

# Community Quality-of-Life Indicators: Best Cases VI

# Community Quality-of-Life Indicators: Best Cases series

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## Volume 4

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The Community Quality-of-Life Indicators: Best Cases book series is a collection of books, each containing a set of chapters related to best practices of community quality-of-life indicators projects. Many communities (cities, towns, counties, provinces, cantons, regions, etc.), guided by their local planning community councils and local government, and other organizations, develop community indicator projects. These projects are designed to gauge the “social health” and well-being of targeted communities. These projects typically involve data collection from secondary sources capturing quality-of-life indicators (i.e., objective indicators capturing varied dimensions of economic, social, and environmental well-being of the targeted communities). The same projects also capture community well-being using primary data in the form of survey research. The focus is typically subjective indicators of quality of life such as community residents’ satisfaction with life overall, satisfaction with various life domains (e.g., life domains related to social, leisure, work, community, family, spiritual, financial, etc.), as well as satisfaction with varied community services (government, nonprofit, and business services serving the targeted communities). The book series is intended to provide community planners and researchers involved in community indicator projects with prototypic examples of how to plan and execute community indicator projects in the best possible ways.

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# Community Quality-of-Life Indicators: Best Cases VI

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# Preface

As in previous volumes of *Community Quality-of-Life Indicators: Best Practices*, the involvement of citizens and residents – community participation – in identification and use of community indicator systems is of paramount concern. This is supported by the belief that by involving those who stand the most to gain or lose from the impacts of public policy, the indicators developed and hopefully used will be more valid. Some researchers propose that such an approach to community indicator development supports the democratic process. Some argue that locally developed indicators of quality of life provide citizens the opportunity to define quality of life, and this is advantageous over experts, administrators, or politicians making those decisions (Rapley 2003).

This emphasis on community participation has been recognized for quite a while as indicator efforts and projects have evolved and matured. Over a decade ago, Salvaris (2000) described five features of locally developed and community-based indicator projects supporting community participation. These projects include:

1. Attempts to integrate economic, social, and environmental goals around some overall vision of progress or well-being, and a vision for the future
2. Development of goals or benchmarks for monitoring progress; some of these are expressed in conventional policy and statistical categories while others related to social capital are more unconventional
3. Initiation, development, and monitoring of the indicators via a community participation process often involving the entire community and/or through specialist panels with citizen participation
4. A long-term view, usually 5 years or longer as well as an iterative process
5. Relationships to formal processes of governance in their community, varying from government support or even government initiation to *de facto* acceptance as legitimate policy, or, at the least, become a political obstacle that politicians and bureaucrats have to confront (Salvaris 2000)

The recognition of the importance of community participation continues to grow as discussion, research, and awareness of issues around quality of life and well-being become increasingly important. For example, it could be proposed that

community indicator projects with participation rely on or help build social capacities, and this in turn reflects well-being. Haworth and Graham (2007, 128) explain that “many of the capabilities for well-being inhere in social relations and social organization, not in the individual, and still less in individually owned resources... *Well-being is something that we do together, not something that we each possess.*” We interpret this to imply that *community* indicator projects can represent ways to influence community well-being. Further, we agree with Rapley (2003, 45) that by “assuming the meaning of quality of life is a local and political matter – rather than an universal, abstract and apolitical or academic one – may enhance the quality of people’s lives.”

It is interesting to note the variations with which indicator projects approach community participation, whether directly with a community focused effort or more diffuse with targeted participation elicited by larger regional governments. All types recognize the value of citizen/resident involvement and may focus on awareness instead of direct widespread participation. Issues around well-being are a common thread throughout many projects, regardless of whether government initiated or more community inclusive in nature. These varying approaches are seen in this volume of ten chapters along four themes – the first is that of community well-being with two cases, one from a local perspective and one from a larger, country-level focus. Next, three chapters are provided centering on the issue of fostering public awareness in the use and further development of indicator systems, one at a state level and two at the city level. The next three chapters provide exploration of regional-level efforts, and the final two chapters present more technical applications at the country and city levels.

The first chapter is a best practices example illustrating citizen involvement in the process of developing indicators. Heidi Elaine Atwood provides how a participatory action research process can be used for fostering a deeper understanding of local quality of life in “The Influence of Quality-of-Life Research on Quality-of-Life: CLIQ Case Studies from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.” This chapter is very appropriate for illustrating conceptualizations of community quality of life and the linkages between indicators and goals and means. It concludes that a subjective, participatory approach to both research and projects for community indicators conveys benefits for researchers and participants alike. Further, findings suggest that the participatory action process itself can help spur improvements in participants’ quality of life.

Chapter 2, provides a “big picture” look at well-being indicators with Florence Jany-Catrice’s “Regional Indicators of Well-Being: The Case of France.” As well-being and quality-of-life concerns are increasingly considered, this case presents ways of quantifying social well-being indicators on a regional basis within the country. Spurred by the need to include less conventional indicators as well as being able to account for heterogeneity among regions, the case promotes the use of a variety of indicators beyond economic to reflect these differences.

In the following three chapters, indicator projects are described that strive for increasing public awareness. Motivations for this include the belief that by disseminating valuable information about community and regional conditions, citizens and

residents can encourage positive policy responses. In Chap. 3, Bruce Whyte and Andrew Lyon develop a framework based on a socio-ecological perspective for gauging health and well-being both individually and at a larger community level. In “Understanding Glasgow: Developing a New Set of Health and Well-Being Indicators for Use Within a City,” seminars and small group interaction helped spur the development of a “holistic” set of indicators describing health and well-being within the city and allowing for both external and internal comparisons across neighborhoods and overall socio-economic levels.

Chapter 4 by Luis Delfim Santos and Isabel Martins, “The Monitoring System on Quality of Life of the City of Porto,” describes a decade-long project designed to foster informed public awareness and political choices. It is founded on a collaborative model of over 30 public and private institutions participating to provide objective data to the city. Given this history, further work has been undertaken to generate quality-of-life conceptualizations, including at the neighborhood level for encouraging dialogue and input about quality of life. The goal of encouraging dialogue among different urban actors has helped encourage a greater collective awareness and led to strategic guidelines for guiding urban development.

Chapter 5, “State Level Applications: Developing a Policy Support and Public Awareness Indicator Project,” by Rhonda Phillips, HeeKyung Sung, and Andrea Whitsett provides a case of an indicators system developed as a public awareness mechanism. It uses the case of Arizona Indicators begun in 2007 and used to bring data and issues to the public forefront so that reactions and responses can be addressed in a policy format. It is presented as a support system for policy and public awareness.

The next three chapters coalesce around the theme of regional indicator projects. All illustrate the value of partnerships for striving for collective outcomes. Simon Weffer, James Mullooly, Dari Sylvester, Robin DeLugan, and Marcia Hernandez provide a case of the value of partnerships in Chap. 6, “Partnerships Across Campuses and Throughout Communities: Community Engaged Research in California’s Central San Joaquin Valley.” The Central Valley of California is noted for its ethnic and economic diversity, and range of community types (both rural and urban with varying levels of development). The Partnership for the Assessment of Community (PAC) serves to model the changes occurring in the Valley and incorporates the use of researchers and students from different universities to conduct community-based work.

Chapter 7, “Measuring Quality of Life in Border Cities: The Border Observatory Project in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region,” by Devon McAslan, Mihir Prakash, David Pijawka, Subhrajit Guhathakurta, and Edward Sadalla is a major project aimed at collecting data for gauging quality of life in the challenging context of a bi-national project. Using both subjective and objective measures, four pairs of sister cities along the border are examined. Using a comprehensive approach, this project yields insight into longitudinal changes as well as an index based on economic, social, and environmental indicators. Further, a social well-being measure of happiness is measured for each city.

Chapter 8, “The Fox River Region Leading Indicator for Excellence: The Benefits and Challenges of Regional Collaboration,” by Lora Warner and Ashley

Heath presents a partnership effort to develop indicators across three metropolitan areas in northeast Wisconsin. The Leading Indicators for Excellence (LEAD) project uses secondary data, public opinion, and qualitative data to calibrate a dashboard of leading indicators. The project also triangulates data along themes of community strengths and issues or areas of concern to develop insight into quality of life at the regional level. Among the partners are philanthropic organizations interested in spurring quality-of-life outcomes.

The final two chapters in this volume provide examples of researcher and technical approaches to gauging quality of life. One is a city level analysis and the other is a country-wide effort. Chapter 9, “Bridging Environmental Sustainability and Quality of Life in Metropolitan Atlanta’s Urban Communities,” by Susannah Lee and Subhrajit Guhathakurta explains development of a multi-attribute Quality of Urban Life (QoUL) Index for comparing and tracking place-based amenities and conditions of public welfare in cities throughout the Atlanta metropolitan area. This case also provides insight into relations with sustainability and how an index of urban environmental sustainability contributes to urban quality of life.

Chapter 10, “Building a ‘Quality in Work’ Index in Spain,” by Jordi Lopez-Tamayo, Vicente Royuela, and Jordi Surinach presents a quantitative approach to measuring job quality. It is a country-level project to quantify the quality in work from the period 2001–2009, applying a methodology to estimate a composite index considering European Commission guidelines. Given the issue of types of jobs (“bad” jobs replacing good jobs) with the economic difficulties, this project provides information for macro-level policy considerations.

As seen in this collection of cases, community indicators and quality-of-life considerations are applied in a variety of contexts from the neighborhood to country level. They incorporate aspects important in project development such as community participation, public awareness, partnership and collaboration, and new approaches to methodology. We hope you will find the collection useful in your own efforts.

Blacksburg, VA  
Phoenix, AZ  
Williamsburg, VA

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# Author Bios

## **Heidi Elaine Attwood**

Heidi Elaine Attwood worked as a researcher and project manager on Community-based Learning, ICT and Quality-of-Life (CLIQ) – an action research project providing ICT training to individuals from poorer communities in KwaZulu-Natal, based at the School of Built Environment and Development Studies (formally the School of Development Studies), at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She is currently completing her research masters at BEDS, UKZN. Her research and training activities have covered Participatory Poverty Assessments in South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. She was involved in the early stages of the now “Participation, Power and Social Change Team” at the Institute of Development Studies (University of Sussex) and has also since worked on various aspects of participatory approaches to research.



**Robin M. DeLugan**

Robin M. DeLugan is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Merced. Her subfield is sociocultural anthropology and her research interests include collective identity, social memory, nation-building and concepts of community and belonging. In addition to her long-standing research on postwar nation-building in El Salvador, since coming to the new University of California, Merced, in July 2006, she has been central to efforts to direct campus research attention to Central Valley issues.



**Subhrajit Guhathakurta**

Subhrajit Guhathakurta joined Georgia Tech in 2011 as the Director of the Center for Geographic Information Systems and Professor in the School of City and Regional Planning. He was previously Associate Director of the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning at Arizona State University (ASU) and among the founding faculty members of ASU's School of Sustainability. Professor Guhathakurta was instrumental in developing the Urban Modeling and Simulation Lab in ASU's College of Design. He also serves as the lead member of several research centers at ASU including the GeoDa Center for Geospatial Analysis and Computation, Decision Center for a Desert City, and the project on Sustainable Urban Systems, Technologies, and Infrastructure (SUSTaIn). He is an author of 5 books and monographs and over 70 scientific papers. He has held visiting appointments at the Center for Urban Spatial Analysis at University College London, the Indian Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore, and at the Center for Sustainable Urban and Regional Futures at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. More recently, he held the German National Science Foundation (DFG) Mercator Guestprofessorship at Technische Universitat Kaiserslautern, Germany.



**Ashley A. Heath**

Ashley Heath is Research Associate at the Center for Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, with a B.A. from UW-Green Bay in Public Administration. With expertise in project management and compilation/visualization of secondary data, Ashley played a central role in managing data collection and reporting for the 2011 LIFE Studies in Brown County, the Fox Cities, Winnebago County, and the Fox River Region.

**Marcia D. Hernandez**

Marcia Hernandez, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of the Pacific and the Assistant Dean of the College. Her scholarship interests include Black Greek-Letter organizations, higher education, popular culture and media studies in sociology. She is currently working on projects that focus on the intersection of social class, body politics and images of beauty within African American communities. Other projects include assessing service-learning pedagogy, and community based research examining social cohesion and civic engagement in California's Central Valley. Her research is featured in the *Journal for Civic Commitment*, *Social Indicators Research* and the interdisciplinary anthologies.



**Florence Jany-Catrice**

Florence Jany-Catrice studied economics in France and Belgium (College of Europe), and urban studies at the Johns Hopkins University (Maryland, USA). She is currently Assistant Professor in economics at the Lille University, and a research fellow of the Clersé (Centre lillois d'études et de recherches économiques et sociologiques) and of the Institut universitaire de France, Paris. She has co-founded and is the current director of the *Revue française de socio-économie* (ed. La Découverte, et Cairn). She is also the director of the Master2 APIESS (Public Action, Institutions, Not-for-profit-organizations). She is the author or co-author of numerous academic articles, book chapters, and books, among which *The New Indicators of Wealth and Development* (Palgrave Mc-Millan 2006).

**Susannah Lee**

Susannah Lee is a student in the Master of City and Regional Planning program at Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech). She is currently a research assistant at the Center for Geographic Information Systems where her work is focused on the spatial implications of sustainability. Prior to joining Georgia Tech she studied French in Paris, France and Trois-Pistoles, Quebec. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Humanistic Studies from McGill University.



**Jordi López-Tamayo**

Jordi López-Tamayo graduated in Economics at the University of Barcelona in 1993, where he gained his Ph.D. degree in Applied Economics in 2000. He works as Associate Professor of Applied Economics for the Department of Econometrics, Statistic and Spanish Economy at the same university. He is a member of the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IREA-UB), member of Regional Quantitative Analysis Group (AQR) and member of Teaching Innovation in Economic Data Analysis Group (GIDAD) at the same university. He has been member of the Spanish Regional Science Association (AECER) and the European Regional Science Association (ERSA). His main fields of research are teaching innovation in economic data analysis, labor markets, social and economic indicators and regional and urban economics.



**Andrew Lyon**

After five years working in shops and factories, Andrew studied Sociology and Economics at Edinburgh University. After completing his Ph.D., he led a community oriented health programme at Polaroid UK Ltd, before moving to Glasgow to lead the Healthy Cities Programme. He has also worked for the WHO in Bangladesh and Europe. With Forward Scotland, he led on a Scottish approach to Sustainable Development from 1996 to 2001. Now with the International Futures Forum, he leads on programmes designed to restore effectiveness in times of rapid change. Also a volunteer by nature, he currently serves on the boards of several innovative charities. He loves to cycle, is a poor but enthusiastic astronomer. He also says he can play the flute and the uilleann pipes, his children say he can't.



**Isabel Martins**

Isabel Martins is a senior officer in the Studies and Planning Unit, at the Porto City Council. She is Co-Coordinator of Porto’s Monitoring System on Urban Quality of Life Project. She holds a Ph.D. in Human Geography from the University of Porto and is a Research Associate at the Geography and Spatial Planning Research Centre (CEGOT) an I&D unit, assembled by researchers from the Universities of Coimbra, Porto and Minho. Her research interests include quality of life measurement, social-spatial disparities and urban information systems. She has published on issues of quality of life assessment and urban planning.



**Devon McAslan**

Devon McAslan has a master’s degree in Urban and Environmental Planning from Arizona State University. His thesis, entitled “Urban Indicators: A Study and Evaluation of Urban Indicator Programs for Creating Sustainable Communities,” explored how indicators are used at the urban scale and how they become effective tools for policy making.



**James J. Mullooly**

James J. Mullooly is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at California State University, Fresno, and Applied Cultural Anthropologist with a great deal of interest in improving the quality of life in Fresno. He focuses on key issues such as education, commerce and industry. He works in the fields of Ethnography, Applied Anthropology and Ethnomethodology. James holds a B.A. in Anthropology and History from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, two master’s degrees, one in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (American University in Cairo) and another in Anthropology and Education (Columbia University) and a Ph.D. in Anthropology and Education (Columbia University). His dissertation, “Work, Play and Consequences: What Counts in a Successful Middle School” (2003) is an ethnography of an alternative middle school for Hispanic immigrants of low socio-economic status that has fostered great academic success amongst its graduates.



**Rhonda Phillips**

Rhonda Phillips is Associate Dean, Barrett, The Honors College and Professor, School of Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University. Community investment and well-being comprise the focus of Rhonda's research and outreach activities including community-based education and research initiatives for enhancing quality of life. Her focus is using community indicator and evaluation systems for monitoring progress towards community development and economic development revitalization goals. Rhonda is author or editor of 15 books, including *Community Development Indicators Measuring Systems and Introduction to Community Development*. Rhonda is President-elect of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies.



**David Pijawka**

David Pijawka is Professor and Associate Director of the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning at Arizona State University and is also a Senior Sustainability Scientist in the Global Institute of Sustainability. Professor Pijawka has published extensively on the social dimensions of sustainability, the management of technological and natural disasters, risk and hazard assessment, perception and behavioral impacts of environmental change, and urban sustainability. At Arizona State University he was the director of the Center for Environmental Studies, School of Planning, and the PhD Program in Environmental Design and Planning. He has written several books and reports on the US-Mexico border region and received multi-year funding from the US EPA to develop The Border Observatory Project on longitudinal Quality of Life indicators. He was also Director of the Southwest Center for Environmental Research and Policy, a collaborative effort between 5 US universities and 10 universities in Mexico. He has received numerous awards for his research including the Aaron Wildavsky Book Award and an award from the NAACP on his work in environmental justice. He is also recognized in the area of American Indian community planning.



**Mihir Prakash**

Mihir Prakash recently completed his Master's in Urban and Environmental Planning from Arizona State University's School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, with specialization in GIS and Transportation Planning. His areas of expertise span the subjects of international planning, poverty alleviation, trans-border studies, quality of life, urban governance, disaster mitigation and risk management. He has worked as a consultant for various Law Firms and Government agencies on related issues, and regularly contributes to research publications.

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Vicente Royuela gained his Ph.D. in Applied Economics at the University of Barcelona in 2000. He is an Associate Professor of Applied Economics at the Department of Econometrics, Statistics and Spanish Economy at the same university and is member of the Regional Quantitative Analysis Research Group (AQR) and of Institute of Applied Economic Research (IREA-UB). He is a member of the Spanish Regional Science Association (AECR) and the European Regional Science Association (ERSA), where he holds a position at the European Organizing Committee. His research agenda is focused in Regional Science and Urban Economics and labor market issues. He has developed several projects related with Quality of Life and Urban Economics, and with Real Estate. He is currently member of the Board of Editors of the Encyclopedia of Quality of Life Research.



**Edward Sadalla**

Edward Sadalla received his Ph.D. at Stanford University. He taught undergraduate and graduate courses in Environmental Psychology for 30 years at UCLA and ASU, and directed the Environmental Psychology Doctoral Program at ASU for over two decades. In addition to scholarly work on the topics of urbanization, spatial cognition, self-presentation and evolutionary psychology, he has conducted applied research in the areas of housing, transportation, energy (nuclear waste disposal), air quality, water quality and quality of life (in border settlements). He has been the PI on numerous grants from federal agencies, including the US Department of Agriculture, the US Air Force, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the Department of Transportation and Southwest Center for Environmental Research and Policy. He currently is Professor Emeritus in the Psychology Department at ASU and works with ASU's School of Sustainability and the Decision Center for a Desert City.



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Luis Delfim Santos is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto and member of CEF.UP, a research unity at the same University. Holding a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Paris, is author of several publications in national and international journals and technical studies in its main areas of research and teaching, namely econometrics, economics of tourism, regional economics and quality of life.



**HeeKyung Sung**

HeeKyung Sung worked as a research assistant at Arizona Indicators Project in 2011. She is a doctoral student in Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University, where she focuses on community development. Her research interests center on the impacts and value of arts and culture on local community, and their relationships with community development. Her prior experience includes over 3 years' experience with a cultural nonprofit organization, the Seongnam Cultural Foundation in Korea. She holds a bachelor's degree in Music Performance and a master's degree in Music Education from Seoul National University



**Jordi Suriñach**

Jordi Suriñach is a Ph.D. in Applied Economics at the University of Barcelona since 1987. He is an expert in Regional and Urban Quantitative Analysis. Since 1993, he is Professor of the Department of Econometrics, Statistics and Spanish Economy and, in 2006, became the Director of the Institute of Applied Economics Research (IREA-UB). He is President of the Catalan Regional Science Association (ACCR), and member of different regional science associations: the Spanish (AECR), the European (ERSA) and the International Regional Science Association (RSAI). In 1986, with other researchers, he founded the Regional Quantitative Research Group (AQR). He has led several projects funded by the European Commission and has participated in Spanish and European competitive public projects. He has led the 7th Framework Programme project called Intangible Assets and Regional Economic Growth (IAREG 2007–2010) and actually leads the SEARCH project from 7th Framework Programme Sharing Knowledge Assets: Interregionally Cohesive Neighbourhoods (2011–2014).



**Dari E. Sylvester**

Dari E. Sylvester, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Political Science, Interim Director of the Jacoby Center for Public Service and Civic Leadership, University of the Pacific, and an active member of Phi Beta Kappa. She and her colleagues have been conducting research and analysis pertaining to quality of life for more than 7 years, and have published three peer-reviewed works and numerous reports in this area. Another area of interest is focused around political empowerment of marginalized groups, and she co-authored a number of articles exploring how the method of casting a vote impacts various groups. In addition, she recently gave a TEDxSan Joaquin talk entitled, “Invisible Numbers,” in which she highlighted the political and psychological implications of “counting” in society.



**Lora H. Warner**

Lora Warner, Director of the Center for Public Affairs at UW-Green Bay, has taught at the University since 2008. Lora obtained her Ph.D. in Health Administration and Policy from Virginia Commonwealth University (1987) and her M.Ed. in Educational Research from the University of Virginia (1983). Dr. Warner teaches courses in program evaluation, nonprofit management, fund raising and marketing, health care policy and administration and public policy (among others). With her primary emphasis on evaluation research, Dr. Warner has expertise in multi-method evaluation, summative evaluations, secondary data visualization and community assessments. Prior to full time teaching, Dr. Warner has consulted with a wide array of community organizations throughout Wisconsin and has led a number of community wide studies related to quality of life.

**Simón E. Weffer**

Simón E. Weffer, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Merced. His work is on the intersection of collective action and inequality. His work includes the study of protest and civic engagement in Chicago, immigration rights protest in California, the relationship between protest and voter turnout, and issues of Latino obesity in California's Central Valley. He has published in *Mobilization*, *The American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Indicator Research*, and *Childhood Obesity*. He earned his Ph.D. and master's in Sociology from Stanford University and his bachelor's in Sociology from University of Chicago.



**Andrea Whitsett**

Andrea Whitsett is a senior policy analyst at ASU’s Morrison Institute for Public Policy, where she manages the Arizona Indicators project – a centralized, online data resource that shows Arizona’s competitive position and trajectory. Whitsett works closely with scholars, state agencies, and community leaders to identify meaningful metrics, collect and analyze data, and develop interactive content for the project’s dynamic website, [ArizonaIndicators.org](http://ArizonaIndicators.org). Whitsett serves on the board of directors for Florence Crittenton and the Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence. She is also a member of the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce’s DATOS Research Committee and the Arizona Cultural Data Project Taskforce. Whitsett holds a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from Yale University where she was awarded an Amy Rossborough Fellowship through the Yale Women’s Center. Whitsett holds a Master’s of Nonprofit Studies degree from Arizona State University.



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