

Directed Research Projects on Canadian Economic Policy for 4th Year Students in Economics

Project title:

An overview of social finance and other performance based funding models for the delivery of government programs

Manager/Supervisor:

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Name/address of organization:

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Description of organization:

The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) was established in December 1991 at the request of Human Resources and Development Canada (HRDC) – now Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) – to develop and implement a long-term, multi-site demonstration – the Self-Sufficiency Project. Since then, SRDC has completed over 100 projects and studies for various federal and provincial departments, municipalities, as well as other public and non-profit organizations.

SRDC is a non-profit research organization, with offices in Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver, created specifically to develop, field test, and rigorously evaluate government programs. SRDC's two-part mission is to help policy-makers and practitioners identify policies and programs that improve the well-being of all Canadians, with a special concern for the effects on the disadvantaged, and to raise the standards of evidence that are used in assessing policies.

SRDC accomplishes its mission by evaluating existing programs, and by testing new program ideas at scale and in multiple locations before they become policy and are implemented on a broader basis. Through the development and evaluation of demonstration projects and field experiments conducted in real-life contexts, SRDC brings together the worlds of academic researchers, government policy-makers, and on-the-ground program operators.

Project description:

This project will assess the state of knowledge with respect to innovative performance-based models for the funding and delivery of workforce employment and training programs targeting lower skilled workers. The initiative will entail a review of the Canadian and international literature to identify various performance based funding models including those based on social financing schemes, and to assess our state of knowledge about what works and what does not work with respect to various models. The analysis will inform the development of program models to pilot test and evaluate.

Benefit to the student:

The work is being completed for a major federal policy department. As such, the participant will learn about the policy regarding the topic in great detail. To date, very little is known on performance-based funding and social financing in the context of Canadian public programs. As a result, the student will become knowledgeable in a “cutting edge” area, and meet researchers and potentially policy department staff working in the area.

Tasks and deliverables:

- Researching and documenting existing program models, evidence and lessons learned
- Assisting in identifying promising directions and potential program models to pilot test and evaluate
- Assisting in the preparation of the final report.

Qualifications required:

- Good knowledge of micro-economic theory. Courses in public sector economics and/or work experience in the public sector would be an asset, though not necessarily a requirement. Experience with cost-benefit analysis would also be an asset.
- Advanced econometrics is not a requirement.
- Fluency in English is required for researching policies in certain jurisdictions.