FY 2026

Annual Review



Research, Engagement & Education for the Public Good

University of New Hampshire
Carsey School of Public Policy



Discover the research and impact of Carsey's Centers.



Center for Demography engages in research to inform public policy. Senior Demographer Ken Johnson is a regular go-to for major media outlets and policy groups due to his expertise and ability to explain demographic information to a broad audience.



Center for Engaged Communities bridges the gap between people and policy. It supports communities and organizations in building strong pathways for civic participation, skills for navigating controversy, and reliable information to guide the way.



Center for Impact Finance addresses income and wealth inequality by promoting increased access to capital for place-based investments in underserved communities, through applied research, training, and practitioner-driven solutions.



Center for Social Policy in Practice is Carsey's applied social research and evaluation hub, skilled equally in data and community collaboration. It is home to the NH Early Care and Education Research Consortium.

Advance your career with a Carsey master's degree.

- **Master in Community Development** students learn practitioner-focused community-centered skills, theories, and applied strategies in policy and economic analysis, project finance, and organizational development through participatory projects strengthening community and civic health.
- **Master of Global Conflict and Human Security** students gain expertise in international development, peace, and conflict studies while building skills in project design, management, and evaluation to advance resilience and human security through local and global policy.
- **Master of Public Administration** students develop real-world management, budgeting, and strategic planning skills, learning to lead transformative public and nonprofit organizations through evidence-based decisionmaking.
- **Master in Public Policy** students elevate their policy expertise through direct engagement with Washington, DC, policymakers, government agencies, and advocacy groups while mastering analytical frameworks and policy design through capstone projects and internships.

920+	12–24	95%	880+
Alumni	Months to Completion	Retention Rate	Community Projects

Research, Education, and Engagement



For the Public Good

Dear Carsey Friends,

When I reflect on Fiscal Year 2026, I'm inspired by our shared resolve to analyze, teach, listen, convene, and work for better policy options and productive engagement. We trained North Country residents to lead community conversations, informed state decisions on child care, convened scholars and officials on global security, and sent graduates into public service worldwide. We also deepened our strategic alignment with UNH and the College of Liberal Arts, strengthening the partnerships that let us reach more students, share expertise across disciplines, and extend our impact. I am very proud of the Carsey Community.

Why Our Work Matters. In a time when public trust is scarce and difficult policy questions are everywhere, Carsey deepened its commitment to address pressing public issues through research, teaching, and dialogue. We produce research that is rigorous, unbiased, and accessible. We prepare students to lead in public service. And we bring people together across differences to solve real problems. Our senior demographer's work is cited by major news outlets and the Federal Reserve alike, and our researchers hold the sole-source contract that helps New Hampshire set child care subsidy rates for families across the state. Our faculty bring scholarly expertise and hands-on experience to the classroom. Our facilitators are trusted in schools, town halls, and national gatherings. This work influences decision-making and shapes lives.

Academic Growth and Innovation. In January, 14 students joined me in Washington for our DC Colloquium, meeting with Senators, Congresspersons, the National Academies, and the Center for European Policy Analysis to see policymaking up close. In May we celebrated our 2026 graduates across all four master's programs and welcomed them into a network of more than 920 Carsey alumni. Also in May, we launched the Summer Engagement Lab, a hands-on course that took students into communities from Portland to Nashua to see civic engagement in action. Our Treat Fellows earned the new Carsey micro-credential in practical facilitation, and our five fellowship programs continued to give undergraduate and graduate students meaningful, paid work in service of communities. Carsey Research Scientist Tyrus Parker became our newest PhD and NH Listens Program Manager Mikayla Townsend a newly minted MPP.

Collaboration and Engagement. Carsey's reach grew this year. In October, we hosted the inaugural UNH Security Forum, convening scholars, policymakers, and innovators to ask how emerging technologies are reshaping global security. Fulbright Canada launched a binational initiative on Canada and America's energy future with Carsey as a senior research partner. We continued our longstanding partnership with CARD MRI, the Philippines' largest microfinance organization. Through the World Affairs Council of New Hampshire, we welcomed delegations of current and emerging leaders from Ukraine, Kenya, Mexico, and around the world. Closer to home, we co-hosted the New England Municipal Sustainability Network, which formed "split incentive" working groups on decarbonization, housing, and community engagement. We joined a Sips of Science discussion exploring how the housing crisis, climate change, and health are deeply connected.

Research Centers. Our four centers had a remarkable year. The Center for Demography's Ken Johnson continued to document local, regional, and national demographic trends to inform planners and policymakers. The Center for Engaged Communities and NH Listens trained facilitators statewide, hosted the second North Country School Leader Summit, supported resident-owned communities in 10 cooperatives, and carried our model of respectful dialogue to educators nationally through the Association of American Colleges & Universities. The Center for Social Policy in Practice secured a pivotal contract with the NH Department of Health and Human Services and answered more than 50 requests for research and data support from partners working on child care research, policy, or project implementation. They nearly doubled the NH Early Care and Education Research Consortium to 40 members, whose second convening produced the state's first coordinated early childhood research agenda. The Center for Impact Finance trained 300 community lenders and developers in clean energy finance and continued to bring CDFIs into public capital markets. In June 2026, the Center for Impact Finance moved its research and training operations to the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. We are grateful for our long history with them, and our continued relationship and collaborations.

Strategic Direction and Milestones. Our second year in the College of Liberal Arts brought the cross-campus collaboration we hoped for. In April, Carsey faculty, staff, and fellows gathered at Huddleston Hall to share work ranging from state climate literacy planning to how "disadvantaged community" designations are drawn. Our *Carsey Policy Hour* series tackled topics ranging from preschool access to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. We published research briefs on housing, child care, climate, the demographic cliff, and more. Our funding remains strong and diversified, with grants and contracts making up two-thirds of our revenue, a mark of confidence from our funders.

Our Team and Supporters. We offer a heartfelt thank you to Robin Husslage, who retired in June after more than a decade of guiding our students. And we extend congratulations to Carrie Portrie for her completion of Leadership New Hampshire, Jess Carson for her promotion to Associate Research Professor, and to Mikayla Townsend for her promotion to Program Manager. None of the strides we made in 2026 would have been possible without our dedicated staff, Associate Director Michele Holt-Shannon, and an Advisory Board whose support during the (603) Challenge and beyond has been extraordinary. And thank you to the donors of UNH's annual giving campaign who contributed nearly $26,500 to support our students and research. We are so grateful.

Looking Ahead. Our work ahead is significant. How will New Hampshire care for its children and its aging population? How will our region meet its energy needs sustainably? How will people across political divides find common ground? Despite headwinds facing public policy and higher education in general, Carsey is moving forward. In the following pages, you'll see highlights of our past year. We look forward to continuing this meaningful work in the coming year.

Thank you for being part of this community. Whether you fund our research, hire our graduates, sit on our board, or engage in our events, you are the reason I'm excited for our next steps.

With optimism and appreciation,

Stephen Bird

Stephen Bird, Director, Carsey School



Thinking Big, Thinking Global







Moments of Impact

Advancing Relationships Between Canada and the U.S.—New Initiative Examines Energy Landscape

Fulbright Canada established a binational research initiative to bring together leading Canadian and U.S. scholars to examine the economic, geopolitical, technological, and societal forces shaping North America's evolving energy landscape. The initiative will be led by Monica Gattinger of the University of Ottawa (above center), with Carsey Director Stephen Bird and Robert Johnston of the University of Calgary serving as senior researchers.

In December, Stephen spoke on a panel discussing updates on U.S. and Canadian energy policy, regulatory trends, and trade relationships at the New England–Canada Business Council's (NECBC) 33rd Annual U.S.–Canada Executive Energy Conference. Held in Boston, the event brought together over 200 senior executives, policymakers, and innovators from across the United States and Canada to address the most pressing issues of our energy system including grid reliability, clean energy integration, affordability, and cross-border collaboration.

> "I'm glad to bring a focus on energy governance and technology to a project with this scope. Diversifying the energy sector—whether through new supply chains, renewables, or the infrastructure needed for AI data centers—depends heavily on the policy choices governments make now. This initiative offers a chance to bring evidence and comparative analysis to those decisions."
>
> — Stephen Bird, Director, Carsey School



Did You Know?

Founded in 1981, the **NECBC** is one of the leading non-profit organizations working to sustain and expand the strong and mutually valuable connections between New England and Canada.



UNH Hosts Security Forum on Emerging Perspectives of 21st-Century Security

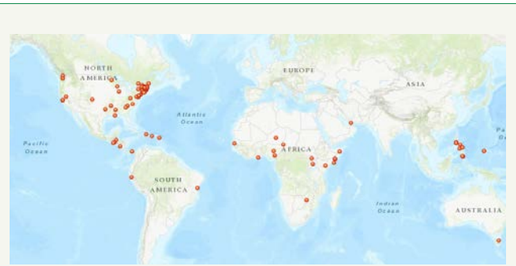
At a time when technology is reshaping everything from our climate systems to global defense strategies, Carsey brought together top minds in October to explore one central question: how do we secure the future? In collaboration with the UNH Departments of Political Science & International Affairs and Security Studies, this day-long forum convened scholars, policymakers, and innovators to examine how emerging technologies—like AI, advanced energy systems, and geoengineering—are transforming global security. From the risks of AI militarization to breakthroughs in renewable energy, the inaugural Forum sparked essential conversations about innovation, responsibility, and the path toward a safer, more sustainable world.

Examining Health and Sustainability

The Saul O Sidore Memorial Lecture Symposium in September was a day of exploration, inspiration, and a chance to look ahead to a world supporting health, wellbeing, and sustainability. Carsey's NH Listens team attended and facilitated small and large group conversations at the event. The Symposium offered an expansive view of health and sustainability, posing questions and connections meant to inspire and interrogate ideas about what it means to cultivate a community committed to supporting health, well-being, and sustainability for all. The 2025 Sidore Lecture Series was a partnership of UNH's College of Health & Human Services, Health & Wellness, and the Sustainability Institute.

Seacoast Sips of Science: On Building Balance

The Sips of Science event in January featured a discussion on Building Balance: Affordable Homes and Healthy Communities in a Warming World. Held at the Throwback Brewery in North Hampton, the event explored how the housing crisis, climate change, and health are deeply connected. Speakers included Semra Aytur, epidemiologist and UNH professor of health management and policy; Carsey School Director Stephen Bird; and Mary Stampone, New Hampshire state climatologist and associate professor of geography at UNH. The Sips of Science series, in partnership with the UNH Graduate School and UNH Research and Innovation, brings local scientists to seacoast breweries to share their latest research.



Carsey's Capstone Projects Span the Globe

Our students put theory into action by designing and executing Capstone projects that address real-world challenges in their communities and organizations. As a culmination of their graduate work, the Capstone provides students with the opportunity to turn knowledge and skills developed in the classroom into practical experience. Students have completed projects at the local, national, and global levels across various federal agencies, non-profit organizations, community development institutions, and more. Projects range from uncovering conservation policy alternatives for New Hampshire's lobster industry to engaging the community surrounding Lake Chad in Africa in restoration and rehabilitation efforts.

880+	26	5
Projects	Countries	Continents

Honing in on the Nation







A Year in Review

Carsey Launches Summer Engagement Lab

This spring, Carrie Portrie and the NH Listens team launched the inaugural Summer Engagement Lab, an experiential course focused on public engagement. Combining online learning with site visits across New Hampshire and Maine, participants learned firsthand about community engagement tools such as storytelling, mini-grants, and collaborative decision-making. The pilot was made possible through partnerships with the UNH Graduate School, NH Sea Grant, and the College of Professional Studies.

Interdisciplinary Food Systems Research Reaches Public and Academic Stakeholders

Continuing their ongoing partnership with the UNH Food Systems Lab, the Center for Social Policy in Practice (SPiP) published a variety of research-based resources intended to support small local farms and improve access to their products. With SPiP bringing sociological and analytic expertise, the group co-produced four publicly accessible briefs describing barriers to participation in collaborative marketing models and their corresponding field-informed solutions. The group also published an academic journal article exploring consumer attitudes related to local food systems, with three additional articles in various stages of preparation.

NH Listens Hosts Multi-Partial Facilitation Training with Everyday Democracy

In December, NH Listens hosted Everyday Democracy's Multi-Partial Facilitation Training at UNH's Huddleston Hall. Over two days, 40+ participants engaged in activities like role-plays, small-group work, reflection, and practice to develop skills for inclusive conversations and effective facilitation. This training reflects a partnership built on over 25 years of collaboration, with NH Listens as a key partner for Everyday Democracy. Trainings like this help prepare a growing list of NH Listens Facilitators across the Granite State. The NH Listens team thanks all attendees and Everyday Democracy for another motivating partnership.

Did You Know?

In Fiscal Year 2026, NH Listens trained **120+** facilitators across the state and beyond.

Carsey Holds Forum on Careers in Public Service

In March, the Carsey School hosted a career conversation featuring panelists from across public service in the non-profit, government, and private sectors with UNH undergraduate and graduate students. Panelists included Dr. Yvonne Goldsberry (President, NH Endowment for Health; on right), Rich Ashooh (VP Global Trade & Government Affairs, Lam Research) (on left), and Kennedy Nickerson (Director, Federal Government Relations at National Grid). Carsey Director Stephen Bird moderated the event. The speakers talked about their professional paths and shared tips on how to start a career in government, public policy, politics, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. A lively Q & A session wrapped up the event.

Strengthening Regional Sustainability Through the NEMS Network

Carsey remained actively engaged with the New England Municipal Sustainability Network (NEMS), with significant contributions from Stephen Bird and Jo Field. In November, Carsey, NH Listens, the UNH Graduate School, and the Sustainability Institute co-hosted the NEMS biannual meeting, where members launched three working groups focused on decarbonization, public health and housing, and community engagement. In June, Stephen Bird, Jo Field, and Carrie Portrie joined municipal leaders, planners, and community partners in Providence, Rhode Island, to advance regional efforts on climate resilience and environmental justice.

NH Listens Supports Educators Through Conflict and Conversation

At the Association of American Colleges & Universities Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, educators attended a workshop titled *Navigating Conflict, Encouraging Conversation, and Defending Academic Freedom*. Led by Nancy Thomas, senior advisor for Democracy Initiatives and executive director of the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education, the session offered a supportive space to address classroom challenges. Co-facilitator Carsey's Michele Holt-Shannon shared strategies for managing difficult conversations, safeguarding academic freedom, and fostering respectful spaces. The workshop left attendees inspired and prepared to navigate hard conversations on campus.

Radically Rural Conference on Civic Engagement in the Granite State

NH Listens' Carrie Portrie and Lu Butterfield-Ferrell participated in the Radically Rural Conference in Keene, New Hampshire, in October, alongside Ash Hanson from the Department of Public Transformation and Adrian Paul Bryant from CivicLex. Their interactive session focused on how rural communities can enhance and assess civic health and engagement.

Summer Engagement Lab Explores New England





Kenneth Johnson, senior demographer at Carsey and professor of sociology at UNH, provided information and analysis of United States and New Hampshire demographic trends to governmental and non-governmental organizations including the Federal Reserve Bank. Such information provides a demographic context for planners and policymakers as they address the economic-, social-, and health-related policy challenges the nation, region, and state face as their populations grow and change. Much of this analysis is included in Kenneth's Carsey briefs which report the latest trends in the nation, region, and Granite State.

Did You Know?

After losing 384,000 residents between 2010 and 2020, rural America began to grow again, gaining 523,000 residents between 2020 and 2025.

"Demography is not destiny, but policymakers, planners, and organizations need to be aware of current demographic trends to make informed decisions."

— Kenneth Johnson, Professor of Sociology, Senior Demographer, Carsey School





CDFI Training and Capacity Building

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, as community development lenders navigated a dynamic and unpredictable financial and political landscape, the Center for Impact Finance (CIF) continued its long history of strengthening community development financial institutions (CDFIs) through field-wide capacity building, training, financial analysis and modeling, strategic advising, and research and evaluation, to help community lenders increase organizational resilience and maximize their impact. CIF designed the CDFI Strong multi-year initiative to safeguard and advance the high impact field of community finance that remains under threat of disinvestment.

CDFI Consolidation and Integration

Recently, the number of CDFIs has increased dramatically while existing CDFIs have grown their business lines and portfolios. Few CDFIs, however, engage in a thoughtful evaluation of how to continue to increase their impact and whether integration, consolidation with a partner organization, or the use of shared operating platforms would enable them to achieve their organizational goals. In FY 2026, CIF researched past cases of CDFI mergers and planned the 2026 Financial Innovations Roundtable in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago to explore CDFI integration with practitioners.

CDFI Equity Project

In addition to federal policy changes and funding cuts, CDFIs are facing an evolving capital market landscape. To help the sector respond to increasing demands for community finance, CIF has spent several years developing and piloting a practical pathway for CDFIs to access conventional equity markets through preferred equity instruments backed by seasoned loan portfolios. In FY 2026, CIF continued its research to enable individual CDFIs to raise true equity against their own portfolios, develop aggregated multi-CDFI portfolio offerings to scale capital access across the sector, and build the market infrastructure, data standards, and investor confidence needed to move toward public capital markets.



Carsey's Michael Swack at the 41st annual conference of the Opportunity Finance Network held in Washington, DC.

Community-Based Clean Energy and Climate Resilience Finance

CIF works at the intersection of clean energy, climate resilience, and community development to help organizations and communities design and finance solutions that are equitable, scalable, and sustainable. To date, CIF has trained more than 3,300 community lenders and mission-oriented developers in clean energy and climate finance. Training opportunities include both self-paced courses and instructor-led training. In FY 2026, CIF trained a total of 300 participants across three core course categories: 72 community lenders in partnership with Inclusiv; 172 mission-oriented developers through collaboration with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the National Community Solar Partnership+; and 56 participants in Fundamentals of Community Development Finance. In January 2026, CIF, in partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Kresge Foundation, researched and published a white paper, *Resilient Communities and Affordable Energy: Charting Roles for Community Finance*.

In June 2026, the Center for Impact Finance moved its research and training operations to the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

"In 2026, the Center for Impact Finance continued to build upon its successful record of accomplishment and adapted to a changing policy landscape to continue advancing policy and finance solutions which help drive meaningful investments in underserved communities."

— Ellen Lurie Hoffman, Executive Director, Center for Impact Finance, Carsey School



Tending to the Granite State







Impact at Home

Contributing to NHFPI's 10th Annual Budget & Policy Conference

In October, Carsey's Center for Social Policy in Practice (SPiP) Director Jess Carson joined a panel discussion at the NH Fiscal Policy Institute's Annual Budget & Policy Conference "Working Hard and Falling Behind: The High Cost of Living in New Hampshire." The panel examined the rising costs of caregiving, their impact on households and the workforce, and what policies and investments are needed to support caregivers and those they care for. Along with the SPiP team and other Carsey staff, the event was attended by researchers, policymakers, advocates, business and nonprofit leaders, and community members to explore the most pressing challenges facing Granite Staters today and how a more affordable and equitable future could be built for all.

Did You Know?

Between 2017 and 2026, the number of licensed child care programs in New Hampshire serving children under 5 fell by **4.7%**.

Source: Carsey School of Public Policy analysis of NH Department of Health and Human Services data, August 2026

Acquiring Pivotal Contract with NH Department of Health and Human Services

Every few years, the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) completes a federally required Market Rate Survey and Narrow Cost Analysis, which helps the state determine the costs involved with running child care programs to set subsidy rates. This year, the Center for Social Policy in Practice was awarded the sole-source contract for this state partnership. Through extensive data system and survey design, community outreach, data analysis, and reporting, this large undertaking sets DHHS up to best support child care providers and families throughout the state. This project also spotlights the strengthening relationship between UNH and DHHS.

Documenting New Hampshire's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Research Stakeholders

The SPiP team continued to maintain and expand some of the NH ECE Research Consortium's longest-running resources this year, including their NH ECE stakeholder maps. Each map offers a continually updated snapshot of organizations with a stake in the Granite State's ECE landscape, which partners use to build connections, find contacts, and situate themselves within the broader NH ECE research landscape. The team now offers four separate maps highlighting organizations that contribute to early childhood education through research and evaluation, community efforts, research funding, and state agencies.

"Do We Have Data on That?" NH ECE Research Consortium Meets Growing Need for Research Technical Assistance

The NH ECE Research Consortium met a growing need for research and data technical assistance (TA) this year, responding to more than 50 requests for research and data support from partners working on child care research, policy, or project implementation. By sourcing and interpreting data for partners, the Consortium's TA work ensures program and policy decisions are grounded in high-quality evidence. The Consortium also serves as a field coordinator for NH ECE research by supporting partners with project planning, ensuring they are connected to existing research and partners doing similar work. In the coming years, the team aims to enhance the availability of real-time, online research and data resources that can further deepen the Consortium's support for partners.

"I'm a data nerd. I really believe in the power of data and research to help us understand what we need as a state, how we can tackle those needs, and assess whether our efforts are working."

— Jess Carson, Director, Center for Social Policy in Practice, Carsey School



Second Convening of NH ECE Research Consortium







In May, the Center for Social Policy in Practice hosted the 2026 NH Early Care and Education (ECE) Research Consortium convening in Durham. Researchers and research users confirmed topic areas for ongoing research, identified resources and gaps in each area, and contributed to research priority setting. The day's work will be synthesized and shared out as the first-ever coordinated NH ECE research agenda.

Expanding the NH ECE Research Consortium

Membership in the NH ECE Research Consortium nearly doubled this year, with 40 organizational and individual members now formally affiliated with the Consortium. Membership is diverse, with research organizations, statewide nonprofits, policy advocates, state employees, and multiple academic institutions (including faculty and staff from four UNH colleges!) represented. These consortium partners have access to a host of benefits, in exchange for a commitment to support a stronger NH ECE research landscape through coordination.

Did You Know?

There are **147** New Hampshire public school-affiliated preschool programs in the state.

Source: Carsey School of Public Policy, Public School-Affiliated Preschool Study, 2025

Did You Know?

Since 2020, New Hampshire's population has grown by **38,000** (2.7%) to 1,415,000. This is the 2nd largest percentage population gain in New England.



Kenneth Johnson, senior demographer at Carsey and professor of sociology at UNH, met with numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations to help inform their local, regional, and national efforts to address complex issues related to demographic change. In addition, he wrote numerous Carsey briefs reporting on national demographic trends. His research was extensively published in major news publications.

Growing the Next Generation of Facilitators

NH Listens' Lu Butterfield-Ferrell and Mikayla Townsend continued to host UNH undergraduates in the William W. Treat Fellowship. Over six weeks, fellows gained hands-on skills for conducting welcoming and effective conversations, such as active listening, facilitative questioning, and multipartiality. Participants who finish the program receive the UNH Carsey School micro-credential, *Building Practical Facilitation Skills for Dialogue Across Differences*.

"Trust is central to civic health and community resilience, and trust starts locally with neighbors, local institutions, and local government. I am proud that our local work in communities directly informs our research on civic health."

— Michele Holt-Shannon, Cofounder & Director, NH Listens, Center for Engaged Communities, Carsey School



Agrivoltaics: Pairing Solar & Farming in New Hampshire

What does it look like to produce both food and energy on the same land? At UNH, Constantine Spandagos and the Spandagos Lab (Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, College of Life Sciences and Agriculture) are exploring that question through agrivoltaics. Graduate students Jillian Zube and Ellie Malesiada, alongside NH Listens partners Carrie Portrie and Maddie Smith, engaged a variety of people through interviews and outreach with farmers, municipal leaders, and energy experts.

Building Facilitation Capacity Across New Hampshire

NH Listens kept its core training offerings this year, including Basic and Advanced Facilitator Trainings and Local Lunch Box sessions. These programs teach practical skills for leading engaging conversations online and in-person. Completing a mix of training and Lunch Box sessions can earn the UNH Carsey School micro-credential in *Public Facilitation: Community Engagement in Practice*, focusing on active listening, facilitative questioning, and impartiality. These initiatives have created a network of hundreds of facilitators supporting civic engagement in New Hampshire and beyond.

Bringing Civic Health to the i2i Symposium

Michele Holt-Shannon and Mikayla Townsend represented NH Listens at the Community Development Finance Authority's Ideas to Innovation (i2i) Symposium, *ReWeaving the Social Fabric of Our Communities*. The interactive half-day event brought together leaders and community builders from across New Hampshire to explore how inclusive public spaces strengthen connection and civic life. Drawing on the Carsey School's *2024 New Hampshire Civic Health Report*, Michele and Mikayla presented on how trust, participation, and community voice shape local decision-making and democratic practice.

Building Support for North Country Youth

NH Listens' Lu Butterfield-Ferrell is working with the North Country Health Consortium to improve services for at-risk youth in the North Country. In November, North Country youth gathered with prevention specialists, community members, officials, small business owners, and nonprofits for two retreat sessions at Mead Hill greenhouse at Mount Cabot Maple in the White Mountains. Participants formed a multidisciplinary coalition for positive youth development, with over 50 people discussing strengths, gaps, and resource opportunities. Their feedback will guide efforts to enhance collaboration and support for regional youth.

NH LIFT Hosts Summit

In August, NH-Long-Term Investment to Fuel Transformative Research (NH-LIFT) hosted a summit bringing together faculty, students, and partners from across New Hampshire's higher education institutions to expand research opportunities in STEM. Carsey's Carrie Portrie, Michele Holt-Shannon, and Bailey Schott attended, with Bailey capturing student stories on video. NH-LIFT, funded by the National Science Foundation, fosters research collaboration, workforce development, and STEM talent pipelines.

Voices Shape Mental Health Solutions

The Portsmouth Mental Health Alliance organized a community discussion, facilitated by NH Listens, to examine local mental health needs and identify solutions. The gathering brought together community members, families, service providers, and local leaders to discuss current challenges and inform the Alliance's initiatives. Participants engaged in small-group conversations to share their perspectives, highlight regional needs, and propose strategies to improve mental health and recovery support across all age groups.

North Country Leaders Gather for Education Summit

NH Listens hosted the second North Country School Summit, providing a space for local legislators, school board members, superintendents, and school leaders to share insights. Participants discussed key issues like funding, open enrollment, and Education Freedom Accounts, focusing on their impact on rural and small-town schools. They also explored challenges and opportunities for students, staff, and families. Attendees stressed the importance of maintaining connections, clear communication, and grounding policies in local experiences to ensure they reflect North Country

SHOUT OUT

Through community-building events, local partnerships, and resident leadership, the Community Builders Hub is strengthening connections across the North Country. Its work reflects a value shared by NH Listens: strong communities are built through relationships, trust, and participation. We value opportunities to collaborate with the Hub and are continually inspired by how it brings people together to strengthen belonging, build local connections, and support thriving communities.



In partnership with North Country Healthcare, NH Listens has helped convene and support a team of North Country facilitators to lead community conversations across the region. This local facilitation model strengthens community ownership of the process while ensuring residents have meaningful opportunities to share their perspectives.

Did You Know?

New Hampshire has **over 150** Resident-Owned Communities in which the residents own their homes and the community owners control the land.



Resident Owned Communities USA Convening with ROC-NH Technical Assistance Coaches in Covington, Kentucky

Supporting Resident-Owned Communities in New Hampshire Through Conflict and Change

Over the past 18 months, NH Listens' Carrie Portrie and Lu Butterfield-Ferrell partnered with ROC-NH and the Community Loan Fund to support Resident-Owned Communities (ROCs) in New Hampshire. Recognizing that governance challenges can feel especially personal in communities where board members are also neighbors and volunteers, they focused on listening, relationship-building, and understanding local needs. Together, they attended 21 meetings across 10 ROCs and worked with ROC-NH Technical Assistance Coaches to develop new resources, including a conflict-focused toolkit and a coaching pilot designed to support board members in their leadership roles. This work continues.

Carsey Students, Faculty, Fellows, Alumni, and Staff



Our Super Power

Carsey's educational mission is realized through the dedication of the stellar group of individuals who comprise the Carsey community. Our master's degree programs bring passionate students together with instructors at the top of their professions. We pride ourselves on a faculty that combines leading practitioners with academic scholars to bring the best hands-on experience and scholarly expertise to the classroom. We are proud of the many contributions made by our engaged faculty, students, fellows, and alumni to build a better, more sustainable future for our communities, state, country, and planet.

NH Listens Adds to Its Leadership New Hampshire Alumni Ranks



NH Listens' Carrie Portrie completed Leadership New Hampshire's Class of 2026, which unites state leaders to explore issues shaping New Hampshire's future. She said the experience made her more knowledgeable, confident, and connected: "My participation in Leadership New Hampshire reflects my commitment to understanding communities and helping people connect policies to their own lives. My growth and expanded perspective will deepen the work of NH Listens across the state."

Tyrus Parker is the Carsey School's newest PhD!

Congratulations to Center for Social Policy in Practice Research Scientist Tyrus Parker for successfully defending his doctoral dissertation through the UNH Department of Sociology! Tyrus's dissertation explores factors linked to declining modern fertility, a trend that has been well documented by Carsey's Senior Demographer (and Tyrus's dissertation committee chair) Kenneth Johnson.



Reconnecting and Collaborating Across Campus







In April, we gathered Carsey staff, faculty, and fellows at Huddleston Hall to catch up, share some laughs, and to hear short presentations on Carsey projects and collaborations across campus and beyond.

- NH Listens' Maddie Smith and Jo Field discussed engagement to inform policy and NH Listens' role in state climate and environmental literacy planning.
- Evan England, Assistant Director of Carsey's Center for Social Policy in Practice (SPiP), reviewed collaborations between SPiP and the UNH Food Systems Lab.
- Carsey Senior Demographer Kenneth Johnson explored the role of demographic, forest cover, and land cover data in understanding cyanobacteria blooms in lakes.
- Carsey Director Stephen Bird and Assistant Professor of Economics Qingran Li shared highlights of their research on how Disadvantaged Communities' designations are designed, how they differ, and the implications of those differences.

Did You Know?

The **STEM-MoBILE** (STEM Mobile Biofabrication Integrated Lab Experience) is a traveling lab that introduces the cutting-edge field of biofabrication to schools and communities across New Hampshire and surrounding areas.



Carsey Director Stephen Bird (left), Carsey Fellow and Advisory Board Member Rich Ashooh (center), and UNH Manchester Dean Mike Decelle (right) joined UNH's Director of Development for University Initiatives Brooks Oliver to review the bio-tech initiatives at UNH Manchester in the context of business and workforce development.

SHOUT OUT





Sustainability at UNH is a university-wide endeavor. Sustainability Awards celebrate and spotlight individuals and teams doing important sustainability work in the areas of research, curriculum development and teaching, campus initiatives and culture development, and external engagement. At the 2025 Awards Celebration, Carsey's Natural Resources and Environmental Studies PhD student Jo Field and the Center for Impact Finance team were recognized for their outstanding contributions to UNH's sustainability work. Kudos to all!

SHOUT OUT

Oh, the anticipation! Carsey Senior Demographer Kenneth Johnson is on the verge of publishing his 100th publication at Carsey. We consider Kenneth to be a rockstar between his expertise and ability to explain demographic information to a broad audience. Whether a Carsey brief, fact sheet, data snapshot, or report, he keeps the nation informed.



Congratulations Are in Order!



Congrats to Our 2026 Graduates!

In May, Carsey gathered with graduating students and their loved ones to celebrate the tremendous dedication and perseverance that brought its students to the finish line of their Carsey master's degree programs. We look forward to hearing about the contributions these new changemakers will make in the fields of community development, global conflict & human security, public administration, and public policy!





Carsey Fellowships Provide Meaningful Work and Support for Students

Carsey offers five fellowships for UNH undergraduates and graduate students to engage in meaningful, fulfilling work in communities and organizations. All of Carsey's fellowships include a stipend.

The **Nordblom Fellowship**, established through the generosity of Peter C. Nordblom '80 and Kristin Van Curan Nordblom '83, offers UNH students and faculty the opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of youth in northern New Hampshire.

Public Policy fellowships for Master in Public Policy students focus on policy areas including social and fiscal policy, law enforcement, New Hampshire youth retention, and more.

The **Treat Fellowship** program, established in 2018 in memory of the late New Hampshire Judge William W. Treat, provides students a platform for engaging in civil discourse across differences.

The **S. Melvin Rines Fellowship**—named after UNH alum S. Melvin "Mel" Rines '47—is offered for Master in Community Development students who are committed to making a difference in Africa through work in financial innovation and enterprise development.

Created in 1982 in memory of the late New Hampshire Governor John G. Winant, the **Winant Fellowship** program encourages the professional development of undergraduates with a strong commitment to public service.

SHOUT OUT



We offer heartfelt thanks to Robin Husslage, who retired in June after more than a decade of service. For many prospective students, Robin was their first contact at Carsey, guiding them through curriculum, admissions, and financial aid and, as a 2012 graduate of our Master in Community Development program, speaking from experience about what a Carsey education could mean. Many of the alumni we celebrate this year began with a conversation with Robin.

A Whirlwind Week of Insightful Meetings in Washington, DC



Carsey's DC Colloquium provides an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the heart of American policymaking. At January 2026's Colloquium, Carsey School Director Stephen Bird and 14 students met with leaders across government, nonprofit, and research organizations to learn directly from the experts shaping policy today. Highlights included visiting the National Academies, international exposure with the Center for European Policy Analysis, and extensive time with both Senator Jeanne Shaheen and Representative Chris Pappas from the New Hampshire delegation.





SHOUT OUT

Mikayla Townsend has been working full time with NH Listens as a program manager. At the same time, she has been working on a Master in Public Policy degree. It is a big commitment to do both! We are thrilled to congratulate Mikayla on her graduation in December.



"I'm constantly impressed by our Carsey students. They demonstrate what thoughtful public service looks like in practice by translating ideas into action and research into results for communities near and far."

— Melinda Negrón-Gonzales, Associate Professor, Graduate Programs Coordinator, Carsey School



Publications



During FY 2026, we published important research on topics related to housing, universal free lunch, child care, healthcare, climate, energy, population trends, and much more.

- *Forests, Lakes, and "Hidden" Housing* by Kenneth Johnson, Barbara Cook, Mark Ducey, and Kathryn L. Cottingham
- *Universal Free Lunch: Why Not New Hampshire?* by Delaney Hesler
- *What's the Scoop on Life in New Hampshire? Youth Perspectives on New Hampshire as a Place to Live, Learn, and Work After High School* by Elliot Ng, Jayson Seaman, Cindy Hartman, Andrew Coppens, Kate Moscouver, and Hannah Falcone
- *Winter 2026 North Country Healthcare Listening Sessions Report* by Carrie Portrie and Michele Holt-Shannon
- *Ski Industry Professionals in New Hampshire Are Worried about Climate Change* by Jacklyn Tracy and Elizabeth Burakowski
- *Public School-Affiliated Preschool Programs in New Hampshire, 2024–2025 School Year* by Tyrus Parker, Kamala Nasirova, and Jess Carson
- *Carsey School of Public Policy 2024–2025 Annual Review* by Carsey School of Public Policy
- *All Six New England States Gain Population, but Demographic Basis of Gain Varies* by Kenneth Johnson
- *Operating on Thin Margins: The Cost of Providing New Hampshire Child Care* by Tyrus Parker and Jess Carson
- *Resilient Communities and Affordable Energy: Charting Roles for Community Finance* by Eric Hangen, Adam Kent, Melanie Duenas, and Jessica Luk-Li
- *New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship Program Reaches Young Children Statewide* by Harshita Sarup and Jess Carson
- *The New Hampshire Voluntary Paid Family and Medical Leave Program: Did the Program Increase Coverage?* by Kristin Smith
- *2025 Financial Innovations Roundtable Summary* by Val Benson
- *The Future of Consolidation in the CDFI Sector: A Proactive Strategy for Scale and Impact* by Michael Swack and Sara Razavi
- *Factors Contributing to the Demographic Cliff: More U.S. Women of Childbearing Age, but Fewer Have Given Birth* by Kenneth Johnson
- *Can the Government Control Hurricanes? New Survey Results on Conspiracies and Science* by Lawrence Hamilton

Carsey Policy Hour



Our Carsey Policy Hour discussion series engages policymakers, public service professionals, active citizens, and organizations in the issues and policies that affect the people and places of New Hampshire. The series is jointly organized by Carsey; the New Hampshire Bureau of Education and Training; the New Hampshire Association of Counties; the New Hampshire Municipal Association, Inc.; and the New England Municipal Sustainability Network.

In FY 2026, the monthly sessions' topics ranged from civic health, to the early care and education landscape, immigration policy, and more.

- *New Hampshire Schools Offer Preschool? Exploring New Hampshire's Preschool Landscape* with Tyrus Parker
- *Rooted in Place: Expanding Environmental Education Across New Hampshire* with Carrie Portrie, Maddie Smith, Judy Silverberg, Leigh Ann Reynolds, and Kayla Stoll
- *Want Effective Bipartisan Solutions? Elect More Women* with Devan Quinn
- *An Actionable Roadmap Toward Positive Change: How the NH Food and Agriculture Strategic Plan Is Changing NH's Food System* with Colleen Jennings
- *Exploring New Hampshire's Civic Health and Policymaking in a Time of Polarization* with Anna Brown, Steve Brown, and Michele Holt-Shannon
- *The Impact of Rising Housing Costs in New Hampshire* with Emmy Ham
- *What's Ahead for K–12 Public Education in New Hampshire* with Nicole Heimarck and Alex Tilsley
- *What is in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act? Select Provisions* with Deborah Fournier
- *New Hampshire Demographic Trends—What It Means for You* with Kenneth Johnson

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

University of New Hampshire
Carsey School of Public Policy

BET Bureau of Education and Training

50th Anniversary NH Association of Counties

NHMA New Hampshire Municipal Association

NEMS Network

Funders

Fiscal Year 2026

Grants

- American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE)
- Citi Foundation
- Concord School District
- Couch Family Foundation
- Endowment for Health, Inc.
- Inclusiv
- Inclusive Prosperity Capital (IPC)
- Invest in Our Future (IOF)
- John T. Gorman Foundation
- JPMorgan Chase Foundation
- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
- National Science Foundation (NSF) / NH EPSCoR – NH-LIFT
- Nellie Mae Fund for Education
- New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
- New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
- New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
- New York Community Trust (NYCT)
- North Country Health Consortium
- United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Northeast
- Wells Fargo Foundation

Contracts

- Capitalize Good
- Catherine Cutler Institute, USM
- Economic Opportunity Coalition (EOC)
- Henniker School District (SAU #24 / Weare)
- Inclusiv
- Inter-Lakes, SAU #2
- Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC)
- National Community Investment Fund (NCIF)
- New Hampshire Environmental Educators (NHEE)
- North Country Healthcare
- Raza Development Fund
- Reaching Higher New Hampshire

Gifts

- Anonymous
- Joshua Arnold
- Arnold Ventures
- Richard and Sharon Behan
- Stephen Bird and Mary Cabral
- The Bob Tuschman Fund
- William and Pamela Bryan
- Kristen and Lu Butterfield-Ferrell
- Dennis and Tiffany Calcutt
- Marcy Carsey
- Andrea Diaz
- Michael Ettlinger
- Eileen Fogarty
- The Honorable David and Mrs. Jean Gottesman
- Helen Gredd
- Curt Grimm and Monica Ciolfi
- David Hermann and Joanne Gilles
- Michael Higgins
- Melanie Higgins Dostie
- Talmira Hill
- Michele and Mark Holt-Shannon
- Andrew Horton
- Charles and Ann Hotchkiss
- Robin Husslage
- Ian and Rebecca Jacobs
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- John G. Winant Memorial Scholarship
- Kenneth and Brenda Johnson
- Anne Lawson
- Yyokkia Lawson
- Jamie Lewis
- Valerie Lewis
- Laurel Lloyd
- Libbey-Clarke Family Fund
- Local Enterprise Assistance Fund/ Hymes Foundation
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Bruce Mallory
- Gene Martin
- Lorne and Brian McCabe
- The Mel Rines '47 Fellowship Fund
- Christopher Messier
- Kenneth and Anna Monahan
- National Philanthropic Trust
- Melinda Negron-Gonzales and Nikolas Gonzales
- Peter and Kristin Nordblom
- Jackie Overton
- Orlando Pacheco
- Phelan Family Fund
- Alexander and Nicole Pooler
- Howard and Susan Reichbart
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Lauren Rolfe
- Vilmarie Sanchez-Rothkegel
- Barbara and Robert Schultz
- Jayson Seaman and Kimberly Sekera
- Douglas and Linda Smart
- Madeleine Smith
- Michael Swack and Jayne Adelman
- Gretchen Swain
- Faith Thompson
- Yusi and David Turell
- Sara Varela
- William W. Treat Foundation
- Caroline Wilson
- Rouzbeh Yassini-Fard
- You Have Our Trust Fund

Funding

Fiscal Year 2026 Revenue

In Fiscal Year 2026, the Carsey School of Public Policy continued to draw on a diverse portfolio of funding sources to support its applied research, academic programs, and public engagement.

Grants and contracts remained the cornerstone of Carsey's funding, reflecting the School's continued success in securing external support for research and policy-focused initiatives. Academic program revenue and endowment income provided important complementary support for Carsey's educational mission and ongoing programs, while philanthropic gifts supported students, innovation, and community engagement.

Together, these funding sources reflect Carsey's broad base of support and its continued ability to advance research, education, and public service.

Revenue Sources



Advisory Board

- Rich Ashooh
- Susan Brophy
- Marcy Carsey
- David Dixon
- Yvonne Goldsberry
- K. Corley Kenna
- Brian McCabe
- Ken Monahan
- Greg Nickerson
- Kennedy Nickerson
- Thomas Rath
- Jake Sullivan

SHOUT OUT

Big kudos to Carsey's Advisory Board members for their contributions in the past year. We've seen enormous support of Carsey during the 603 challenge and other fundraising efforts, supporting DC Colloquium visits, and providing critical feedback to help advance Carsey's mission.





University of New Hampshire
Carsey School of Public Policy

Carsey School of Public Policy
University of New Hampshire
Huddleston Hall
73 Main Street
Durham, NH 03824