Public Policy Associates

CRAIG VAN VLIET
Statistician
9 Years of Experience

Education

Master of arts from Wayne State University in economics, bachelor of arts from Grand Valley State University in economics

Qualifications

Skilled in statistical packages including R, SPSS, SAS, STATA, WEKA, and Tableau; experience in computer languages such as SQL, Python, Java, VBA (Strong Excel and Access skills), JavaScript, HTML and web tools such as SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, and Exact target; expert in experimental, quasi-experimental, and survey design; regression building and modeling; post-hoc testing; causal inference; A/B testing; Machine Learning; statistical learning models; neural networks, survey validation, data analytics; and predictive modeling.

Relevant Professional Experience

Experience with Public Policy Associates (2018-Present)

2024-present **Statistician. Building Knowledge About Michigan's License-Exempt Providers, Non-Traditional Hours Care Services, and Quality of Care Improvement.** Public Policy Associates (PPA) and the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) are partnering to study the role that license-exempt (LE) child care plays in Michigan's mixed-delivery system. LE providers (LEPs) are related and unrelated individuals who fulfill certain health and safety standards and qualify to deliver care to children of families with subsidies participating in the State's Child Development and Care (CDC) program. The rigorous mixed-methods study design is focused on parental choice, provider characteristics and quality-improvement needs, and the prevalence of non-traditional hours care from LEPs and includes a comparison of LE and family child care providers, using inferential statistics to assess the effects on continuity of care, equity, geographic variation, and families with very low incomes. Responsibilities include research design, analysis and management of MiRegistry data, management of CDC data, sampling, data management and cleaning of billing information, and reporting.

2024-present **Statistician. Increasing Equitable Access to the CACFP.** With grant funding from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) has partnered with Public Policy Associates (PPA) and 1837 Partners to lead a research and awareness project aiming to promote and expand child care providers' participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). As a federally funded, state-administered program, CACFP reimburses child care providers, including before- and after-school programs, that offer healthy meals and snacks to eligible children. Due to its underutilization in

Michigan, increasing participation would promote food security and healthy eating habits for the state's children, benefit providers with additional financial and informational resources, and benefit the state economy by drawing down additional federal funds. Responsibilities include research design, analysis and management CACFP data, management of data from partner organizations, sampling design, survey analysis, and communications with data partners across organizations.

2023-present **Research Associate. Unequal Burdens, Unequal Access? Understanding How Administrative Burden Mediates Payment and Co-Payment Policies.** In partnership with the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP), Public Policy Associates is studying the payment structure of Michigan's Child Development and Care (CDC) assistance program. Of interest are the program's payment rates to providers (including temporary increases), enrollment vs. attendance billing policy, payment by time blocks, (temporary) waiver of the family contribution (also called co-payment), and the pilot of contracted slots for infants and toddlers. In addition, the project has a strong focus on the administrative burden experienced by providers, parents, and eligibility specialists (who work for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services). Responsibilities include research design, analysis and management of CDC data, management of data from providers, sampling design, survey design, survey analysis, experimental design, and statistical analysis.

2023-2024 **Research Associate. Michigan Needs Assessment of the Early Childhood System Grant.** Working as a subcontractor/partner to SRI International, PPA conducted a two-part study to determine opportunities to improve Michigan's early childhood system. PPA led the workforce study, which included a survey of the broad early care and education (ECE) workforce, interviews with ECE administrators, listening-workshopping sessions, following early ECE professionals through monthly surveys, and analysis of secondary data from the state's MiRegistry Registered Education Professional databases and other sources. PPA also co-facilitated partner groups and contributed to the family and community engagement study through the workshopping sessions. Responsibilities included research design, analysis and management of MiRegistry data, management of the QRIS data, and reporting.

2023-2024 **Research Associate. City of Saginaw Food Feasibility Study.** PPA worked with the City of Saginaw, through a contract with Guidehouse, on conducting broad community engagement around developing and implementing a food retail establishment to increase food security and food access in the city. Prior to embarking on these broader community engagement efforts, PPA completed a preliminary food retail feasibility study with recommendations for the city. Responsibilities included mapping data in ArcGIS, providing secondary data from publicly available sources, and assisting in providing recommendations.

2022-present   **Research Associate. Evaluation of Michigan's Provider-Driven QRIS.** Funded through a $1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, PPA is working with the Michigan Department of Education and Early Childhood Investment Corporation to study the implementation and outcomes of the redesigned quality rating and improvement system. The evaluation design includes speaking with child care providers, parents receiving child care assistance from the State, and a variety of regional child care groups. Responsibilities include research design, analysis and management of MiRegistry data, management of the QRIS data, and reporting.

2022-2025   **Research Associate. Secondary Analyses of Data on Child Care Subsidy Equity.** This secondary data analysis research project examined key issues related to the accessibility of center-based child care for underserved groups, with findings broken down by demographics, including race, ethnicity, and income level. Using existing secondary data, the study sought to understand the effects of child care subsidy policy changes on access to high-quality child care over time and identify policy barriers, additional research needs, and ways to address disparities at the state and national levels. The overarching goal of the work was to improve access to quality child care for families in need. Responsibilities included research design, data management and analysis, statistical testing, reporting, and creation of a custom dashboard.

2022-present   **Research Associate. Evaluation Support to Urban Community Farm Education and Production Innovation Hub.** With funding from USDA's Urban Agriculture Innovation Grant, Allen Neighborhood Center has expanded its capacity as an Urban Community Farm Education and Production Innovation Hub. In summary, the project goals are to: (1) provide public exposure to urban agriculture and innovative production strategies through a multi-faceted demonstration farm in a well-trafficked public park; (2) increase community food sovereignty through urban agriculture training for both adults and youth; (3) support for-profit urban farms and urban farming-based nonprofits in the Greater Lansing area through continued support and growth of the Eastside Farmers Tool Library; and (4) lift up community growers as instructors and resources to the community. PPA was retained to lead the evaluation of the endeavor. Responsibilities include survey and research instrument creation, methodology development, and statistical analysis.

2022-2024   **Michigan College Access Network (MCAN). Evaluation of the College Completion Corps and AdviseMI.** MCAN created and implemented two signature initiatives that have become integral to MCAN's mission-driven efforts. The first, AdviseMI, focuses on the expansion and enhancement of high school students' access to postsecondary education in Michigan. Its initial funding included a three-year grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS, a.k.a. AmeriCorps), for which MCAN successfully recompeted in 2021. The second, the College Completion Corps (CCC), aims to promote and support students' persistence to the successful completion of their postsecondary

programs. MCAN's CCC program secured CNCS grant funding for an initial three-year period beginning in 2020. MCAN engaged in its first re-competition for its CCC grant during 2023-24, and that required the completion of an initial, independent program impact evaluation by the third year of the grant's cycle. MCAN required an evaluation team to develop and conduct the next phase of research for both AdviseMI and the CCC. Responsibilities included survey monitoring, data collection and cleaning, benchmarking, data analysis, and reporting.

2021-2023   **Research Associate. Out-of-School Time (OST) Data Project, Michigan After School Partnership (MASP).** PPA provided ongoing facilitation and strategic consulting services to MASP. In 2021, PPA conducted a statewide scan of OST programming in Michigan in order to provide a clear picture of the current landscape of OST activities in Michigan. OST programs provide supervised activities for young people (grades K-12) when school is not in session. As part of this project, Dr. Daniel Quinn led a team of researchers who also conducted an evaluation of grantees funded under Public Act 3 of 2021, Section 23e, which allocated $5,000,000 for a competitive grant program to community-based organizations that are 501c(3) to provide Before/After/Before-and-After School Programming. Responsibilities included data management and analysis, survey design, mapping, and data visualization.

2021–present   **Research Associate. Upper Peninsula Food As Medicine Program, Upper Peninsula Commission for Area Progress (UPCAP).** The Food As Medicine (FAM) Collaborative consists of a large number of health, human service, and food-assistance organizations spanning the 15-county Upper Peninsula (U.P.), dedicated to improving community-clinical linkages to address social determinants of health for U.P. residents. The Collaborative secured funding to implement a two-year U.P.-wide Prescription for Health program to improve the food security of low-income residents and invest in the local food infrastructure. The project is a culmination of a two-year research and facilitation project, Food Security and Health in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, led by PPA and Feeding America West Michigan. PPA is responsible for the program evaluation design, implementation, analysis, and dissemination. The results will build the body of evidence on the program effectiveness when implemented in rural areas and may help other rural areas replicate the program. Responsibilities include evaluation design, research design and methodologies, survey design, and data analysis.

2021-2024   **Research Associate. Michigan Child Care Subsidy Improvement through Research: Child Care Policy Research Partnership.** This collaborative research partnership joined policy researchers at Public Policy Associates with key staff from the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Great Start (MDE/OGS), which is the Michigan Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) lead agency, and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, which determines eligibility for the Child Development and Care (CDC) program on behalf of the MDE/OGS. The overarching goal of this work was the ongoing

improvement of access to quality child care for families in need, in support of employment and child-development outcomes critical for families and the state's social and economic vitality. Responsibilities included data management, statistical analysis, and reporting.

2023-2024   **Research Associate. Frederick County Child Care Market Study.** The Frederick County Office for Children and Families (OCF), together with the Frederick County Interagency Early Childhood Committee (IECC), sought to increase equitable access to high-quality early care and education (ECE) in the county. To address this need, the PPA team (including consultant Dr. Shira Solomon and community liaison Damaris Jackson) studied the county's regulated child care landscape, the economic drivers and educational impact of ECE quality and gaps, and the community-specific values that can guide the development of culturally responsive, local solutions. Methods included secondary data analysis, interviews, provider and family surveys in English and Spanish, family focus groups, and meetings with the Community Advisory Board and the Child Care Advisory Group. Responsibilities included mapping data in ArcGIS, providing secondary data from the American Community Survey, and assisting in measuring the SROI (social return on investment).

2022-2023   **Research Associate. Michigan's Current and Future Adult Education Landscape.** PPA worked with Talent 2025 and an advisory group representing business, workforce development, and the Michigan House and Senate to research the current state of adult education in the state, identify opportunities for maximizing effectiveness, and shape policy recommendations. The research tasks included a literature review on multiple facets of adult education (e.g., funding, structure, instructional practices), a scan of select states' systems and successes, a survey of adult education providers in Michigan, interviews with key stakeholders, and the analysis of existing secondary data on Michigan adult education performance. Responsibilities included methodology design, survey design and analysis, quantitative analysis, and data collection.

2021-2023   **Research Associate. Informing Michigan's Family Co-Payment and Provider Payment Structure Policies and Administration.** With this research planning grant, PPA partnered with the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Great Start (MDE/OGS) to explore several questions important to the policy and procedural decisions about child care assistance family co-payments and provider payments, with a specific emphasis on the role that administrative burden plays in reducing access to quality child care. To develop the research design, PPA worked closely with MDE/OGS and child care assistance stakeholder groups (parents, providers, and caseworkers) to solidify research questions and research approaches. Responsibilities included assisting with the development of the research design, including identification of constructs, preliminary data analysis, instrument development, piloting strategy, power analysis, and identification of quantitative methods.

2023	**Research Associate. Head Start Needs Assessment.** PPA worked with Capital Area Community Services (CACS) to assess the child care needs in its service region of Ingham, Eaton, Clinton, and Shiawassee Counties, including needs for Head Start and Early Head Start programming. The PPA team examined Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) from the American Community Survey (U.S. Census) to estimate the number of Head Start-eligible children, household demographics, and needs for special education and public benefits. The team also analyzed child care supply for the CACS's four-county area. The final deliverable was a summary report. Responsibilities included data analysis, data visualization, mapping, and reporting.
2022	**Research Associate. Research Framework to Study Michigan's Auto No-Fault Reforms.** PPA worked with the Insurance Alliance of Michigan to develop a research framework that lays out research questions about the reforms, data sources, and methods of data collection and analysis. Responsibilities included research design, finding data sources, and framework writing.
2022	**Research Associate. Child Care Workforce Survey Analysis.** The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) contracted with PPA to analyze the survey response data, which includes mostly open-ended responses. We will code for themes in responses to identify patterns. As part of the analysis, we will consider whether there are differences by region and provider type. The results of the analysis will be summarized to inform LARA policymaking decisions. Responsibilities include question coding and survey analysis.
2021-2022	**Research Associate. Michigan State Housing Development Authority Statewide Housing Plan.** MSHDA engaged PPA for Phase II of the strategic planning process; to deliver a Statewide Housing Plan that was informed by MSHDA stakeholders, that was forward-looking/aspirational, that outlined strategic actions based on data/needs, and that addressed inequities in housing. Phase II involved two major components of research: (1) outreach and engagement with customers, partners and non-traditional partners, and the public, and (2) benchmarking Michigan against other select Housing Finance Authorities (HFAs). The outreach and engagement task included surveys of recipients of MSHDA services as well as those who might benefit from MSHDA services, 50 interviews with MSHDA program participants, development of a Partner Advisory Council to help guide outreach activities and development of the plan, 12 roundtables with MSHDA partners and potential partners, presentations at relevant conferences, and public information sessions in each of Michigan's 10 Prosperity Regions. The benchmarking task included the creation of a set of benchmarking metrics, gathering data on each of the 16 HFAs that serve as benchmarks through interviews and online research, conducting a review of current trends and innovations in affordable housing, and 5 interviews with experts in the housing sector to help shape MSHDA's understanding of current trends and innovations. PPA used the information gathered through these tasks and in consultation with MSHDA's Strategic Planning Team helped MSHDA

develop Michigan's first Statewide Housing Plan. Responsibilities included survey design; data collection, management, analysis; and reporting.

2021-2022   **Research Associate. Oakland County Strategic Planning.** The PPA team was selected by the Oakland County Executive to conduct strategic planning. To move Oakland County government forward, Executive David Coulter sought assistance laying out an inclusive, ambitious multi-year agenda, which aligns programs and services to address Oakland County's current challenges. Responsibilities included data management, statistical analysis, survey design, survey data collection, and reporting.

2021   **Research Associate. Title III Grant Evaluation.** Through its Title III grant, Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) has adopted a "Guided Pathways" model that seeks to enhance the educational success of disadvantaged students by providing simplified, more tightly structured, and better-supported progress through college. CVCC's plans call for strengthened institutional capacity by academic support staff, a focused effort to support student success in mathematics (a key barrier for many students), and the use of a two-way electronic tool that students can use for planning purposes as well as interface with CVCC advisors. PPA is evaluating progress towards process and outcome goals over the five-year life of the grant. Responsibilities include statistical testing and analysis.

2021   **Research Associate. Evaluation of the Community-Clinical Integration Initiative.** PPA provided an overarching equity-focused evaluation of the Connecticut Health Foundation's Community-Clinical Integration Initiative and provided evaluation technical assistance to grantees, which represent multi-organization collaborations aimed to address social determinants of health in order to impact health equity. PPA implemented a developmental evaluation and provided evaluation technical assistance to the grantee. Our evaluation revealed lessons in cross-sector collaboration to address social determinants of health, and in payment reform that recognizes the role of human services in improving social and health outcomes. Responsibilities included providing notes, recording meetings, and providing input on evaluation.

2021   **Research Associate. MCAN Strategic Plan.** PPA refined MCAN's strategic plan and helped guide its activities over the next five years. As part of the planning process, PPA helped MCAN hone its mission, values, and goals; and articulate clear actionable steps (grounded in results) to ensure its continuing mission is achieved. PPA used a SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results) model for this work. SOAR embraces an appreciative inquiry approach, which generates discussion and creates an atmosphere where continuous improvement can be fostered. The final plan was developed in collaboration with the MCAN team and was designed using MCAN's branding and color palette. The report included a description of the methods and research approach, key findings, and actionable recommendations. Responsibilities included note-taking and survey design.

Other Professional Experience

2017-2021   **Research Assistant/Data Manager. Wayne State University.** Acted as the data manager for the Epidemiology core in the department of oncology where he worked on various cancer studies. He created and maintained SAS files, Access and SQL databases to manipulate data and present it to the principal investigators as well as assist in causal inference for published academic papers. He also programed surveys in Qualtrics, utilizing JavaScript to make customized questions. Additionally, he created and maintained programs using SQL and SAS to find eligible patients for studies by connecting to SEER. Finally, he designed the Detroit ROCS website, utilizing JavaScript skills.

2015-2017   **Market Research Specialist. DFCU Financial.** Created targeted member lists for marketing campaigns, designed and analyzed customer surveys, performed post-hoc tests for campaign effectiveness, created profiles on customers, generated automated reports, and created predictive models for forecasting. Also, he utilized SQL skills to mine data from relational databases and SPSS and SAS skills to manipulate the data further.

Selected Papers

Van Vliet, Craig J., author, *Are We Making Progress? Trends in the U.S. Child Care Subsidy Program*, Public Policy Associates, December 2024.

Van Vliet, Craig J., contributing author, *Conditions for Change: Michigan's Great Start to Quality System*, Public Policy Associates, October 2023.

Van Vliet, Craig J., author, *The State of Sectoral Economic Recovery after the Pandemic Recession*, Public Policy Associates, March 2023.

Van Vliet, Craig J., contributing author, *Michigan Child Care Subsidy Policy Changes 2021: Awareness Gaps, Support for Increased Access, and the Implications of Temporary Policies*, Public Policy Associates, September 2022.

Van Vliet, Craig J., author, *The Child Care Workforce Dilemma*, Public Policy Associates, January 2022.

Professional Affiliations

American Statistical Association

American Evaluation Association

Michigan Association for Evaluation