

RICHARD J. RIORDAN 2017 SUMMER INTERN PROGRAM

The Richard J. Riordan Summer Intern Program provides an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students interested in a public policy career to work in a policy research environment. Intern projects are proposed by PPIC researchers and designed around a specific set of tasks and deliverables that can be accomplished within the term of the internship.

The application deadline for the seven 2017 projects was February 6, 2017.

We expect to make our selection decisions for these projects by late March. No phone calls, please.

Location, Compensation, and Time on Project

These summer internships are located in PPIC's San Francisco office. These fulltime internships will last up to three months, ideally beginning June 5, 2017. Compensation is \$17.50 per hour.

PPIC values the wide variety of backgrounds and experiences of our research staff, and key elements in the consideration of qualified candidates include excellence; diversity of talents, backgrounds, and viewpoints; and a strong fit with the institute's mission, values, and goals. AA/EEO/Veterans/Disabled employer.

The Research Environment

Interns are offered the opportunity to participate in the collegial atmosphere of PPIC through daily interaction with all aspects of the institution. They are invited to join the research staff in their regular meetings and to attend PPIC's outside events, including the institute's public affairs programs and research briefings. PPIC offers access to the Institute of Governmental Sciences library at the University of California, Berkeley, allowing interns to work with many important databases, journals, and statistical datasets. The intern program also includes a Sacramento orientation, with a tour of the state capitol and a discussion of California state policy by PPIC's government affairs staff.

Each intern's project will include an initial meeting with research staff, evaluation and feedback at the beginning, midpoint and end of the project, and a briefing by the intern on the goals, findings, and significance of the project. Interns are encouraged to discuss their work throughout the course of the project, to meet with research staff to discuss careers in research, and to meet with communications staff to learn about outreach and building an audience of policymakers.

PROJECT 1 – Evidence-based Practices in Criminal Justice Reform

Project Directors: Mia Bird and Shannon McConville

The intern will support the Multi-County Study (MCS) project. The MCS is a criminal justice data collection, standardization, and linking effort motivated by the need for research into the effects of policy and practice changes on recidivism outcomes. Our research agenda is focused on three areas. First, we are interested in leveraging the MCS data to evaluate the effects of Prop 47 and Public Safety Realignment on correctional populations and recidivism outcomes. Second, we are interested in identifying effective recidivism-reduction interventions for the criminal justice population, including programs, services, and sanctions. Finally, we are interested in linking criminal justice data with other key administrative data sets to better understand how individuals move across multiple systems at the local level.

Responsibilities

The intern will work collaboratively with the project director, as well as the full MCS research team, to expand the literature base to complement our empirical work on evidence-based practices in criminal justice. The internship will provide the opportunity to develop an understanding of the evidence-based practices literature, critically co-evaluate this literature with the project director, and synthesize that literature into a review that identifies key findings from the field and highlights key gaps. These work products will help to support the MCS, but may also be used by the intern to support her/his future research agenda.

Qualifications

The intern for this project should have:

- Graduate training in public policy, economics, criminology, or related field.
- Interest in criminal justice reform and evidence-based practice.
- Experience identifying key literature, critically-evaluating study methodology, synthesizing study findings, and producing integrated literature review.
- Ability to work independently as well as seek feedback when appropriate.

PROJECT 2 – STEM Education in California's K-12 Schools

Project Directors: Niu Gao and Sara Adan

State and local policymakers are focused on preparing students for success in college and beyond. Much of their efforts concentrate on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, due to STEM's well established educational and economic benefits. At the state level, some notable examples include the passage of SB 359 to address inequities in math placement process and AB 2329 to expand computer science education in K-12 schools. At the local level, a number of districts have incorporated A-G in their high school graduation requirements. This project surveys the landscape of STEM education in K-12 schools and identifies major challenges facing STEM education.

Responsibilities

The intern will develop insights into STEM education in California by working with a team of researchers to analyze data from the statewide STEM survey, which will include quantitative analysis, as well as qualitative analysis for open-ended questions. The intern will also have the opportunity to project teacher shortages in math and science using data from the California Department of Education. The intern will create periodic memos for the supervisors on her/his progress and will present a summary of her/his work to PPIC staff at the end of the summer.

Qualifications

The intern for this project should have:

- Undergraduate or graduate training in economics, public policy, sociology, education, statistics, or related field
- Strong quantitative and qualitative skills
- Statistical programming experience (Stata, Matlab, Python, R)
- Ability to work independently, as well as seek feedback and direction

PROJECT 3 – Developmental Education Reforms at California Community Colleges

Project Directors: Olga Rodriguez, Hans Johnson, and Marisol Cuellar Mejia

Recent research by PPIC found that the vast majority of students entering California's community colleges are designated as underprepared for college-level work and must start their college journey in developmental (or basic skills) courses in math, English, or both. This research found that developmental education in the state's community colleges is lengthy, attrition is high, and outcomes are poor. In California, and elsewhere in the nation, concerns about the large number of students in developmental education and their poor academic outcomes has led to a surge of interventions designed to improve student success. The state legislature has been a key actor in these efforts. Many of the ongoing reforms at community colleges have been implemented with state funding to support improvements to developmental education. In 2016, as a result of Assembly Bill 770 (AB770), \$90 million was awarded to 64 across the state as part of the Basic Skills Student Outcomes Transformation Program. This funding is intended to assist community colleges in adopting or expanding the use of evidence based models of placement, programming, and student support that accelerate the progress of underprepared students toward achieving postsecondary educational and career goals.

Given the recent nature of many of these reforms, little is known about them, their effectiveness, and whether they help narrow achievement gaps. To inform PPIC's ongoing research on developmental education reforms, this project will use data from college documents to better understand the types of models colleges are adopting, the timing of their implementation, as well as the literature supporting their effectiveness.

Responsibilities

The summer intern on this project will collect and assemble information from community college documents about the developmental education reforms being adopted or expanded by colleges across the state. The intern will also review the literature base supporting their effectiveness. With guidance from project supervisors, this data will be coded and analyzed to assess which are the most prevalent practices. There is a possibility the intern will work closely with the project supervisors to identify and interview colleges to obtain more a deeper understanding of the reforms—especially, colleges that are implementing innovative strategies. Over the course of the summer the intern will develop insights into the ways developmental education reforms are intended to improve student outcomes. The intern will create periodic summaries of the work for the supervisors and will prepare a presentation summarizing this work for presentation to PPIC staff at the end of the summer.

Qualifications

The intern for this project should have:

- Training in sociology, education, economics, public policy, or a related field
- Strong analytical and organizational skills
- Experience mining qualitative and quantitative data
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to work independently as well as seek feedback and direction when appropriate
- Interest in California higher education policy

PROJECT 4 – Exploring opportunities for stackable credentials across CTE programs at California’s Community Colleges

Project Directors: Sarah Bohn and Shannon McConville

California’s community college system is the state’s primary provider of career technical education (CTE), also known as vocational education, offering training across a number of programs including health, IT, engineering, protective services, and family consumer services. Recent research provides strong evidence that students who complete certain types of CTE programs see sizable wage gains, while other programs – particularly shorter-term credentials – do not confer much economic benefit. However, students who return to college and earn additional credentials along a career trajectory, which is often referred to as ‘stacking credentials’, can experience wage gains. Despite the potential of stackable credentials in CTE, little is known about the specific training pathways that offer opportunities for stackable credentials. This project aims to fill the gap by collecting and systematizing information on career pathways in California’s community colleges and describing students and student outcomes along CTE pathways.

Responsibilities

The project intern will be responsible for collecting detailed information on available credentials offered in CTE programs across different community colleges/districts with a focus on whether there are any specific/articulated pathways to complete multiple degrees within a program. Data collection will be accomplished through web searches, examination of course catalogs, and phone calls as needed. The intern may also help the project team develop and field an online survey of community college administrators and faculty within specific CTE programs throughout the state. The intern will prepare written summaries of progress and will meet regularly with the project directors. The intern will also present a summary of this work to PPIC staff (in the San Francisco location) at the end of the summer. This internship will be based in PPIC's San Francisco office.

Qualifications

The intern for this project should have:

- Training in education, economics, public policy, or a related field. Graduate-level training a plus
- Strong organizational skills and ability to work independently
- Ability to use qualitative and quantitative data to inform policy issues
- Experience with online survey tools including Qualtrics a plus
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Strong computer and analytical skills

PROJECT 5 – Quantifying Social Safety Net Program Rules

Project Directors: Caroline Danielson and Sarah Bohn

This project will support the development of the California Poverty Measure (CPM) by researching detailed program rules for key social safety net programs that contribute to family resources. The CPM is a next-generation assessment of economic need in California akin to the Census Supplemental Poverty Measure, which better accounts for cost of living and the array of social safety net programs families utilize to make ends meet. To develop our capacity to simulate changes in policy, this project will collect and systematize program rules for major government programs including federal and state tax credits and cash, food, and housing assistance. The project directors seek to enhance the utility of the CPM by developing our capacity to conduct “what if” policy scenarios.

Responsibilities

The intern will work collaboratively with the project directors, meeting weekly with one or both. The intern will 1. Conduct a review of the relevant literature; 2. Assemble program rules; 3. Code these program rules in Stata to support ongoing and planned research. These work products will help to support the PPIC research agenda, but may also be used to further the intern's research goals.

Qualifications

The intern for this project should have:

- Training in public policy, economics, sociology, social work, or related field. Graduate-level training a plus.
- Interest and background in one or more social safety net programs.
- Demonstrated experience in coding using Stata or similar statistical software package. Experience outside of the classroom a plus.
- Ability to work independently as well as seek feedback when appropriate.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills

PROJECT 6 – Preparing for Water Scarcity – Learning from California’s Recent Drought

Project Directors: Ellen Hanak, Alvar Escriva-Bou, and Caitrin Chappelle

This interdisciplinary project, involving experts from PPIC and its research network, aims to conduct an integrated synthesis and assessment of how California’s water management systems functioned during the drought, including efforts to reduce negative economic, social and environmental impacts. As part of this effort, we are working on highlighting management successes and challenges for California utilities, including the relation between the water and energy sectors during droughts, and the effects of water scarcity on water quality.

Responsibilities

The intern would work with the team on gathering and organizing data on various topics to inform research on alternative approaches to managing drought, particularly in light of climate change. This project could include working with large datasets, designing and implementing surveys, and participating in interviews and workshops with relevant stakeholders and decision makers. The intern will also prepare and conduct a presentation summarizing this work to PPIC staff in San Francisco. We are looking to hire up to two interns for this project.

Qualifications

The intern for this project should have:

- Training in economics, environmental sciences and engineering, public policy, or a related field
- Strong analytical and organizational skills
- Experience mining qualitative and quantitative data
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to work independently as well as seek feedback and direction when appropriate
- Interest in California water policy

PROJECT 7 – Multi-County Study Data Collection and Analysis Project

Project Director: Mia Bird and Viet Nguyen

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Responsibilities

A key part of the overall MCS project is understanding which programs and services effectively reduce recidivism. The summer intern will support this project by helping to clean, standardize, manage and analyze incoming data. These data include population flow and services data. The intern will work with multiple datasets:

- Charge data – helping in our efforts to identify the impact of recent reforms, and how these reforms relate to crime categorization (i.e. downgrading of penalties under Prop 47).
- Services data – helping in our efforts to identify effective practices and identifying the range of recidivism reduction services provided across counties.
- Dashboard – helping in our efforts to provide counties with data that can be used for self-evaluation.

Qualifications

The intern for this project should have:

- Graduate or undergraduate training in public policy, economics, statistics, or related field.
- Skills working with data cleaning, standardization, management, and analysis.
- Statistical programming experience, particularly Excel, SAS, STATA and R.
- Aptitude for detail-oriented work and strong critical thinking skills.
- Ability to work independently as well as seek feedback when appropriate.