curricula for students, and mentored experiential opportunities to work with community partners on evaluation efforts. In addition, we have cultivated training and professional development partnerships, including with the American Evaluation Association (AEA) and the Greater Boston Evaluation Network (GBEN).*

*In the first half of our second year, we have made great strides towards our goal of growing and sustaining NU-PEL via partnership with the School of Engineering on the resubmission of the Puerto Rico Testsites for Exploring Contamination Threats (PROTECT) grant as the evaluators of the training core; partnership with faculty in the SPPUA on a Boston Foundation funded evaluation effort; receiving several small evaluation grants with community partners; and established an expansive network with a number of CSSH and Bouvé faculty for future evaluation collaborations.*

*A major pivot took place in our second half of the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19, our community partners needed our collaborative evaluation support more than ever. With the incredible support of our multi-generational teams of faculty, staff, and students, we have been able to develop innovative, virtual evaluation approaches in order to meet the new, adjusted needs of our community partners in the Greater Boston Area and internationally.*

*NU-PEL has a strong dedication of community engagement. Our multi-generational teams allow for us to efficiently and fully respond to community partners' needs for informed, data-driven decision-making support and evaluation. We remain determined and devoted to engaging in culturally responsive evaluation efforts to promote health equity, social justice, equity in education, and criminal justice.*

Tiana Yom  
Program Director of NU-PEL



**Northeastern University**  
Institute on Race and Justice

Northeastern University  
**Institute for Health Equity  
and Social Justice Research**

## About NU-PEL

NU-PEL is an interdisciplinary lab comprised of faculty and student teams conducting evaluation research that leads to healthier communities and enhances the lives of those living within them. The lab is a collaboration of the Institute on Health Equity and Social Justice Research in Bouvé College of Health Sciences and the Institute on Race and Justice in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities.

The overall mission and vision of NU-PEL is to build a community-academic partnership to improve our communities and the well-being of the people living in them through the use of evaluation research. This is accomplished by bringing together expertise and resources to advance the theory, practice, and utilization of evaluation through research, education, and service.

NU-PEL's aims are three-fold:

1. To build collaborations and share evaluation expertise across Northeastern University's colleges.
2. To train students in the techniques of program evaluation through a wide-array of experiential learning opportunities.
3. To provide evaluation and consultative services to Greater Boston area community organizations with the mission of improving the health, wellbeing, and safety of the people impacted by these organizations.

## MEET THE NU-PEL TEAM

### *The Leadership Team*



Alisa Lincoln, PhD, MPH is the Director of the Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research and a Professor in Bouvé College of Health Sciences and CSSH. She is also the Associate Dean of Research in CSSH. Her research focuses on the mental and physical health of marginalized communities.



Amy Farrell, PhD is the Director of the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and a Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Northeastern University. Her research examines institutional legitimacy and justice system responses to new crimes such as hate crime and human trafficking.



Jack McDevitt, PhD is the Director of the Institute on Race and Justice and a Professor of Practice in School of Criminology and Criminal Justice in CSSH. His research expertise involves ways to assist criminal justice agencies in responding to crime such as hate crime.



Emily Mann, PhD, MSSW is a Teaching Professor in the Human Services program in the CSSH. She is also a Senior Research Associate at the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy. Her current research highlights the impact of education and clinical interventions on youth development.



Tiana Yom, MPH, CHES is the Director of the Northeastern University Public Evaluation Lab. She is jointly appointed in Bouvé College of Health Sciences and the CSSH. She brings a background of evaluation consultative experiences as well as teaches *Techniques of Program Evaluation* in SPPUA.



Suzanne Garverich, MPH is the Assistant Program Director for the Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research. Her work focuses on the mental and physical health of marginalized communities.





## Affiliated Faculty



Claudia Santelices, PhD, is an Assistant Research Professor in Bouvé College of Health Sciences and a Faculty Scholar at the Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research.



Beth Molnar, ScD, SM is the Director of Violence Prevention and Trauma Studies at the Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Sciences in Bouvé College of Sciences as well as the Director of the Population Health PhD Program.

## The NU-PEL Student Community

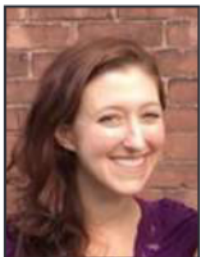
Students from the *Techniques of Program Evaluation* and other Northeastern University students joined NU-PEL to form the NU-PEL Student Community to assist in providing consultative evaluation services to Greater Boston Area community organizations.



Kaleem Ahmid is a Master's Student in Public Health at Bouvé College of Health Sciences. He was also a double-major in Health Sciences and Philosophy as an NU undergraduate student. His work with NU-PEL focused on evaluation plans for the 826 Boston Writers' Room Program.



Zoë Harris is a Master's Student in Public Health at Bouvé College of Health Sciences. Her work with NU-PEL focuses on evaluation efforts for the Massachusetts Adult Suicide Prevention Project (MASPP), which is funded by the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (NSSP) grant.



Alexandra Alden, MA is a Doctoral Candidate in Sociology in CSSH. Her work with NU-PEL spanned from developing evaluation plans, conducting a landscape analysis, creating logic models, and collecting evaluation data via focus group and in-depth interviews.



Gemma McFarland is a Doctoral Student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Bouvé College of Health Sciences. Through conducting interviews, leading qualitative data analyses, and developing evaluation plans for the Massachusetts Adult Suicide Prevention Project (MASPP).



Marie Senescall is an undergraduate Health Equity Intern. Her work with NU-PEL included creating literature reviews and assisting the NU-PEL team on an evaluation project for 826 Boston Writers' Room Program.



Kevin Carvalho is a Master in Public Health graduate from Bouvé College of Health Sciences. Through his Capstone and Practicum with NU-PEL, he developed an evaluation plan and conducted interviews for Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly CitySites Programming.



Christina Ransom is a Master in Public Health Student at Bouvé College of Health Sciences. Through her Capstone project, she developed and conducted focus groups that were analyzed to help in the process of creating a patient satisfaction survey for patients utilizing secondary cancer screening methods.



Jenna Bourassa is an undergraduate Health Equity Intern. Her work with NU-PEL included creating literature reviews and assisting the NU-PEL team on an evaluation project for Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly.



Candence Wills is a Doctoral Student in the Criminology and Justice Policy Program in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities. Her work with NU-PEL focuses on evaluation research that aims to improve outcomes for children and youth victims of human trafficking. Her work included developing survey instruments and conducting focus group interviews.



Megan Zelinsky is a Doctoral Student in the Population Health Program in Bouvé College of Health Sciences. She focused on assessing sports for development programs through creating evaluation plans, conducting focus groups, and building evaluation capacity.

## Previous NU-PEL's Evaluation Partnerships

**YW Boston**

**Project R.I.G.H.T.**

**Dimock Community Health Center**

**Northeastern O.P.E.N.**

**You're with Us**

**Bethel Institute for Social Justice**

**Boston Public Health Commission**

**Shooting Touch**

**The Boston Foundation**

**Compass Working Capital**

**Asian American Civic Association**

**The ARC of Massachusetts**

**Vicarious Trauma Response Initiative**

**Strong Start Boston**

**The Institute on Urban Health Research and Practice**

**Massachusetts Department of Mental Health  
Zero-suicide Project**



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## 2019-2020 NU-PEL's Evaluation Partnerships

Utilizing an experiential learning model, NU-PEL's faculty and staff led students and students team in working with local and international community organizations to help build evaluation into their organization's programs.

### Techniques of Program Evaluation

Through the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs in CSSH, students taking Techniques of Program Evaluation participated in experiential learning as they worked collaboratively with community organizations in developing evaluation plans.

### Greater Boston Evaluation Network (GBEN)

NU-PEL worked collaboratively with GBEN, the American Evaluation Association local chapter to provide community organizations and academic institutions training on evaluation. In its first of what will be a regular series of jointly sponsored events, GBEN and NU-PEL sponsored an evaluation training focused on impact evaluations. Members from the community as well as faculty, staff, and students from Northeastern University came together to hear from a panel of experts about their experience with conducting impact evaluations. NU-PEL will continue working with GBEN to provide other important evaluation trainings that intersect the needs of community organizations and academic institutions.

### 826 Boston Writer's Room Program

NU-PEL with the Human Services program continued an ongoing collaboration with 826 Boston to evaluate their Writers' Room programs in Boston Public Schools.

### PROTECT (Puerto Rico Testsite for Exploring Contamination Threats)

NU-PEL received a grant to evaluate PROTECT's Training Core, which aims to provide high quality interdisciplinary training and mentoring.

### Dimock Community Health Center

Funding was provided by the Myra Kraft Foundation and NU-PEL received \$2,500 to conduct an evaluation of secondary cancer screening procedures.

### Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly, Boston

NU-PEL is working with the local Little Brother's organization to develop an evaluation plan of their seniors' mentoring program with funding support of \$5,000.

### A Community Organization's Perspective

*"Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly's (LBFE) second year with NU-PEL was a productive one! MPH Capstone student Kevin Carvalho helped us move forward in two important areas: creating a data supported logic model for our intergenerational program, CitySites, and developing and administering surveys to participants at our evaluation pilot sites. Kevin was creative and considerate and made participants feel comfortable about being part of LBFE's evaluation process.*

*For a small organization like LBFE, having access to evaluation professionals makes a huge difference, and working with graduate students makes the work affordable. It also melds nicely with our intergenerational focus, as student evaluators integrate seamlessly with program participants."*

*- Cynthia Wilkerson,  
Program Director*



## Expanding NU-PEL's Evaluation Partnerships

*Throughout the year, NU-PEL utilized various strategies to collaborate with community partners for future projects.*

### Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS)

NU-PEL will work with EOPSS to help enhance the Commonwealth's response to child sex trafficking. NU-PEL will develop program evaluation instruments for MyLifeMyChoice, Department of Children and Families, and Roxbury Youthworks.

### ROUTES (Research Opportunities for Undergraduates: Training in Environmental Health Sciences)

NU-PEL received a grant to evaluate a NIH funded program, which aims to address need for more environmental health researchers from historically underrepresented minorities.

### Office of Massachusetts Attorney General Bureau of Justice Assistance

NU-PEL will work with the Massachusetts Coalition Against Trafficking (CAT) Task Force as an Action Research Partner to analyze the program model, review strategies, and conduct interviews with staff and partners to create an overall performance measurement guide for the CAT-Task Force.

## Building Evaluation Capacity

*NU-PEL is committed to training undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and community partners in evaluation theory, methods, and techniques and tools to advance the evaluation capacity in the academic and community setting. Throughout this past year, NU-PEL was successful in providing a wide array of evaluation training opportunities focusing on qualitative methods, survey development, evaluation methods, theories and techniques.*

### Evaluation Theory and Techniques

NU-PEL is dedicated to training undergraduate and graduate students in evaluation theory and tools to enable them to provide state of the art evaluation consultative services to our community partners. The student community came together monthly to increase their evaluation knowledge and skills. Trainings included topics such as evaluation theory and methods, how to develop and leverage the use of a logic model, how to utilize evaluation techniques such as rubrics and checklists.

### Qualitative & Quantitative Methods

NU-PEL provided various qualitative trainings that increased the learning capacity of all participants. A variety of different forums were provided to students, faculty, staff and community members to build qualitative evaluation capacity. Training included sessions on learning the qualitative software, NVivo, and how to conduct focus groups.

### Survey Development

Trainings were provided in collaboration with Northeastern University's Information Technology Services in how to utilize the survey tool, Qualtrics. Trainings included an introduction to the tool which trained participants to be able to learn the skills to develop a wide range of surveys. A second more in-depth training was offered to learn how to utilize Qualtrics' analytics.

## Looking Ahead for NU-PEL

### Community-Engaged Teaching and Research at Northeastern (CETR) and Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research (IHESJR) Mentorship Event

In collaboration with CETR and IHESJR, NU-PEL participated on a panel event to discuss meaningful mentor and mentee relationships in a professional setting. This virtual event took place on September 22, 2020.

### Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE) Series with the Greater Boston Evaluation Network

In collaboration with the GBEN, NU-PEL will co-sponsor a virtual event to introduce and discuss CRE. This will be a part of a year-long series of panels, presentations, workshops, and webinars. This virtual event will take place on November 16, 2020. To register for the event, please visit: <http://greaterbostoneval.org/event-4029046>.





*Student Photo Submissions for "Images of Urban Health" contest*

**For more information about NU-PEL, visit our website at:**

**<https://bouve.northeastern.edu/nu-pel/>**

**To contact us, email us at:**

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