

Center for California Studies

[Center for California Studies | Sacramento State \(csus.edu\)](https://www.csus.edu)

FACULTY RESEARCH FELLOWS PROGRAM

High-growth/high-equality economies: what do they have in common?

Request for proposals

The Center for California Studies at Sac State has received a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support policy research on topics related to reducing income and wealth inequality. The following RFP is part of a series intended to inform policy solutions to income and wealth inequality; the series is partially funded through the grant from the Gates Foundation.

Project Title

High-growth/high-equality economies: what do they have in common?

Background

Since the 1980's, income and wealth inequality has been on the rise in most countries.ⁱ This rise has been particularly pronounced in the U.S, where reliable growth in labor productivity over the past five decades has not translated into a corresponding growth in wages, denying most Americans any benefit from this growth and instead enriching the country's already wealthiest citizens.ⁱⁱ As pronounced as this inequality is at the national level, it is even greater in California, where income inequality is among the highest in the country.ⁱⁱⁱ

In recent years, state policy makers have ranked the state's income and wealth inequality as among the state's most pressing problems.^{iv} Bills introduced in the California State Legislature contain hundreds of proposals to address the problem, from a lack of affordable housing to health care subsidies and tuition-free community college. Governor Newsom's 2021-22 budget revision includes aggressive anti-poverty proposals: a \$5.2 billion renter assistance package, proposals on affordable housing and homelessness, and a universal basic income pilot program.^v

ⁱ World Inequality Report 2022: Executive Summary, [The World #InequalityReport 2022 presents the most up-to-date & complete data on inequality worldwide:](#)

ⁱⁱ Steven Vogel, "The Regulatory Roots of Inequality in America," *Journal of Law and Political Economy*, 272

ⁱⁱⁱ Public Policy Institute of California, "Just the Facts: Income Inequality in California," January, 2020, [Income Inequality in California - Public Policy Institute of California \(ppic.org\)](#)

^{iv} Elizabeth Castillo and Lauren Rosenthal, "A Deep Blue Sea of California Lawmakers Takes Oath of Office," *CalMatters*, December 3, 2018.

^v [California Roars Back: Governor Newsom Presents \\$100 Billion California Comeback Plan | California Governor](#)

His most recent budget proposal continued in this vein, with an emphasis on job creation, opportunity and a focus on the most vulnerable.^{vi}

While many experts point to state programs as a way to help improve the economic welfare of the poorest residents, others raise questions about certain features of this country's economy, arguing that the only way to reverse decades of stagnating wages is to address certain structural and regulatory features of our economy.^{vii} To assist policy makers in making decisions about bigger, structural changes to the economy, it is important to look at other economies, especially those with more equitable income and wealth distributions.

Purpose of Research

This research is intended to aid state policymakers in crafting policies conducive to a more equitable economy. To that end, we are looking for information on what academic research says about the following questions, along with policy implications of these findings:

- What are the economic and social policies of countries with high rates of economic growth and high equality?
- What structural elements do their economies have in common?
- What legal and regulatory frameworks do they share (e.g., business regulation, consumer protection, intellectual property rights, etc.)?
- What government labor market interventions do they have (e.g., human capital investments, wage regulation, sectoral bargaining, social compacts)?
- What role does the U.S.' history of racist and exclusionary policies play in explaining our high degree of inequality compared to other countries? What changes might we adopt to address or correct the racial inequalities that are the direct legacy of historic racist and exclusionary policies?
- What can we learn from these other countries that have economies that rival that of the U.S. in total size but have more equitable outcomes? What changes might California (or the federal government, if a change is out of states' jurisdiction) adopt to ensure that our economy produces outputs that are more equitably distributed?
- What lessons might California take from regional or state-by-state comparisons that look at the impact of different economic policies and characteristics?

Scope of Research

This project is focused on informing state policy making as it relates to reducing inequality in California and improving the economic circumstances of California's lowest- and middle-income residents, in the long-term. The researcher or research team will review existing research on high-equity economies, summarize the research and determine the policy implications for California.

^{vi} Governor's Budget Summary 2022-23, pp. 5, 109, 114, [Ebudget \(ca.gov\)](https://www.sos.ca.gov/budget)

^{vii} "High Road Training Partnerships: A Path to Reimagining and Rebuilding Our Economy" UC Berkeley Labor Center [Taking the High Road - UC Berkeley Labor Center](https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/taking-the-high-road/)

Deliverables and Timeline

1. Participate in a planning call with legislative requesters and Center for California Studies staff, prior to beginning the project.
2. Provide preliminary drafts of the following to the Center for California Studies by August 15: a report and a two-page summary of findings and recommendations.
3. Respond to any comments or questions about the draft and provide a final report and two-page summary to the Center for California Studies by September 30.
4. Present research in Sacramento by the end of 2022, on a date mutually agreeable to both the researchers and the Faculty Research Fellows Program award recipient. (The Center can cover travel costs for faculty doing the presentation.)

Budget

\$20,000 This amount includes any indirect costs charged by the recipient's institution, as well as travel costs and all other costs (except for travel costs related to the presentation, which will be covered by the Center for California Studies).

Who May Apply:

Faculty and staff at any California State University campus may submit proposals. Preference is given to principal investigators who are full-time faculty or staff, but part-time faculty may also apply. Part-time faculty and CSU students may also be included as secondary investigators and assistants.

How to Apply

Proposals are due May 27, 2022. Submit proposal by email (in a single Word document or PDF file) to Leonor Ehling, Executive Director, Center for California Studies, at leonor.ehling@csus.edu. Include "FRPR Gates proposal – High-equity countries" in the subject line. Notification of awards will occur by June 3, 2022.

Proposal should be no longer than five single spaced pages (excluding a list of cited works, curriculum vitae, and evidence of approval from applicant's campus office of research). The proposal should include the following:

1. An introductory statement that demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter.
2. Explanation of the research design including the methods of analysis and source of data, if applicable.
3. A timeline for completing the project in the allotted period.
4. A proposed budget including the portion to be devoted to faculty time and travel to Sacramento for presentation of the research.
5. Description of the researcher's (s') qualifications for performing the study.
6. Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for the principal researcher (s).
7. A resume or vitae for each person funded under the project.
8. Approval by the principle investigator's campus office of research and sponsored programs, in conformance with Chancellor's Office Executive Order Number 890 [EO 890 - Administration of Grants and Contracts in Support of Sponsored Programs \(csusm.edu\)](http://www.csusm.edu/EO890)

Questions about this RFP may be directed to:

Leonor Ehling (leonor.ehling@csus.edu)

Executive Director

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