

Crime Reduction Research Program 2023–2024 Call Out and Application Guidelines

Overview

British Columbia's Crime Reduction Research Program (CRRP) is a provincial research grant program administered and funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General in collaboration with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Its mission is to support independent research on policing and public safety issues and foster greater collaboration between government, law enforcement, and academic experts in the field.

Each year, the CRRP allocates grants to researchers from post-secondary institutions across Canada to conduct focused research on priority policing and public safety topics in British Columbia. Research topics are identified on an annual basis by the Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General and the RCMP based on current and emerging provincial priorities. All research proposal submissions are evaluated through a merit review process with oversight and final approval by a Joint Management Team (JMT) consisting of senior-level representatives from all partner agencies.

Directed Call Out for Research Proposals

The following research topics have been selected as priorities for the 2023-2024 research cycle. Research proposals that exhibit the most competitive methodology, deliverables, and qualifications to satisfy requirements of the following topics will be selected. Eligible research proposals will be limited to the identified priority topics and final topics selected for funding will be subject to budget considerations. Eligible project topics include the following:

1. Police Data Modernization

Data modernization plays a critical role in improving efficiency and transparency in police service delivery models and enhancing public safety. Fostering a data-driven culture and enterprise can not only streamline operations, but also inform strategic decision making and service delivery processes. Data modernization efforts are currently underway within police agencies but continue to be impacted by data policy and process challenges as well as resistance to a changing data culture. As the RCMP continues to make strides towards improving the utilization of data and leveraging

advancements in data modernization, focused research on the current and future state of data modernization, both within and outside of the policing sector, is needed.

A strong research proposal will include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Inventory of best practices for successful implementation of change management initiatives as they relate to data modernization. This includes specific change management practices, tools and techniques from other business sectors, non-governmental industries, and policing and/or governmental agencies that have successfully implemented change management initiatives.
- Analysis of RCMP data policies and sharing processes, including governance and storage of data.
- Survey/interviews within RCMP to gauge (1) perceived trust and value in data, (2) appetite to change data culture, (3) perceived concerns with data sharing and access.

Requested Deliverables: Final report, detailing recommended change management framework and inventory of best practices from industry standards. A presentation of findings to key stakeholders may be requested.

Grant Amount: \$TBD

2. Socioeconomic Impacts of Public Order Events in BC

In recent years, British Columbia has witnessed an increase in both the frequency and complexity of public demonstrations and protests. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) and the police both play important roles in monitoring, managing, and ensuring safety at public demonstrations while ensuring all Canadians' rights are upheld. As these events continue to increase in sophistication, it is critical that government, law enforcement, and the public have a clear understanding of the total socioeconomic costs of public order events to inform future operational and strategic decision making.

To support these efforts, focused research is needed on the socioeconomic

impact of public order events in British Columbia. A strong research proposal will include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Identification and estimates for relevant direct and indirect costs associated with public order events in British Columbia, including costs borne by law enforcement and other criminal justice stakeholders, emergency health services, government (municipal, provincial, and federal), and the public.
- Development of a functional index that provides costs associated with public order incidents delineated by incident type, jurisdiction, scale and severity (e.g., spontaneous vs. planned events, peaceful vs unlawful and/or critical).
- Incorporation of a practicable engagement plan focussed on co-development of research priorities and other considerations with Indigenous communities, law enforcement and other relevant stakeholders.
- Recommendations to inform potential collaborative, holistic, and evidence-based remedial and mitigation mechanisms across multiple sectors.

Requested Deliverables: Functional cost index (in Excel format). Final report, detailing all methodological justifications, research limitations and recommendations for responsible application of the cost index. A presentation of findings to key stakeholders may be requested.

Grant Amount: \$TBD

3. Impact of Chemical Precursors on BC Drug Landscape

BC continues to experience a public health emergency due to the ongoing proliferation of illicit toxic drugs. A multi-faceted approach is required to successfully address this crisis, with police playing a critical role in investigating and prosecuting gangs and organized crime groups that produce and traffic illegal substances. The Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of British Columbia (CFSEU-BC) have specialized units dedicated to combating the production and trafficking of synthetic opioids, particularly fentanyl and related products/substances.

There has been limited research on how gangs and organized crime groups

in BC import precursor chemicals and the mechanisms through which they are diverted to illegitimate markets. To support ongoing efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking, an improved understanding of the impact of chemical precursors on the illicit drug landscape is needed.

To support these research gaps, a strong research proposal will include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Collate and review available data sources (e.g., health data, law enforcement data) to support understanding of the volume and impact of chemical precursors within the illegal drug market.
- Interviews with subject matter experts from multidisciplinary fields on the enforcement and interdiction of illegal chemical precursors.
- Analysis of law enforcement investigations (PRIME-BC data) targeting chemical precursors.

Requested Deliverables: Final report detailing all relevant research, themes, guidelines, recommendations, and best practices. A presentation to relevant staff and stakeholders may be requested.

Grant Amount: \$TBD

4. After-Market Compartments

Over the past several years, Law Enforcement agencies have seen an increase in the use of After-Market Compartments (AMC). Compartments are frequently found within vehicles but can also be located across other contexts such as residential and commercial properties. Compartments are used to conceal and/or transport illicit commodities including drugs, firearms, weapons, and illicit cash. Recently, a small research initiative was undertaken at CFSEU-BC to examine the use of After-Market Compartments (Olson, 2023) but more in-depth analysis is required to develop best practices and new avenues for addressing the issue. To support this ongoing research a comprehensive review of the Armoured Vehicle and After-Market Compartment Control Act (SBC2010) is needed—namely, its impacts on current law enforcement practices and investigations.

A strong research proposal will include, but is not limited to, the following

components:

- A comprehensive policy analysis of the After-Market Compartment Control Act (SBC2010), including its impacts on investigations into serious and organized crime offences.
- Review of regional, national and international practices, through literature and interviews with subject matter expert.
- Review of select law enforcement investigations (PRIME-BC data) involving after market compartments.

Requested Deliverables: Final report detailing all relevant research, themes, guidelines, recommendations, and best practices. A presentation to relevant staff and stakeholders may be requested.

Grant Amount: \$TBD

5. BC Illicit Tobacco

The black market for tobacco products in Canada has grown in both size and sophistication in recent years. With demonstrable connections to high level organized crime groups, illicit tobacco is significant source of revenue that fuels downstream criminal activities. Additionally, the availability of cheap contraband tobacco products undermines key objectives of federal and provincial excise taxes on tobacco, including reducing smoking prevalence. In recent years, law enforcement in British Columbia has engaged in several key files involving the seizure of contraband tobacco under various circumstances, including ties to organized crime groups.

Despite this growing issue, there has been little research conducted on the topic of illicit tobacco, particularly within the Canadian or British Columbian context. Focused research is needed to determine the nature and extent of illicit tobacco industry in British Columbia to inform policy and operational decision making. This includes exploring local linkages, if any, to organized crime groups.

A strong research proposal will include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- National/international scan of best practices for combatting and mitigating illicit tobacco sales.
- Review and analysis of current legislation(e.g., *Excise Act* and *BC Tobacco Tax Act*) to identify potential gaps and opportunities for law enforcement and government.
- Analysis of available law enforcement and government data involving illicit tobacco activities in BC.
- Key stakeholder interviews with subject matter experts including law enforcement (e.g., RCMP, CBSA) and government stakeholders.

Requested Deliverables: Final report detailing all relevant research, themes, guidelines, recommendations, and best practices. A presentation to relevant staff and stakeholders may be requested.

Grant Amount: \$TBD

6. Public Trust and Police Misconduct

In British Columbia, the police rely on the support and cooperation from the public to carry out necessary duties. The public’s willingness to meaningfully engage and cooperate with the police has a direct impact on policing outcomes and is directly impacted by overall perceptions of the police.

Incidents of police misconduct can have significant adverse effects not only on victims, but on public perceptions of the police at large. This is particularly concerning given the increased media (and social media) coverage of select police misconduct incidents in recent years. As BC continues to make advancements towards modernizing policing, focused research on risk factors and mitigation factors that influence police misconduct is needed.

A strong research proposal will include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- An in-depth literature review of existing studies on risk factors and mitigation factors for police misconduct, including but not limited to qualifications, education, training, and recruitment of police.
- Inventory of recommendations, best practices, and guidelines on influencing positive policing cultures and behaviours to improve

service outcomes and increase public trust, including but not limited to:

- Hiring, recruiting, and retention practices
- Training and professional development standards
- Misconduct prevention/intervention strategies

Requested Deliverables: An executive summary report highlighting key findings and recommendations for stakeholder dissemination (~10 pages). A full-length final report detailing all relevant research, themes, guidelines, recommendations, and best practices. A presentation to relevant staff and stakeholders including but not limited to the Policing and Security Branch of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

Grant Amount: \$TBD

Eligibility Requirements

General Eligibility

To be eligible for CRRP funding, the following criteria must be met:

- The principal investigator must be currently employed by a Canadian university through whom the funds will be dispersed.
- All involved parties must be willing and able to obtain and maintain an RCMP security clearance if necessary.
- All involved parties must be willing to work from an assigned secure lab if protected data is provided.

Eligible Expenditures

All CRRP funding must be used on activities and expenditures directly related to the approved research proposal. Examples of eligible expenditures include but are not limited to salaries and wages, honoraria, supplies and materials specific to project, data management and access fees, technical and specialized services, travel and accommodation associated with research activities, and participant incentives. CRRP Funding may **not** be used to purchase personal assets or equipment (e.g., laptops, computer equipment).

Applicants must complete the attached budget template as part of the application. Anticipated project expenditures may be used to assess the competitiveness of the proposal.

Project Timeline

All projects are to be completed within 12 months unless otherwise specified.

Application Instructions

Application Package

Completed applications are to be submitted via email to SOC.hub@gov.bc.ca no later than 08:59 PST on January 22, 2024. Application packages are complete if they include the following components:

- A. **Research proposal** - includes the three sections below and does not exceed seven (7) pages, single-spaced:
 - a. **Background:** Please provide an overview of the issue you are proposing to explore from the list of research topics, your main research questions, and a summary of any previous work you have completed on this topic (if relevant).
 - b. **Methodology:** Please describe how your project will be designed to achieve any objectives indicated in the topic description. Please detail planned research activities and steps. Provide a methodology section describing sample, data required, and analytic strategy. Please also indicate whether you currently hold the required security clearance level to view and manage the data required (if working with PRIME or other criminal justice data).
 - c. **Deliverables and outcomes:** Please provide a timeline that includes all the deliverables proposed (competitive applications will culminate in an output that has significance for practitioners, policy makers, or stakeholders).
- B. **Completed project budget template:** Attached to the accompanying email or link provided on [CRRP Website](#)
- C. **Academic curriculum vitae:** The applicant must clearly demonstrate qualifications and relevant expertise to conduct the proposed project.

Application Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the competitiveness of the applicant's curriculum vitae, strength and justification of methodological approach, feasibility of proposed timeline and budget, and alignment with the research callout topic and deliverables. Applicants are encouraged to emphasize qualifications that support their ability to execute the proposed research project.

All applicants will be directly contacted by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General with the results of their application. Any additional queries can be directed to SOC.hub@gov.bc.ca.