

## Call for Research Proposals: Understanding Current Employment Programming and Services for BC Youth

**Published November 15, 2013**

The BC Centre for Employment Excellence is undertaking a research project on the barriers that youth face in the British Columbia labour market, as well as innovative strategies for addressing them.

As part of this research project, the Centre is inviting researchers to submit proposals that explore youth employment issues from a variety of angles and identify promising solutions that can inform policy and practice. The Centre will publish the completed research papers on its website and invite the authors to present their findings at a symposium in Vancouver, BC in Spring 2014 involving stakeholders from a wide variety of perspectives, including researchers, practitioners, policy makers and other subject matter experts.

The papers and presentations by the authors and other invited speakers, as well as the symposium discussion, will inform the broader community with new insights into the current state of research on youth employment and practice. Through this process, the Centre will engage its stakeholder community in building consensus on innovative approaches that have the potential to be developed into a pilot project at a later stage.

### The BC Centre for Employment Excellence

BC Centre for Employment Excellence is a Vancouver-based non-profit organization that was created in 2012 to enhance the knowledge and development needs of the employment services sector and the employer community in British Columbia. A division of the [Social Research and Demonstration Corporation](#), the Centre was established by the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation to support the sector with up-to-date information and best practices, as well as to design and test new and innovative approaches in employment services and training. The Centre has spent the past year working closely with its stakeholders to shape its business activities and partner in the delivery of its research projects. You can learn more about the Centre at [www.cfeebc.org](http://www.cfeebc.org).

### Background and Objectives

Many of the barriers that youth face in today's labour market are well-known. Despite improving employment outcomes of participants in the Canadian labour market in recent years, the unemployment rate among youth has not kept pace, resulting in the biggest gap between youth and older adults in the past thirty-five years.<sup>1</sup> Although the rate has improved somewhat over the past year, the unemployment rate for BC youth is currently at 12.2 per cent, more than double that of the older

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2013024-eng.pdf](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2013024-eng.pdf)

population,<sup>2</sup> with key subgroups of young job seekers struggling even further to find meaningful and/or financially rewarding employment.

This research project aims to engage researchers, practitioners and policy makers to identify workable solutions to address important challenges that young British Columbians face in the labour market. In particular, it will encourage researchers to consider topics that address populations of youth who face specific barriers to employment, or who are not being well-served by existing services and supports, including Aboriginal youth, youth in or leaving care, youth with special needs, immigrant and refugee youth, or youth in conflict with the law. Potential research topics include:

- 1) What barriers are youth facing in today's labour market in BC?
- 2) What strategies are working to help youth make the transition from school to work, particularly youth with specialized needs?
- 3) What knowledge, skills and abilities do career development practitioners need to serve all youth effectively, including youth with disabilities?
- 4) What interventions are showing promise for improving the labour market outcomes for vulnerable youth?
- 5) What methods, practices or programs have shown to be effective in improving young people's entrepreneurial attitude and self-confidence?
- 6) What employment supports and resources best equip youth leaving care with the necessary tools to become independent and successful adults?
- 7) What types of labour market information delivered in what format are most effective in helping youth find work that best fits their skills and interests?

### Invitation to Submit Proposals

This invitation is open to both academic and non-academic researchers who have applicable knowledge and experience analyzing the youth employment programming environment in British Columbia.

Researchers are invited to submit a proposal of **no more than 5 pages in length** on a specific topic concerning BC youth employment. The proposed research topics must address youth who are residents of British Columbia and are between the ages of 15 to 29. Approaches can include – but are not restricted to – comparative studies of promising programs from other jurisdictions that have promise for BC youth; innovative, new or existing data sets that provide further insights into particular barriers faced by some or all BC youth; and evaluative studies of new or innovative programs that have the potential to be expanded to a regional or provincial level. The proposed research methodology can use qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method approaches.

---

<sup>2</sup> [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/lmi/publications/bulletins/bc/oct2013.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/lmi/publications/bulletins/bc/oct2013.shtml)

The proposal must include specific details of the proposed project's scope, methodology, timeframe and budget. It must also indicate how the research will inform current practice or service provision and contribute to a potential pilot addressing the barriers or issues to be examined in the study.

The total budget of submitted research proposals may not exceed \$25,000, excluding GST.

Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format to Shawn de Raaf, the Centre's Research Coordinator, at [sderaaf@cfeebc.org](mailto:sderaaf@cfeebc.org) by December 20, 2013 at 5:00pm PST.

### Evaluation Process

Submitted proposals will be evaluated by a review committee which will include the Centre's Research Coordinator, a representative from the Centre's Steering Committee, a representative from the BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, and an external expert knowledgeable about youth employment. The committee will evaluate each proposal according to the following criteria:

- Relevance of the research results to youth employment policy and practice in British Columbia;
- Potential to support innovation and inform policy making and practice;
- Soundness of the project's conceptual framework (e.g. ideas, concepts, and knowledge informing the proposed approach) and methodology;
- Qualifications of the research team to undertake and complete the project on schedule and according to stated objectives, including the team's experience in successfully completing similar work in the past; and
- Appropriateness of proposed budget to project scope and methodology.

If necessary, the review committee may request a telephone meeting with proposal teams to address any issues or questions about submissions.

The Centre will award contracts based on a ranking of project submissions and budget considerations. The final number of contracts to be awarded will depend on the nature and quality of the proposals received and the constraints of the total project budget.

All papers produced through this project will undergo a peer review process prior to final report submission. Authors will be required to present their findings at the one-day expert symposium (tentatively scheduled for June 2014) to discuss their findings and their implications for practice.<sup>3</sup> Report authors will submit a final paper incorporating comments from the peer review process, symposium discussion, and the Centre's editing process no later than four weeks after the workshop for publication on the Centre's website.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Centre will reimburse report authors for any pre-approved travel expenses to attend the symposium.



## Privacy Considerations

Personal information collected in the funded research projects will be required to meet the [Code of Practice](#) of the Centre's parent organization, the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation.

## Copyright

Rights to the reports and data collected to conduct the research under this Call for Research Proposals will be the property of the BC Centre for Employment Excellence. The Centre will review requests from authors who wish to disseminate the research or use the research data for further analysis, and will make reasonable efforts to approve these requests. However, no additional funding will be provided for these activities.

## Questions?

For queries about this project or other research activities being undertaken by the BC Centre for Employment Excellence, please email Shawn de Raaf at [sderaaf@cfeebc.org](mailto:sderaaf@cfeebc.org).