

PPIC's 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 six 2020 projects was February 7, 2020.

The six project descriptions are included below. We expect to make our selection decisions for these projects by late March. No phone calls, please.

These summer internships will be based in PPIC's San Francisco office, and compensation will be \$17.50 per hour. These full-time internships will last up to eleven weeks, ideally beginning June 15, 2020.

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 priorities.

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 - Paying for Forest Management

Project Directors

Henry McCann and Ellen Hanak

Project Summary

The internship will focus on developing an accurate understanding of the current pace and scale of forest management activities in the Sierra-Cascade headwater region. The intern would work with the research team as they prepare a research report on funding strategies for improving the health of headwater forests.

Responsibilities

The intern will work with a research team on organizing research notes, managing datasets, and synthesizing findings. The intern's primary task is to identify, compile, and organize local, state, and federal datasets on recent forest management activities in the Sierra-Cascade region. This project requires previous experiences making maps with ArcGIS mapping software. This project includes working with large datasets as well as participation in interviews with relevant stakeholders and decision makers. The intern will also present a summary of this work to PPIC staff at the end of the summer.

Qualifications

The ideal applicant will bring undergraduate or graduate training in a field related to ecology or environmental policy, economics, public policy or related field.

The intern for this project should have:

- Familiarity with California forest management science and policy
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Strong computer and analytical skills, including ArcGIS
- Statistical programming experience
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team

PROJECT 2 - Sustainable Groundwater Management: Successful Implementation and Transition Pathways**Project Directors**

Andrew Ayres and Ellen Hanak

Project Summary

This internship will focus on understanding how California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) can be successfully implemented in groundwater basins throughout the state. The intern will work with PPIC staff to undertake research that characterizes how diverse sets of affected groundwater users can be made better off by adopting new groundwater management rules, including evaluating options for reducing any negative impacts of the transition. In particular, this work will involve understanding how reduced water availability will affect future land use decisions, and how this could impact—or provide opportunities for coordination and collaboration between—various stakeholder groups.

Responsibilities

The intern will work with a research team to track policy and management developments, perform background research, and undertake novel data collection and analysis. The ability to understand and summarize the hydrologic, economic, and policy details of various case study groundwater basins (with guidance from PPIC experts) will be an important asset. Furthermore, this work requires basic familiarity with manipulating GIS shapefiles and raster data. This project may include working with large datasets as well as participation in interviews and workshops with relevant stakeholders and decision makers. The intern will also present a summary of this work to PPIC staff at the end of the summer.

Qualifications

The ideal applicant will bring undergraduate or graduate training in economics, water resources management, public policy, or a related field.

The intern for this project should have:

- Familiarity with California water management and politics, as well as a basic understanding of groundwater systems
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Strong computer and analytical skills, including ArcGIS (preferred)
- Data management experience, including Excel, STATA, R (preferred)
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team

PROJECT 3 - California's Statewide Longitudinal Data System

Project Directors

Jacob Jackson and Hans Johnson

Project Summary

California has lagged behind the rest of the nation in constructing a longitudinal data system that can connect data from K-12 to its various higher education entities and beyond. Such a data system can help the state answer critical questions about its educational pipeline and improve educational outcomes for Californians. As a part of the state's most recent budget, the governor set aside ten million dollars for a statewide workgroup to meet and propose a student-level longitudinal data system. The workgroup will begin meeting in 2020. PPIC currently convenes the California Education Data Collaborative, a group of 16 advocacy, policy, and research organizations with an interest in helping the state effectively create and implement that system. This internship would be supporting and engaging in the work of the California Education Data Collaborative.

Responsibilities

The intern would help plan, attend, and work with PPIC staff to produce memos on the monthly meetings of the collaborative. In addition the intern would attend the public meetings of the state's workgroup and produce memos of those meetings. With guidance from PPIC staff, the intern would also conduct literature reviews and research on topics around the statewide data system and contribute to research briefs on those topics. Those topics could include data security and privacy, workforce data, early childhood data, or other topics that arise out of the state workgroup or collaborative.

Qualifications

The intern for this project should have:

- Training in education, public policy, sociology, economics, or a related field
- Strong organizational and analytical skills
- Experience reading and analyzing research
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to work independently and with a team
- Interest in California education policy

PROJECT 4 - Dual Enrollment in California**Project Directors**

Olga Rodriguez and Niu Gao

Project Summary

Dual enrollment, which allows high school students to take college courses while enrolled in high school, is an important policy strategy to expand educational opportunities and improve student outcomes. An [increasing body of research](#) suggests that dual enrollment (also known as concurrent enrollment), is associated with improvements in high school and college outcomes. Importantly, dual enrollment programs are also found to improve the academic outcomes of groups historically underrepresented in higher education as well as for students in career-focused programs. Despite the mounting evidence, the promise of dual enrollment in California has not materialized. A [recent national study](#) finds that dual enrollment participation in California remains relatively low (8 percent), especially when compared to states like New York (21 percent) and Texas (25 percent). This could be due to multiple factors, including California's complex education governance structure and fiscal missteps in the early 2000s. Understanding the potential of dual enrollment to improve intersegmental alignment as well as access and equity to a college education, [Assembly Bill 80](#) (AB 80) in 2019 and its predecessor [Assembly Bill 288](#) (AB 288) in 2015 established what are known as the College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) in an effort to shift these trends. The goals of this project are three-fold: (1) document the trends in dual enrollment participation over time; (2) explore the relationship between dual enrollment participation and student outcomes, including high school graduation and college enrollment and possibly completion; and (3) identify solutions that may address the policy and institutional barriers to dual enrollment programs. Our analysis will focus on persistently low-performing students, including low-income, Latino and African American students.

Responsibilities

To inform PPIC's research on dual enrollment as strategy to provide new educational opportunities for California students, the summer intern on this project will collect and analyze information from K-12 and community colleges about the dual enrollment programs across the state over time. Special attention will be given to how these programs changed in response to AB 288 and AB 80, which specifically call for broadening access to dual enrollment opportunities with the goal of developing seamless pathways from high school to community college, improving high school graduation rates, or helping high school students achieve college and career readiness. With guidance from project supervisors, this data will be coded and analyzed to better understand the landscape of dual enrollment programs across the state, the students served, and will help identify policy barriers and opportunities for expanding dual

enrollment programs in the state. 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 education policy

PROJECT 5 - Racial Disparity in Criminal Justice Outcomes**Project Directors**

Magnus Lofstrom and Brandon Martin

Project Summary

Striking racial disparity, especially between African Americans and whites, is one of the most troubling and pressing issue in the U.S. criminal justice system. Disparities in criminal justice outcomes are also evident in California. For example, the arrest rate of African American is slightly more than three times that of whites in California, and while African Americans make up about 6% of the state's overall population, more than ¼ of California's jail, prison and probation populations are African American. It is likely that these inequities arise differently throughout the criminal justice process. This project will build on research efforts at PPIC examining racial disparity in arrests by examining existing research on racial disparity at other steps of the criminal justice process (such as initial contact with law enforcement or at the prosecutorial stage) and explore data availability. Ideally, access to relevant data would be secured, and initial analysis would be undertaken.

Responsibilities

The summer intern on this project will be tasked with reviewing research literature on racial disparity in criminal justice outcomes and explore sources and availability of relevant data, and possibly perform initial descriptive analyses. Efforts to accessing and analyzing stop data from the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA), prosecutorial data or court data will be explored. 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:

- Undergraduate or graduate training in economics, sociology, criminology, political science, public policy or related field
- Excellent written and verbal communication
- Strong quantitative skills, experience working with large datasets
- Statistical programming experience (Excel, SAS, and/or Stata)
- Ability to work independently as well as seek feedback and direction when appropriate

PROJECT 6 - Student Health and Achievement in Early Childhood

Project Directors

Paulette Cha and Julien Lafortune

Project Summary

The intern will help develop new project(s) at the intersection of health and education policy for young children. The goal of this project is to develop a more complete understanding of the current policy landscape in childhood health, to assess potential data, and to develop research questions. For example, the public provision of childhood health services is varied and disjointed, and may contribute to delayed or inaccurate identification of specific needs. Policies to improve identification of child needs – as well as the provision of services to address these needs—could have immediate impacts on the opportunities available for some of the highest need students in the state.

The project will be exploratory. Future research projects based on this exploratory project could involve evaluating the effects of recent health policies on educational outcomes through changes in early diagnosis and service provision. Potential policies include the 2014 Medi-Cal expansion or the 2016 expansion of Medi-Cal to undocumented children.

Responsibilities

Research activities will include reviewing literature and assessing data feasibility on topics such as:

- Diagnosis of learning disabilities or autism spectrum disorder
- Screening for environmental exposures such as lead
- School-based educational services under Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- School-based health services
- Standardized elementary test scores for students with special health care needs or IEPs
- Behavioral outcomes such as suspensions

Depending on project status and the early results of the intern's activities, the intern may also contribute to data cleaning and analysis using statistical software. The intern will regularly discuss progress with project directors, and will prepare a formal presentation to PPIC staff at the end of the summer. A variety of meetings and events, including a trip to Sacramento, will enhance the intern's experience beyond project work. The intern will be a member of both the Education and Safety Net policy groups.

Qualifications

The intern for this project will need:

- Training in economics, public policy, education, epidemiology, or a comparable quantitative field
- Strong research and communication skills
- Ability to work independently, handle feedback well, and change direction when necessary
- Statistical programming experience in Stata, R, or Python is an additional desired skill