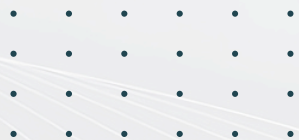




STETSON UNIVERSITY  
CENTER FOR PUBLIC  
OPINION RESEARCH

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

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Prepared By:  
**CPOR Staff and Faculty**



# LETTER FROM DIRECTOR



**Dr. Steven Smallpage**

*Professor of Political Science  
CPOR Director*

**Dear Friends and Colleagues,**

As we reflect on another dynamic year at the Center for Public Opinion Research (CPOR), I am proud to share our continued growth, expanded impact, and deepened commitment to high-quality, public-facing research. The 2024–2025 academic year has been one of extraordinary momentum for CPOR, marked by new partnerships, increased media reach, and meaningful student engagement.

This year, CPOR's work reached new heights. Our public opinion polling on the 2024 presidential election and Florida's constitutional amendments gained national attention, earning placements in MSN.com, USA Today, Yahoo News, and others, generating over \$7 million in earned media value (AVE). These findings amplified our reputation as a trusted source in Florida polling and demonstrated the power of university-based research to shape public discourse at the highest levels.

CPOR also expanded its institutional reach and collaborative portfolio. We renewed and enhanced our agreement with the Orlando Economic Partnership (OEP) to continue quarterly economic reporting, partnered with Dr. Jason Evans and the Institute for Water and Environmental Resilience (IWER) on an NSF-funded survey initiative, and entered final negotiations for a major statewide project with the Florida Department of Health. These relationships reflect our growing capacity to support applied research that informs policy and strengthens communities.

Perhaps most exciting has been the transformation of our student research model. CPOR has transitioned from traditional employment-based experiences to a credit-bearing research apprenticeship. Students engage deeply in all stages of the survey process from crafting questionnaire items and manipulating large datasets to writing press releases and presenting insights to public audiences. This shift has not only elevated the academic value of CPOR's work, but has created a scalable, interdisciplinary model for experiential learning at Stetson.

Looking ahead, CPOR is launching another ambitious effort: building a longitudinal research panel in Florida's I-4 Corridor, a region pivotal to state politics. With full access to the Florida Voter File and a comprehensive consumer file, CPOR is positioned to become a leader in regional opinion research in Florida.

Thank you for your continued support of our mission. Whether through your partnership, your collaboration, or your investment in our students, you make this work possible. Together, we will continue to advance impactful research, elevate public understanding, and transform education through experience.



# THANK YOU DONORS!

We are deeply grateful to our donors for their continued support of the Center for Public Opinion Research.

Your generosity has been instrumental in helping CPOR grow into a leading source of public-facing research while providing meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities for students.

This year, your contributions supported the launch of our first cohort of Hatter READY student researchers, helped expand our statewide polling and media outreach, and enabled us to pursue major new partnerships with organizations like the Florida Department of Health and the National Science Foundation.

Thanks to your support, CPOR continues to serve as a trusted research partner and a hub for immersive education.

We are proud of what we've accomplished together and excited for what lies ahead.

-CPOR Faculty, Staff, and Students

*Thank You*

# CPOR FACULTY & STAFF



## **Steven Smallpage - Associate Professor of Political Science and CPOR Director**

Steven Smallpage, PhD, specializes in the intersection of political psychology and political philosophy, focusing on American political thought, including belief in conspiracy theories, partisanship, and political suspicion. His work combines quantitative analysis and philosophical considerations to provide insights into the complexities of political thinking and its implications in the American context.

- PhD, political science, Michigan State University
- MA, political theory and Jewish studies, The University of Toronto
- BA, political science, American University, Washington, D.C.



## **Liam Leider - CPOR Manager**

Liam Leider joined the CPOR staff as a full-time manager after completing his B.A. in Political Science at Stetson in 2023. During his time at Stetson, he focused his research on welfare attitudes working alongside Dr. Smith and Dr. Smallpage.

- MBA, Stetson University (in progress)
- BA, political science and philosophy, Stetson University



## **Catherine Wright - Administrative Assistant**

Before working with CPOR and the Political Science & Economics Department in 2023, Catherine Wright worked for 1.5 years with the Sociology Department at Stetson University. She graduated from Louisiana State University in 2007 and is currently pursuing a masters degree at Stetson.

- MS, Marriage and Family Therapy, Stetson University (in progress)
- BA, communication studies, Louisiana State University



## **Robert Askew - Associate Professor of Psychology**

Robert Askew, PhD, is a quantitative psychologist and epidemiologist whose research focuses on the measurement of distinct facets of physical and mental health through the application of latent variable modeling techniques.

- PhD, psychology, University of Washington
- M.P.H., epidemiology, University of Texas School of Public Health
- BA, international studies and art history, Southwestern University



## **Kelly B. Smith - Associate Professor of Political Science**

Kelly Smith's, PhD, areas of specialty include state politics and public policy. Research focuses on American politics with a particular emphasis on the relationship among state legislative politics, bureaucratic politics, and democratic governance.

- PhD, political science, Brown University
- MA, political science, Brown University
- BA, political science, Providence College



## **David Hill - Associate Professor of Political Science**

David Hill joined the faculty in 2007 after teaching at Valdosta State University in Georgia and Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts. He has published articles in American Politics Research, Electoral Studies, State and Local Government Review, State Politics and Policy Quarterly, American Review of Politics, and Politics and Policy.

- PhD, political science, University of Florida
- MA, political science, University of Florida
- BA, political science, Stetson University



# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## STATEWIDE FLORIDA PRESIDENTIAL POLL

### Highest Potential Editorial Reach

Nov 1 - Nov 7



MSN.com • Mike Snider  
Editorial | US | Nov 2 • 10:25 AM

Presidential election polls 2024: Latest surveys on Harris vs. Trump with 3 days to go

Florida, latest **Stetson poll** finds Trump is leading Harris in Florida in a new **Stetson University Center for Public Opinion Research poll**.

Social Echo 0 0 0  
122M Reach

Neutral

In November 2024, CPOR conducted a major statewide poll assessing voter preferences for the upcoming presidential election, alongside attitudes toward Florida's ballot amendments and broader concerns about democratic stability. This survey captured the opinions of over 800 registered voters and provided crucial insights just ahead of the 2024 election.

### Key findings from the poll included:

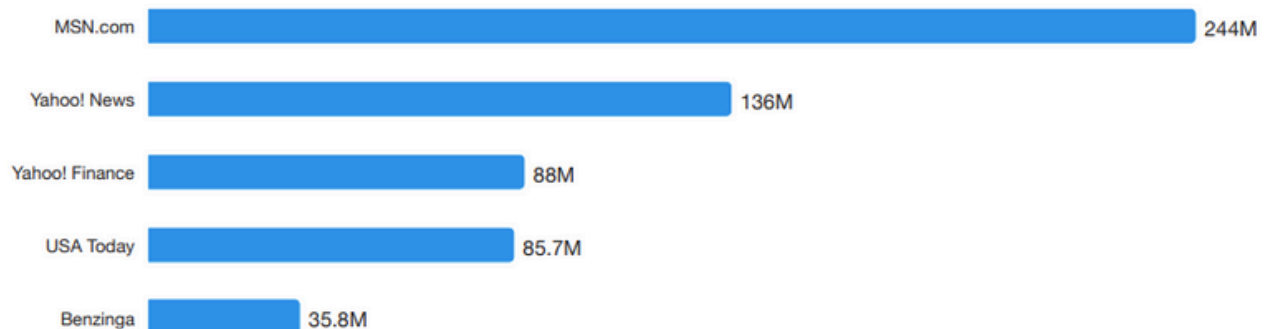
- Donald Trump led Kamala Harris by 7 points among Florida voters.
- Trust in a peaceful transition of power was notably lower if Trump were to lose compared to if Harris were to lose, revealing deep partisan divides.
- Respondents also weighed in on proposed constitutional amendments, showing supermajority support for all those on the ballot. Despite this, amendments 3 and 4 did not pass.

The poll's findings were widely disseminated across major national media outlets, including MSN.com, USA Today, and Yahoo News, generating more than **\$7.03 million in earned media value (AVE)**. This level of national exposure marked a significant milestone for CPOR, enhancing Stetson's visibility as a trusted source for public opinion data in one of the nation's most politically influential states.

Beyond its public impact, the statewide polling project showcased CPOR's growing technical capacity, utilizing the newly acquired Florida Voter File to conduct a targeted and representative survey, further solidifying CPOR's role as a leader in Florida-based public opinion research.

### Top Publications by Editorial Reach

Nov 1 - Nov 7



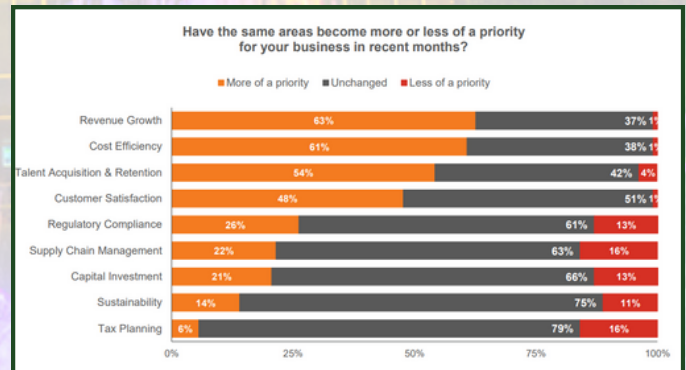
# ON-GOING PROJECTS

## Orlando Economic Partnership (OEP)

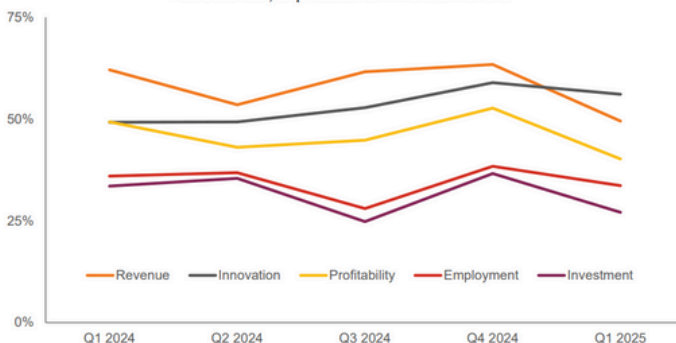


CPOR renewed and expanded its contract with the Orlando Economic Partnership (OEP) for another year of quarterly business conditions surveying. The project captures the economic outlook, workforce trends, and strategic challenges facing Central Florida businesses. In Fall 2024, CPOR staff also visited OEP and OUC (Orlando Utilities Commission) to strengthen project alignment and collaboration. The expanded partnership reflects growing trust in CPOR's research leadership in regional economic analysis.

The images on this page are insights from the Orlando MSA Business Conditions survey. To the right, businesses in the region responded which items were more or less of a priority in recent months. Below, businesses were asked how they anticipate each item will move in the next three months. And in the corner, businesses show a sharp decline in confidence in the national economy.



Net balance\*, expectations in next 3 months



Net balances

	Revenue	Innovation	Profitability	Employment	Investment
Q1 2025	50%	56%	40%	34%	27%
Q4 2024	63%	59%	53%	38%	37%
Q3 2024	62%	53%	45%	28%	25%
Q2 2024	54%	49%	43%	37%	35%
Q1 2024	62%	49%	49%	36%	34%
Change	-14%	-3%	-12%	-5%	-10%

Net balance\*, confidence in next 3 months





# ON-GOING PROJECTS



## Florida Department of Health (FDOH)

Since Fall 2024, CPOR has been engaged in advanced negotiations with the Florida Department of Health to undertake a large-scale survey on child health outcomes and parental experiences. The multi-year project is expected to significantly expand CPOR's work in public health and survey research at the state level. While final contracts are pending, preparatory work has positioned CPOR for immediate project launch upon approval.

## Surface to Springs & Stetson IWER

In collaboration with Dr. Jason Evans and the Institute for Water and Environmental Resilience (IWER), CPOR launched a new survey development initiative under the Surface to Springs National Science Foundation grant. The project focuses on capturing landowner and public perceptions of water resource conservation practices across North and Central Florida. CPOR's role involves crafting high-quality survey instruments, sampling strategies, and public reporting. Data collection and analysis will continue into the next academic year, supporting long-term conservation planning.





# COMPLETED PROJECTS

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## Stetson Core Values Deliberative Poll

Throughout Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, CPOR developed and executed the Stetson Core Values Deliberative Poll, first at the DeLand campus and later at the College of Law. Participants engaged in a unique dialogue process informed by pre- and post-surveys, providing critical feedback on proposed revisions to Stetson's core values. CPOR's survey analysis helped reveal trends in community sentiment and levels of agreement or concern across stakeholder groups. This project showed the Center's capacity to supporting future deliberative democracy practices in higher education settings.



## Stetson Projects

CPOR continued to support institutional research at Stetson University by leading several internal survey projects focused on academic policy, teaching evaluation, and faculty priorities. In Fall 2024, CPOR collaborated with the University Faculty Compensation Committee (UFCC) to design and launch the first cross-campus survey assessing faculty perspectives on salary equity, cost-of-living adjustments, and strategic resource allocation. The survey provided essential data to inform Stetson's compensation planning process and served as a model for inter-institutional collaboration on faculty affairs.

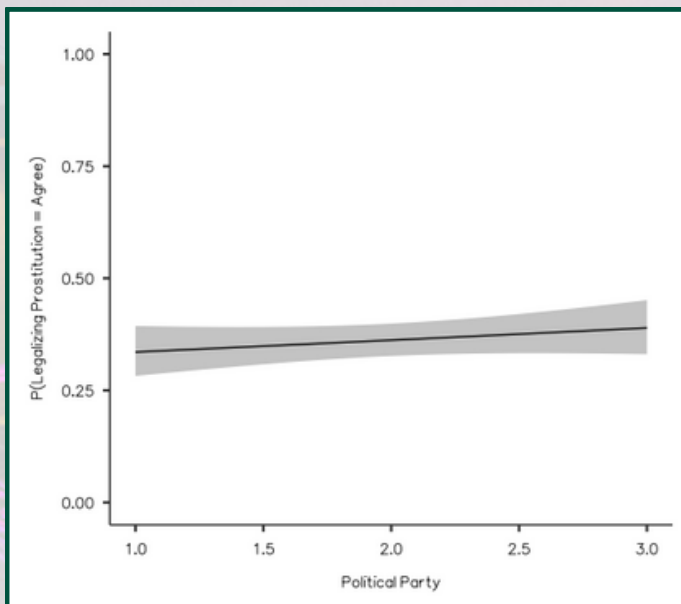
In Spring 2025, CPOR partnered with the Office of the Provost and the Faculty Senate to administer two additional surveys critical to academic quality and institutional development. The first was a comprehensive survey on Writing-Enhanced Courses (WEC), gathering student and faculty feedback on writing instruction across disciplines. The second, created in partnership with the Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) Taskforce, gauged student attitudes toward current evaluation forms to support forthcoming revisions.



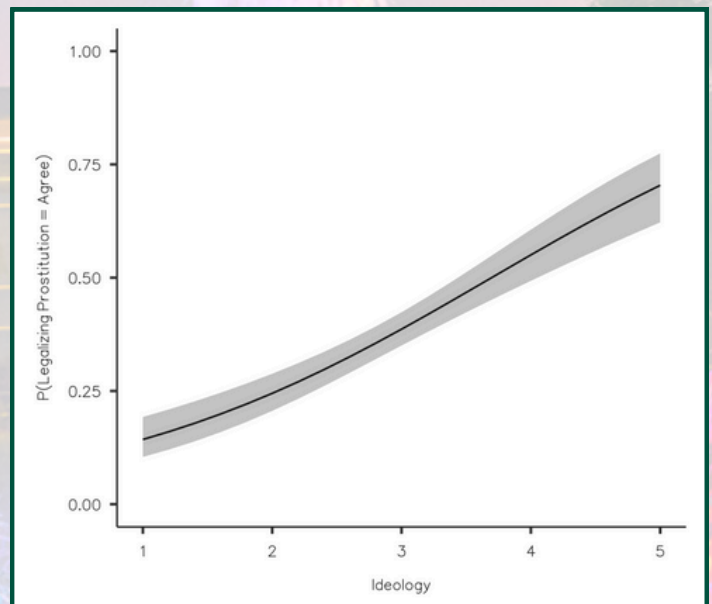
# COMPLETED PROJECTS

## Senior Political Science Polling (National & Florida)

In Spring 2025, CPOR partnered with senior Political Science majors to support their capstone research through national and Florida-specific polling. Students received training in questionnaire design, sampling strategies, data weighting, and public communication of results. CPOR's guidance provided a real-world experiential learning opportunity for students preparing for graduate study and professional careers.



Perceptions of the legalization of prostitution by **party**.  
1 = Strong Republican, 3 = Strong Democrat



Perceptions of the legalization of prostitution by **ideology**.  
1 = Strong conservative, 5 = Strong liberal

Seen above are graphs from Political Science senior, and CPOR Research Assistant, Andrew Goldner in his senior research project created with CPOR data. Andrew's research into American's perceptions of the legalization of prostitution yielded mixed results. He identified that the issue is one of ideology (liberals being for the legalization and conservatives being against), not one of party. In his conclusion, he discusses that should either party start to heavily message that they are for, or against, the legalization of prostitution, we should expect to see a slope similar to the ideological one.

# STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

This year marked the launch of CPOR's first cohort of student research assistants under the Hatter READY immersive experience initiative.

As part of this inaugural class, five students were selected to join a structured, credit-bearing research apprenticeship that offered a gateway into the world of public opinion research and data analytics.

These student researchers represented diverse academic backgrounds but shared a common goal: to gain real-world experience in applied, policy-relevant research.

Throughout the year, these assistants were embedded in every stage of the research process. From crafting survey questions and building logical flows into survey instruments, to managing distribution, collecting and cleaning data, conducting analysis, and writing reports—students received intensive training and mentorship in each core area of professional survey work.

The experience has not only enriched their academic paths, but has also prepared them with the technical and analytical skills needed for a career in survey research, should they choose to pursue it.

As CPOR continues to grow, this immersive model of mentorship and applied learning will remain a cornerstone of our educational mission.



"One of my favorite parts of working with Dr. Hill and CPOR this semester was how genuinely seen and supported I felt. Dr. Hill believed in my ideas, gave me real responsibilities, and helped me grow both as a student and as a person, I'll carry that confidence with me long after this semester."

**Brennan Borally**, *Political Science Senior and CPOR Research Assistant*



# BUDGET

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## Income

- Donations and Grants: Support from donors, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Hollis Grant.
- Projects: From items such as the IWER Project and other one-time projects.
- Partnerships: Income from collaborations like the Orlando Economic Partnership (OEP).

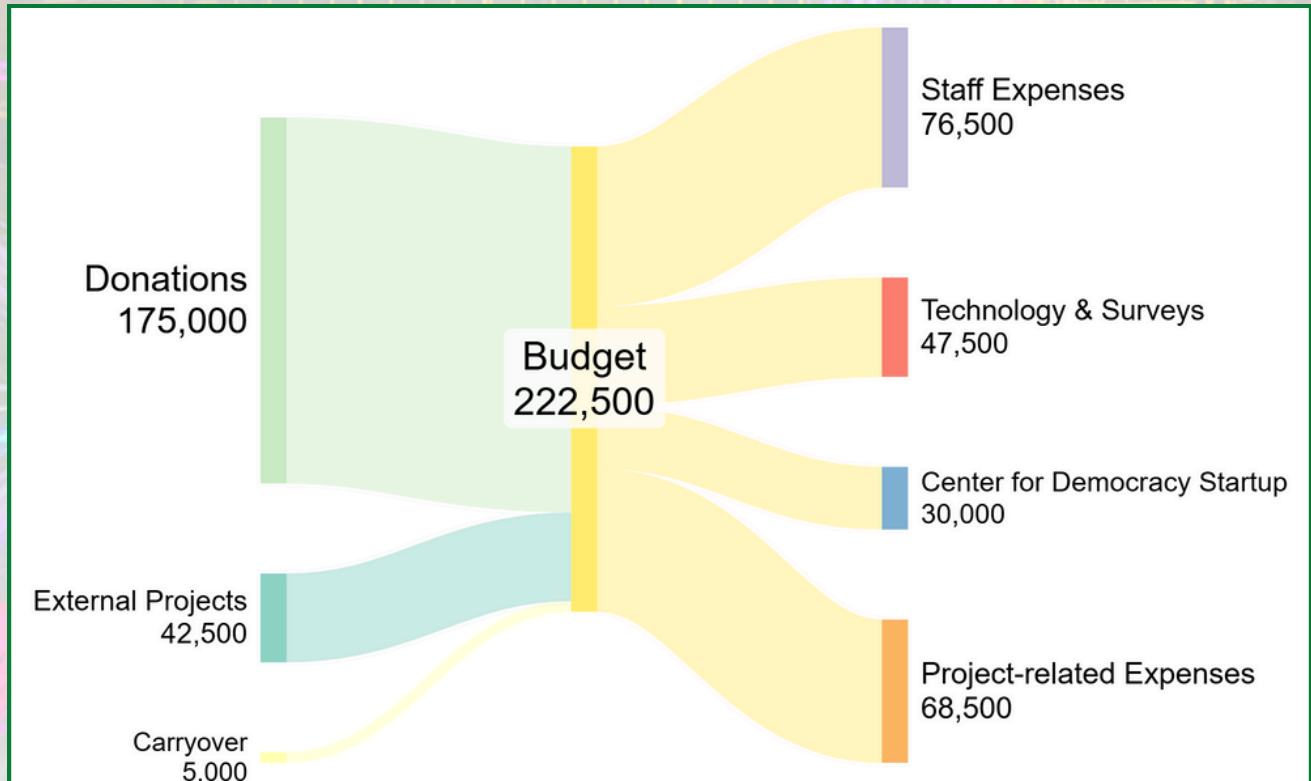
## Expenses

- Operational Costs: Administrative expenses, survey materials, software licenses, and essential operational costs.
- Project Funding: Research projects, including environmental attitudes (IWER), DeLand Youth Council surveys, and others.

## Financial Overview

Total Income: \$222,500

Total Expenses: \$222,500



# MANAGER'S REFLECTION

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**Liam Leider**  
*CPOR Manager*

When I first joined CPOR as an undergraduate at Stetson, I had no idea how much it would shape my academic and professional journey.

What began as a student role quickly turned into a full-time opportunity allowing me to grow with the Center, take on major projects, and help lead an organization that's become a model for experiential learning.

CPOR gave me a foundation in research, communication, and project management that I now carry with me into my MBA studies.

CPOR isn't just a place where students learn how to write survey questions or analyze data, it's a launchpad for careers in research, policy, and beyond. It's where students first discover the power of asking good questions and the responsibility that comes with producing public-facing data.

For some of us, it becomes more than a class or internship, it becomes the first step in a meaningful professional path. I've seen that transition myself: from student to full-time staff member, and now to a graduate student equipped with real-world skills and leadership experience.

As CPOR continues to grow, I'm proud to help mentor the next generation of student researchers and to show them that this work can lead to something lasting—not just for their resumes, but for their futures.



# FUTURE PLANS

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As CPOR looks to the future, we are entering a new phase of growth—one defined by long-term partnerships, deeper community engagement, and an expanded research portfolio that reaches into new areas of public concern.

At the center of our future plans is a multi-year collaboration with the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) and Florida State University, expected to begin in Summer 2025. Over the next two years, CPOR will play a leading role in collecting and analyzing data on child health outcomes and parental experiences across the state. This work will provide critical insight into Florida's public health landscape and support evidence-based decision-making at the state level.

In parallel, we will continue to strengthen the CPOR Research Apprenticeship, launched this year as part of Stetson's Hatter READY initiative. This for-credit, immersive experience gives students the opportunity to build core research skills—from designing surveys to writing public-facing reports—and positions them for careers in research, data science, and public service. The success of this inaugural cohort has laid the foundation for a sustainable, scalable model that blends academic rigor with professional experience.

We are also proud to continue our work with the Orlando Economic Partnership (OEP) through our quarterly business conditions surveys, as well as our survey development collaborations with regional and state-level organizations. These partnerships allow CPOR to remain actively engaged in economic development, education policy, environmental research, and more—all while modeling how academic research centers can respond to the real needs of their communities.

As we move forward, CPOR remains committed to delivering high-impact research, supporting our students' professional growth, and building lasting relationships that shape the future of Florida through data.



# ABOUT CPOR

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At the Center for Public Opinion Research (CPOR), our vision is to be recognized nationally as a preeminent survey research center, known for producing innovative and rigorous research on the public's opinions on politics, the economy, and social issues. We aim to be a trusted source of information for policymakers, media, and the public, promoting evidence-based decision-making and informed public discourse. Additionally, we strive to be a leader in providing students with opportunities to engage in experiential learning in survey research and social science methodology, preparing them for successful careers in research, public service, and related fields.

We envision a society where public opinion is well-understood and considered in policy-making, and where individuals are equipped with the knowledge and skills to engage meaningfully in democratic processes. Stetson University's Center for Public Opinion Research is dedicated to following the best practices of the professional field of public opinion research.

Stetson's CPOR (and Institute for Social Research) is a member of the Association for Academic Survey Research Organizations (AASRO), which upholds best practices for academic institutions to maintain high standards and objectivity in research. CPOR will be seeking certification in American Association for Public Opinion Research's Transparency Initiative, to demonstrate its commitment to transparent and ethical practices in survey research, which can enhance the organization's reputation and credibility among stakeholders.





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