

Research Note

Federal overreach: The attestation controversy and the Canada Summer Jobs Program, 2017-2019

Alan Chan^a, Amy Ross^b and David Murrell^c

^a, Crandall University ^b Canadian Centre for Christian Charities ^c University of New Brunswick (Fredericton)

Abstract

Our research note investigates the impacts of the 2018 attestation requirement of the Canada Student Jobs program (CSJ) compared to that of the no-attestation version of 2017, and that of the revised CSJ attestation box of 2019. We found: (1) Christian groups (mostly Catholic and various evangelical Christian denominations) collectively received less than half the funds they received in 2017, and lost just over 3,000 jobs in 2018, or just under half the jobs secured 2017. In 2019 religious-based groups regained about 2,700 jobs. (2) what jobs the religious groups lost in 2018 were picked up by non-religious applicants. The latter received a modest increase in funding in 2018 over the previous year, and another increase in 2019.

Résumé

Notre note de recherche étudie les impacts des critères d'attestation de 2018 du programme Emplois étudiants Canada par rapport à celle de la version sans attestation de 2017 et à celle de la case d'attestation révisée de 2019. Nous avons constaté : (1) Les groupes chrétiens (principalement catholiques et diverses confessions chrétiennes évangéliques) ont reçu collectivement moins de la moitié des fonds qu'ils ont reçus en 2017 et ils ont perdu un peu plus de 3 000 emplois en 2018, soit un peu moins de la moitié des emplois garantis en 2017. En 2019, les groupes à caractère religieux ont récupéré environ 2 700 emplois. (2) Quels emplois perdus par les groupes religieux en 2018 ont été récupérés par des candidats non religieux. Ces derniers ont reçu une modeste augmentation de financement en 2018 par rapport à l'année précédente, et une autre augmentation en 2019.2019.

Keywords: Canada Summer Job Program, Attestation Box, Youth Employment

Mots-clés : Programme Emplois d'été Canada, Case d'attestation, Emploi jeunesse

Introduction

The federal Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program generated considerable controversy in 2018 when grant applicants were required to attest that, among other criteria, their “core mandate” respected “reproductive rights – and the right to safe and legal abortions” (ESDC 2017). The requirement quickly polarized the public, politicians, and the media. While many religious groups saw the statement as a direct violation of their beliefs regarding the sanctity of life and marriage (see Bussey 2019, 296), proponents of the attestation stressed the need to prevent discrimination and protect a woman’s right to choose (Connolly 2018a)¹. After refusing to modify the wording of the attestation in 2018, the federal government softened the requirement for 2019. Instead of referring to undefined *Charter* “values”, reproductive rights, and freedom from discrimination, the form asked prospective employers to affirm

Contact Dr Alan Chan: alan.chan@crandallu.ca

that funds would not be used to “undermine or restrict the exercise of rights legally protected in Canada” (ESDC 2020). The two abrupt policy changes – first imposing and then removing the ideological values test – led to sharp changes as to which applicant groups received funding. To our knowledge, no formal studies have yet been undertaken to quantify these changes. Thus, the present paper aims to examine the impact of the two changes on both religious and non-religious organizations.

Our paper begins by considering the debate surrounding the attestation and its disparate impact on applicants across the country. We then quantify which groups lost and which groups gained. Did the dollar amount of summer jobs grants, in the aggregate, going to faith-based groups and secular groups rise or fall? If the dollar amounts (and jobs created) fell among religious groups, which denominations and religions suffered most or least? And if non-religious groups did gain from the policy change, which categories among the secular grant recipients benefitted the most? Finally, given the federal government’s efforts to support minority youth, did individuals within the targeted categories gain jobs or funding from 2017 to 2019?

Canada’s Summer Student Job Program

Under the administration of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program provides wage subsidies for small businesses and non-profit groups² to create summer jobs for young people between 15 and 30 years old. Each Member of Parliament, for his or her riding, compiles a list of socio-economic priorities.³ Each federal electoral district has an approved budget, and MPs assist in the screening of applicants, and decide along with Service Canada the final list of successful applicants (Wernick 2019).⁴ ESDC has the final say as to which applicant receives money (Platt 2018b), though it appears that at least until 2018, this was essentially perfunctory: once MPs approved an applicant, the grant was awarded. The Canada Summer Jobs database gives the actual amount of money approved for each electoral district.

The CSJ attestation box controversies, 2018 and 2019

Starting in 2018, in addition to all of the requirements outlined above, each applicant was required to check off a box stating support for nebulous “*Charter* values” and “other rights,” including “reproductive rights.”⁵ In the Applicant Guide, “Canada Summer Jobs 2018: Creating Jobs, Strengthening Communities,” released in December 2017, the government further explained⁶. The attestation and explanatory material generated controversy from legal, political, and moral perspectives, ranging from objections to the ambiguity of *Charter* values (and the incoherence of requiring private actors to uphold the *Charter*)⁷ to concerns about the imposition of partisan ideology. While the LGBTQ+ community and other social justice groups were engaged in the ensuing debate, the main controversy – in part because of the government’s own emphasis on reproductive rights – centered primarily on the issue of abortion. For this reason, we will focus on the tension between pro-life and pro-choice advocates involved in the CSJ discussion.

In 2017, the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC) published reports protesting the fact that anti-abortion groups were receiving federal government funding, including grants received through the Canada Summer Jobs program (see, for example, Arthur 2017).

Although the Liberal government's platform was explicitly pro-choice, Liberal MP Iqra Khalid had approved a 2017 CSJ grant for \$56,695 to the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform, a pro-life advocacy group "dedicated to making abortion unthinkable in Canada" (CCBR 2021). Employment Minister Patty Hajdu's office stated that the government had "fixed the issue and no such organizations will receive funding from any constituencies represented by Liberal MPs" (Connolly 2017). In December 2017, the government instituted the attestation check box for the 2018 CSJ applications (Connolly 2018b), which quickly provoked widespread concern and criticism.

In January, 91 organizations, coordinated by Action Canada and the National Association of Women and the Law, endorsed the attestation in an open letter to the five major political parties. The letter applauded the attestation for "seek[ing] to secure greater fulfillment of human rights in accordance with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*" (Action Canada 2018). While the government insisted that the attestation was not discriminatory, and that religious groups were eligible to apply, the requirement was opposed by many Canadians of all creeds (and none). Even the secular media joined in condemning the attestation for imposing partisan values on applicants.⁸ Despite assurances that "core mandate" only meant activities, hundreds of religious organizations refused to sign the form since they believed it was impossible for them to separate their core mandates from their moral and ethical convictions (Lewis 2018).⁹ Speaking of the Jewish experience, Rabbi Chaim Strauchler observed, "We have been a minority throughout history. We are very sensitive to the possibility of the majority trying to impose values, even if we agree with those values" (Swan 2018). Thus, in a January 2018 letter to the Prime Minister and Minister Hadju, 90 religious leaders and organizations (representing many thousands of churches, mosques, synagogues, and charities) objected to the attestation condition.¹⁰ In response, Minister Hajdu eventually conceded that the attestation would be reviewed for 2019. For many faith-based groups, this loss of funds meant a financial shortfall for 2018 projects. The abrupt policy change left many groups without adequate resources to continue with their summer programs (Platt 2018a).¹¹

After further consultation (and negative publicity), Minister Hajdu announced changes to the CSJ program for 2019. The text of the problematic attestation was replaced with a statement that "[a]ny funding under the Canada Summer Jobs program will not be used to undermine or restrict the exercise of rights legally protected in Canada" (ESDC 2020). Although there was some dissent among faith-based and anti-abortion groups as to the relaxed requirement – for instance, Lutheran Reverend Colin Liske (2019) described the program as "tainted" and urged Christians not to accept the government's definition of rights, which undermined principles of natural law – the majority of religious groups were gratified to see that the subjective values test was gone.

The 2017 and 2018 Canada Summer Jobs database

As described above, each summer jobs application is assessed on a constituency-by-constituency basis. Currently (as of autumn 2021), ESDC has published data online showing “Organizations Funded by Canada Summer Jobs” from 2017 to 2019. From the 2017 data, we found that there were 29,553 grant recipients and \$204,307,157.00 paid out in grant money (“approved money”) which subsidized 68,964 jobs.¹² These numbers approximate the targets announced by the federal Liberals when, in February 2016, they doubled the size of the program (Bryden 2016; see also Office of the Prime Minister 2016). For comparison, in 2018, the federal government paid out \$205,202,651.00 in grant money and subsidized 70,083 jobs – a slight increase over the previous year.

Our motivation was to tabulate the amounts of money for 2017, 2018, and 2019 going to various Christian denominations, other religious groups, and non-religious groups. Comparing both 2017 and 2019 with the anomalous year of 2018, we can then measure the changes (decreases and possible increases) in total grant payments and jobs created. Our hypothesis is that those groups which took public stances against the attestation rule stand to suffer the greatest declines.

Table 1. 2017-2019 dollar grants and number of jobs created, by sector

Sector	\$ Subsidies (in thousands)			Number of jobs subsidized			% Share of total jobs		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Religious	\$20,905	\$12,074	\$24,563	6,358	3,489	6,231	9.22%	4.98%	7.86
Non-religious	\$157,697	\$168,336	\$210,174	53,854	57,992	64,547	77.19%	82.75%	81.42%
Residual*	\$25,705	\$24,793	\$26,795	8,752	8,602	8,501	12.58%	12.27%	10.72%
Total sectors	\$204,307	\$205,203	\$261,532	68,964	70,083	79,279	100%	100%	100%
*refers to all recipients as yet unclassified by the authors.									
<i>Source: Employment and Social Development Canada 2018, 2019, 2020 and authors’ calculations.</i>									

Canada 2017 v. 2018 Summer Jobs Program: our results

Using the ESDC database, we sorted faith-based and secular organizations into various groupings. Of course, organizations are not likely mutually exclusive in nature – in reality, many groups may experience a blend of cultural or religious motivations and functions. However, for the purpose of this study, we have sorted each recipient into one group based on their primary organizational objectives.¹³

As shown in Table 1, in terms of applicants, in 2017, we identified 9.22 percent of total recipients as having a connection to religious bodies, and 77.19 percent as having a secular identification. We are left with an “unclassified residual” of 12.58 percent, which we could not sort into sub-categories for Tables 2 and 3. Since we believe that our coding system is more cut-and-dried for religious organizations¹⁴, we hypothesize that nearly all the unexplained residual belongs to the secular aggregate. The only exception is with the “summer camps” group in Table 3. Many summer camps with a religious affiliation do not use words like “bible” or “gospel” in their name. Moreover, other charities which are not part of a church or other place of worship may still be affiliated with a faith-based organization. Because of these caveats, the number of religious recipients may be somewhat understated. Table 1 also shows that the percentage of jobs in 2017, 2018, and 2019 that could be classified into non-religious categories are 78.09 percent, 82.75 percent, and 81.42 percent respectively. This is quite stable, compared to the jobs that could be classified into religious categories. With the latter, we can observe a significant dip in percentage in 2018, but a rebound in 2019.

In Table 1 we show the broad, aggregate results. For non-religious groups, Table 2 shows the 2017–2019 CSJ subsidy and number of jobs supported by subgroup, in absolute levels and percentage of total secular allocation. Non-religious organizations are broken down into 18 groups¹⁵. Of these 18 groups, two sub-sectors in 2017 – Housing and Community Groups and sports, hunting and fishing groups – have the highest percentage share of secular CSJ money, at slightly over 15 percent of jobs subsidies. The remaining sub-groups with large subsidy percentages, in descending order, are Private Businesses (11.30 percent); Other Social Groups (7.754 percent); Youth and Children Charities and Daycare (7.62 percent); Arts and Culture groups (7.00 percent); and Medical, Disease Prevention (6.81 percent). Note that the two sub-categories that stand to benefit most directly from the ESDC affirmative action policy have low percentages as to federal grants: ethnic and immigrant-assistance groups¹⁶ and First Nations groups (at 1.66 and 1.69 percent respectively).

Table 2A. 2017-2019 dollar grants and number of jobs created, by non-religious group

	\$			Jobs			\$/Job		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
City, town, village	\$ 6,986,421	\$7,288,448	\$ 9,049,383	3889	4070	4429	\$1,796	\$1,791	\$ 2,043
YMCA	\$ 3,351,681	\$3,748,536	\$5,234,860	1008	1050	1306	\$3,325	\$3,570	\$4,008
Libraries	\$1,287,863	\$1,318,113	\$ 1,579,754	496	489	527	\$2,596	\$2,696	\$2,997
Museums	\$4,133,809	\$3,844,706	\$4,561,967	1205	1149	1179	\$3,431	\$3,346	\$3,869
Historical sites	\$3,508,622	\$3,978,460	\$4,751,062	1259	1493	1543	\$2,787	\$2,665	\$3,079
Arts and Culture	\$11,034,007	\$11,524,007	\$14,338,008	3295	3466	3918	\$3,349	\$3,325	\$3,660
Post-secondary	\$5,904,213	\$6,472,675	\$8,077,773	2859	3145	3292	\$2,065	\$2,058	\$2,454
Private businesses	\$17,821,722	\$19,968,533	\$26,591,335	7344	8456	10163	\$2,4271	\$2,362	\$2,617
Youth, day care, etc.	\$12,017,977	\$13,030,289	\$16,762,661	3814	4070	4717	\$ 3,151	\$3,202	\$ 3,554
Health, disease prev.	\$10,743,069	\$11,501,419	\$13,786,518	3454	3683	3935	\$3,110	\$3,123	\$3,504
Women's groups	\$1,966,321	\$2,294,404	\$2,755,000	561	653	674	\$3,505	\$3,515	\$4,088
Housing/com. assoc.	\$24,706,629	\$25,496,207	\$31,144,243	7316	7436	8137	\$ 3,377	\$ 3,429	\$3,827
Other social groups	\$12,225,657	\$12,719,862	\$16,044,358	3611	3801	4266	\$3,386	\$3,346	\$3,761
Environmental	\$6,187,316	\$6,688,740	\$8,526,119	1955	2151	2435	\$3,165	\$3,110	\$3,501
Summer Camps	\$7,134,972	\$7,127,695	\$8,925,664	2462	2542	2738	\$2,898	\$2,804	\$3,260
Ethnic, immigrant gps	\$2,619,871	\$2,966,038	\$3,583,564	799	855	938	\$3,279	\$3,469	\$3,820
Sports, fish & hunting	\$23,398,167	\$26,093,954	\$32,213,822	7693	8789	9704	\$3,041	\$2,969	\$3,320
First Nations groups	\$2,668,667	\$2,274,028	\$2,248,079	834	694	646	\$3,200	\$3,277	\$3,480
Total non-religious	\$157,696,984	\$168,336,114	\$210,174,170	5385 4	5799 2	64547	\$2,928	\$2,903	\$3,256

Source: Employment and Social Development Canada 2018, 2019, 2020 and authors' calculations.

Table 2B. 2017-2019 percentage of dollar grants and jobs created, by non-religious group

	\$			Jobs		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
City, town, village	4.43%	4.33%	4.31%	7.22%	7.02%	6.86%
YMCA	2.13%	2.23%	2.49%	1.87%	1.81%	2.02%
Libraries	0.82%	0.78%	0.75%	0.92%	0.84%	0.82%
Museums	2.62%	2.28%	2.17%	2.24%	1.98%	1.83%
Historical sites	2.22%	2.36%	2.26%	2.34%	2.57%	2.39%
Arts and Culture	7.00%	6.85%	6.82%	6.12%	5.98%	6.07%
Post-secondary	3.74%	3.85%	3.84%	5.31%	5.42%	5.10%
Private businesses	11.30%	11.86%	12.65%	13.64%	14.58%	15.75%
Youth, day care, etc.	7.62%	7.74%	7.98%	7.08%	7.02%	7.31%
Health, disease prev.	6.81%	6.83%	6.56%	6.41%	6.35%	6.10%
Women's groups	1.25%	1.36%	1.31%	1.04%	1.13%	1.04%
Housing/com. assoc.	15.67%	15.15%	14.82%	13.58%	12.82%	12.61%
Other social groups	7.75%	7.56%	7.63%	6.71%	6.55%	6.61%
Environmental	3.92%	3.97%	4.06%	3.63%	3.71%	3.77%
Summer Camps	4.52%	4.23%	4.25%	4.57%	4.38%	4.24%
Ethnic, immigrant gps	1.66%	1.76%	1.71%	1.48%	1.47%	1.45%
Sports, fish & hunting	14.84%	15.50%	15.33%	14.28%	15.16%	15.03%
First Nations groups	1.69%	1.35%	1.07%	1.55%	1.20%	1.00%
Total non-religious	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: Employment and Social Development Canada 2018, 2019, 2020 and authors' calculations.

Table 3 shows the analogous information for faith-based organizations, by religion or Christian denomination. In our analysis, religious organizations are primarily represented by places of worship. In 2017, from Column 1, these organizations received a total of \$20.91 million, with 6,358 jobs supported (as noted in table 1, about 9.22 percent of all CSJ jobs supported). Since almost 87% of these religious applicants belong to the Christian faith, to further analyze the data, we have sorted the Christian applicants into 19 subgroups based on denominations¹⁷. In Table 3, we list the five largest evangelical denominations at the top of the table, followed by “Other Evangelical.” This latter category includes churches and other organizations associated with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), which represents approximately “43 denominations, 66 ministry organizations [...] and more than 600 congregations across the country” (EFC 2021). If a church had the phrase “community church” in the title, with no other affiliation, we listed it under the “Community Churches” group, which received about 8 percent of Christian jobs funded in 2017. The largest group receiving federal money, by far, is our catch-all “Non-denominational” group (about 34.63 percent of jobs created among all classified religious groups); if an applicant was not part of any other denomination listed in the table, we categorized it as “non-denominational.”

In 2017, the religious groups we identified that received the most funding from the CSJ program were the non-denominational groups (\$7.33 million) and Baptist Churches (\$2.08 million), which together accounted for more than half of the jobs funded for Christian applicants in 2017. Among the specific denominations, the largest grant totals went to Community Churches (\$1.41 million), Other Evangelicals (\$1.38 million), Catholics (\$1.03 million), and Bible/Gospel Camps (\$0.85 million). In the “Other Religious” category, Jewish and Muslim groups (each at \$1.29 million) received substantial subsidies as well.

We describe here the key changes in CSJ grants and jobs subsidized in 2018 and 2019. From Table 1, we note a 2017 to 2018 drop of 42.25 percentage points (that is, 2,869 fewer jobs) in total student jobs as having a connection to faith-based bodies, with a corresponding increase of 7.68 percentage points (4,138 more jobs) having a secular identification. This represents a decrease of close to \$9 million lost by religious groups. Correspondingly, the non-religious sector gained about \$11 million. As religious groups refused to sign the attestation box, or chose not to apply, it would appear the jobs were replaced by new (or increased) successful applications from secular groups.

From 2017 to 2018, nearly all the 18 non-religious sub-groups posted an increase in jobs subsidized (see Table 2). In 2019, when the attestation box was weakened and where the total program spending went up, it is worth noting that again, nearly every sub-group gained student jobs compared to 2017, except for “Museums” and “First Nations” groups. Similarly, from 2018 to 2019, all groups except “First Nation’s Groups” gained more jobs funded. Looking at percentage shares of total non-religious jobs (the right-hand three columns in Table 2), all non-religious groups, comparing the 2017 to 2019 columns, saw either slight increases or very little change in their percentage share during the two years.

What we see as interesting, though, is the rather low percentage share of jobs for women’s groups, at 1 percent for 2017 and 2019, with only a slight increase in 2018. We also note that Indigenous groups witnessed a decline in jobs from 1.55 percent in 2017 to 1.00 percent in 2019. However, this group does receive federal support for other summer youth programs, so this figure may not represent the full funding received by such groups. Finally, if we use “ethnic and immigrant” as a very rough proxy¹⁸ for affirmative action for racial minorities,

we observe that this sub-group held steady at about 1.45 percent over the three years studied.

With the introduction of the 2018 attestation box, as suggested earlier, many of the faith-based groups with high percentages in 2017 were on record as opposing the attestation¹⁹. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada likewise expressed concerns, and this umbrella group represents a large part of the denominations listed in our analysis. However, without centralized leadership, it is difficult to discern which individual congregations among the “non-denominational” and “community churches” might have rejected signing the attestation.

Table 3 indicates that in 2018, Christian groups recorded drops in CSJ jobs compared to the previous year. The most dramatic losses were among the non-denominational churches (-1,071 jobs), Baptists (-474 jobs), Community Churches (-321 jobs), Catholics, (-314 jobs), Pentecostals (-195 jobs), Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) (-181 jobs) and Other Evangelical (-180 jobs). Similarly, Bible camps lost 126 jobs from 2017 to 2018. The only exceptions were the United Church (+9 jobs), minority sects (+4 jobs) and the Lutheran Church (+ 1 job). Notably, the United Church of Canada takes a more inclusive view of abortion and LGBTQ+ rights,²⁰ which helps to explain why it was not negatively impacted by the attestation. In total, Christian organizations lost 3,064 student jobs and about \$9.8 million in job subsidies.

Although other religions were outspoken against the attestation, all of the non-Christian religious groups in Table 3 saw a rise in CSJ funding in 2018. However, the overlap between faith and culture is quite large for many of these religious groups, which makes it more difficult to draw conclusions about the impact of the attestation. Given the fact that the overall CSJ funding to these groups is relatively small, the increase in funding could simply be a direct result of the ESDC priorities assisting visible minorities and immigrants or refugee groups.

Compared to 2018, the figures for 2019 show a marked increase in grants to all religious groups – interesting, only the United Church (-18 jobs), and Sikh groups (-32 jobs) saw a decline in jobs. However, quite a few of the major Christian denominations did not return to pre-attestation levels; for instance, the Baptists regained 335 jobs compared to 2018, but still fell 139 jobs short of their 2017 subsidies. Comparing 2019 to 2017 job figures, eight Christian groups saw modest growth: the Lutherans (+3 jobs), Presbyterians (+10 jobs), Other Evangelical (+9 jobs), Minority Sects (+4 jobs), Salvation Army (+8), Assembly of God (+1 jobs), Reformed (+9 jobs) and Bible Camps (+3 jobs). This was undercut by substantial declines in the remaining groups, leading to an overall loss of 394 jobs for Christian applicants between 2017 to 2019. Meanwhile, jobs subsidized among the Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and Jewish groups were all significantly higher in 2019 compared to 2017.

Summary and agenda for further research

To summarize, we found that faith-based groups in 2018 suffered nearly a one-half drop in CSJ funding and jobs subsidized from the previous year. Various news media reported that some 1,560 applications were rejected in 2018 because of a refusal to check off the attestation box, far higher than the 126 rejected applications in the previous year (see Platt 2018c). Here, we estimate religious groups witnessed a net decline of about 2,869 summer jobs. This could mean that many of the rejected applications had sought funding for multiple

jobs; this may also mean that hundreds of religious organizations simply did not bother to apply.

Given the relaxation of the attestation rules in 2019, the federal government did substantially increase grants to religious groups. While the sector enjoyed a 2,742 increase in supported jobs, this still fell short of pre-attestation amounts. The fact that faith groups did not fully return to their 2017 levels may indicate that some programs had to be permanently cancelled or cut back after the loss of funds in 2018. The shortfall may also stem from some continued objections to the application requirements, along with heightened government scrutiny of religious groups. Newspaper reports stated that 403 applicants in 2019 were “deemed ineligible for the funding under new rules that say the money cannot be used to undermine human rights” (Smith 2019). Of these, 26 were denied for allegedly seeking to limit women’s reproductive rights (ibid).

Therefore, one can posit that, given the strong debate throughout 2018, a tacit compromise was reached between the Trudeau government and critical voices. The government relaxed the rules in 2019 to make the attestation more palatable but continued to maintain its pro-choice position by preventing funds from going to groups viewed as discriminatory. While this clearly allowed more religious groups to access CSJ grants, the bureaucratic process still excluded certain applicants whose sincerely held beliefs were deemed unacceptable. The lack of clarity surrounding these rejections in 2019 led two organizations to seek judicial review. The Federal Court decisions²¹ released in 2021 held that the government had indeed breached its procedural fairness obligations, suggesting that the 2019 approach was hardly less problematic than the 2018 attestation. The decisions underscore the government’s responsibility to distribute funds fairly. These cases further highlight the continued relevance of our research and the importance of paying ongoing attention to the CSJ program in future years to ensure that the government does not discriminate in its administration of CSJ funding.

Our findings also revealed several discrepancies – including regional and political inequities in the distribution of CSJ funds – which merit further study. One media report in 2018 mentioned that the government received “41,716 eligible applications” in 2017 (Platt 2018c). However, our spreadsheet documenting the 2017 data lists a total of 29,555 successful applications from hiring organizations. Assuming that the news report was accurate, this means that 12,161 were rejected for reasons other than incomplete form filling. A closer investigation of these numbers, and a comparison to subsequent years, could reveal more about government decision-making. This could benefit communities across Canada, since a better understanding of the process could assist applicants as they seek to provide meaningful job opportunities for young people.

Notes

¹ Less well known, but still important, is the fact that Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the granting agency, instituted an affirmative action program, where special consideration would be given to applicants that supported or hired visible minorities, new immigrants, indigenous youth, or the LGBTQ+ community (ESDC 2021b).

- ² The program is open to a wide range of private sector businesses (for example co-ops, self-employed persons, business associations, and private health and education institutions) and public-sector organizations (charities, municipalities, educational institutions, and so forth).
- ³ For reference, the stated local priorities for each of the federal electoral districts in 2021 may be found at ESDC 2021a.
- ⁴ See also the discussion in Gilbert (2020, 5-6).
- ⁵ The requirement on the form stated: Both the job and the organization's core mandate respect human rights in Canada, including the values underlying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as other rights. These include reproductive rights and the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. (ESDC 2017, 21)
- ⁶ The government recognizes that women's rights are human rights. This includes sexual and reproductive rights – and the right to safe and legal abortions. These rights are at the core of the Government of Canada's foreign and domestic policies. [...] The objective of the changes is to prevent Government of Canada funding from flowing to organizations whose mandates or projects may not respect individual human rights, the values underlying the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and associated case law. This helps prevent youth (as young as 15 years of age) from being exposed to employment within organizations that may promote positions that are contrary to the values enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and associated case law. (ESDC 2017, 3-4)
- ⁷ For more on *Charter* values, see Horner (2014); Sossin and Friedman (2014); Macklin (2014). See also Cottrill (2018), who notes that: “the *Charter's* essential purpose is to restrain the state. It is a check on the use of power that protects individuals' rights when a well-intentioned democratic majority acts. [...] it subjects state action to the rule of law in order to protect basic freedoms” (74).
- ⁸ For instance, an editorial from *The Toronto Star* (2018) declared, “the government has overreached on this issue. Instead of focusing on what summer-jobs money would pay young people to do, it has made an issue of what the organizations that apply for the funds believe.”
- ⁹ The fact that the Applicant Guide referred to “positions” contrary to *Charter* values seemed to confirm this was about beliefs, not activities.
- ¹⁰ This ad-hoc interfaith group brought together Christian, Jewish, and Muslim leaders, including signatories representing both liberal and conservative denominations. The United Church of Canada, considered one of the most liberal Christian groups in Canada, did not sign the letter. We highlight this, since the response by religious groups to the new 2018 rule varied within and across faiths. Although the majority were outspoken in opposing the attestation, some felt comfortable with the requirement.
- ¹¹ Non-religious applicants were rejected as well, if they decided not to sign the attestation box (see Dickson 2018).
- ¹² Note that the data is still subject to change; thus, the figures listed on the ESDC webpage may not correspond to the current figures shown here.
- ¹³ For example, ethnic church groups are classified as religious, not ethnic groups; faith-based housing organizations are classified with housing groups, not faith-based organizations. The process may not be exact, but we have been as comprehensive and accurate as possible given the available information.
- ¹⁴ we used “church”, “mosque”, “synagogue”, and various denominations as codes
- ¹⁵ They are (1) City, Town, Village; (2) YMCA/YWCA; (3) Libraries; (4) Museums; (5) Historical Sites; (6) Arts and Culture Groups; (7) Post-secondary and Research Institutions; (8) Private Businesses; (9) Youth and Children's Charities and Daycares; (10) Health and Disease Prevention; (11) Women's Groups; (12) Housing and Community Associations; (13) Environmental and Animal groups; (14) Ethnic Groups; (15) Camps; (16) Sports, Fishing and Hunting Clubs; (17) First Nations Groups; and (18) Other Social Groups.
- ¹⁶ Note that a few grant-receiving organizations under the “ethnic” category represent population groups from European backgrounds, for example, Scottish, Irish and German associations, that are not part of the affirmative action purview.

¹⁷ These are (1) Anglican; (2) Pentecostal; (3) Baptist; (4) Lutheran; (5) Presbyterian; (6) Catholic; (7) Orthodox; (8) United Church; (9) Salvation Army; (10) Christian and Missionary Alliance; (11) Assembly of God; (12) Nazarene; (13) Bible Church; (14) Reformed Church; (15) Bible Camp/Gospel Camps; (16) Community Churches; (17) Other Evangelicals; (18) Non-denominational; and (19) minority Christian sects.

¹⁸ A very rough proxy, clearly, since people of colour are hired in all the 18 sub-areas.

¹⁹ For instance, Catholics and Baptists stressed that member churches would not sign the attestation box.

²⁰ See United Church of Canada (2021a, 2021b)

²¹ *Redeemer University College v Canada (Employment, Workforce Development and Labour)*, 2021 FC 686, online (CanLII): <https://canlii.ca/t/jgpzv>; *BCM International Canada Inc v Canada (Employment, Workforce Development and Labour)*, 2021 FC 687, online (CanLII): <https://canlii.ca/t/jgpzw>.

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About the authors

Alan Chan is a Professor of Economics and Business Administration at Crandall University in Moncton, New Brunswick.

Amy Ross is a researcher and educator in central Alberta.

David Murrell is a retired Professor of Economics at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

ORCID

Alan Chan: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2125-159X>

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Appendix

Table 3A. 2017-2019 grants money and number of jobs created to religious groups and denomination

	Grant (\$)			Jobs			Grant (\$) /Job		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Anglicans	226,067	160,769	230,656	69	47	62	3,276	3,421	3,720
Pentecostals	807,568	136,312	787,494	240	45	189	3,365	3,029	4,167
Baptists	2,084,141	470,572	1,879,382	604	130	465	3,451	3,620	4,042
Lutherans	93,824	96,571	112,418	25	26	28	3,753	3,714	4,015
Presbyterians	267,965	235,701	399,811	89	62	99	3,011	3,802	4,039
Other evangelicals	1,383,081	859,487	1,658,629	424	244	433	3,262	3,522	3,831
Catholics	1,034,253	98,620	1,227,514	348	34	347	2,972	2,901	3,537
United Church	787,609	910,238	936,950	253	262	244	3,113	3,474	3,834
Other Sects	6,739	21,637	26,064	2	6	6	3,369	3,606	4,344
Orthodox	294,310	104,882	401,167	110	36	109	2,676	2,913	3,680
Salvation Army	465,197	415,979	613,857	142	120	150	3,276	3,466	4,092
C&MA	710,717	44,521	672,748	191	10	157	3,721	4,452	4,285
Assembly of God	13,722	0	13,904	2	0	3	6,861	0	4,635
Nazarenes	102,546	30,815	98,356	34	9	25	3,016	3,424	3,934
Bible Church	147,495	63,690	111,565	41	16	27	3,597	3,981	4,132
Reformed Church	107,652	46,678	168,685	33	14	42	3,262	3,334	4,016
Bible/Gospel Camp**	849,000	389,915	951,257	227	101	230	3,740	3,861	4,136
Community Church	1,412,916	350,939	1,381,657	419	98	339	3,372	3,581	4,076
Non-denominational	7,333,080	3,871,998	8,260,705	2202	1131	2106	3,330	3,423	3,922
<i>Total Christian</i>	18,127,882	8,309,324	19,932,819	5455	2391	5061	3,323	3,475	3,939
Sikh	169,596	429,924	380,960	57	124	92	2,975	3,467	4,141
Buddhist & Hindu	30,983	26,360	92,611	9	9	25	3,443	2,929	3,704
Muslim	1,288,627	1,805,504	2,182,235	424	519	550	3,039	3,479	3,968
Jewish	1,287,998	1,502,543	1,974,275	413	446	503	3,119	3,369	3,925
<i>Total Non-Christian</i>	2,777,204	3,764,331	4,630,081	903	1098	1170	3,076	3,428	3,957
TOTAL RELIGIOUS	20,905,086	12,073,655	24,562,900	6358	3489	6231	3,288	3,460	3,942

Source: Employment and Social Development Canada 2018, 2019, 2020 and authors' calculations.

Table 3B. 2017-2019 percentage distribution of dollar grants and number of jobs created within religious groups and denomination

	Grant Distribution			Jobs Distribution		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Anglicans	1.08%	1.33%	0.94%	1.09%	1.35%	1.00%
Pentecostals	3.86%	1.13%	3.21%	3.77%	1.29%	3.03%
Baptists	9.97%	3.90%	7.65%	9.50%	3.73%	7.46%
Lutherans	0.45%	0.80%	0.46%	0.39%	0.75%	0.45%
Presbyterians	1.28%	1.95%	1.63%	1.40%	1.78%	1.59%
Other evangelicals	6.62%	7.12%	6.75%	6.67%	6.99%	6.95%
Catholics	4.95%	0.82%	5.00%	5.47%	0.97%	5.57%
United Church	3.77%	7.54%	3.81%	3.98%	7.51%	3.92%
Other Sects	0.03%	0.18%	0.11%	0.03%	0.17%	0.10%
Orthodox	1.41%	0.87%	1.63%	1.73%	1.03%	1.75%
Salvation Army	2.23%	3.45%	2.50%	2.23%	3.44%	2.41%
C&MA	3.40%	0.37%	2.74%	3.00%	0.29%	2.52%
Assembly of God	0.07%	0.00%	0.06%	0.03%	0.00%	0.05%
Nazarenes	0.49%	0.26%	0.40%	0.53%	0.26%	0.40%
Bible Church	0.71%	0.53%	0.45%	0.64%	0.46%	0.43%
Reformed Church	0.51%	0.39%	0.69%	0.52%	0.40%	0.67%
Bible/Gospel Camp**	4.06%	3.23%	3.87%	3.57%	2.89%	3.69%
Community Church	6.76%	2.91%	5.62%	6.59%	2.81%	5.44%
Non-denominational	35.08%	32.07%	33.63%	34.63%	32.42%	33.80%
<i>Total Christian</i>	86.72%	68.82%	81.15%	85.80%	68.53%	81.22%
Sikh	0.81%	3.56%	1.55%	0.90%	3.55%	1.48%
Buddhist & Hindu	0.15%	0.22%	0.38%	0.14%	0.26%	0.40%
Muslim	6.16%	14.95%	8.88%	6.67%	14.88%	8.83%
Jewish	6.16%	12.44%	8.04%	6.50%	12.78%	8.07%
<i>Total Non-Christian</i>	13.28%	31.18%	18.85%	14.20%	31.47%	18.78%
TOTAL RELIGIOUS	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: Employment and Social Development Canada 2018, 2019, 2020 and authors' calculation