

Consent to participate in research: an evaluation of the Pursuit Fellowship program

IRB Protocol Number: 21-1205

Research Project Title: Assessing impacts of a tech-focused sectoral training program on career paths and earnings RCT

Researchers:

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Matthew Notowidigdo, Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago will serve as co-principal investigators on this evaluation.

Thank you for your interest in applying to the Pursuit Fellowship. As part of this program, you are also being invited to participate in a study looking at the impacts of the program.

What is the purpose of the study? Researchers from the University of Chicago, Harvard University, and MIT are working with Pursuit to understand whether the program helps its Fellows increase their earnings and improve their employment opportunities. This will help Pursuit understand how well the program works and how it can be improved.

How does the study work? Pursuit uses a multi-step application process to find qualified applicants, and there are typically many more qualified applicants than program spots. Individuals who are eligible, who agree to participate in the study, and who make it through to the end of the application process will be assigned to one of two groups based on a random lottery:

- The Pursuit Fellowship group, who will be offered the Pursuit Fellowship, and
- The control group, who will not be offered the fellowship.

What does it mean to participate in this study? If you participate in the study, the research team will be given some information about you from Pursuit and other agencies. The study also has some implications for future participation in the Pursuit Fellowship.

Data collection: Pursuit may share information about your application status, performance in the Fellowship, future employment, and related data with the research team. Researchers may invite you to fill out online surveys and/or to do interviews over the phone. Please note that if you do agree to participate in this study and get sufficiently far along in the application process, the research team will ask for your Social Security number. At that time, your Social Security Number will be required to continue applying to Pursuit. Researchers may use your social security number, along with information on this application (eg. name, date of birth, address) to access wage reports, unemployment insurance records, tax records, and other official records. Government agencies already collect this information. Taking part in the study means that researchers are able to use the information for research purposes.

Findings from any research may be published in scientific journals, meetings, or public data sets. However, no one will be able to identify individuals in any of these publications. Participating in this study is voluntary, and you can leave the study at any time.

Future participation in the Pursuit Fellowship:

If you make it through to the end of the application process and are assigned at random to the control group, you will not be eligible for services at Pursuit for two years. This does not exclude you, however, from seeking out other employment services in the community.

If you drop out of the application process before this stage, either because you choose to stop or Pursuit chooses not to move forward with your application, you are eligible to reapply to Pursuit.

Agreeing to participate in the research does not guarantee you a spot in the program. However, only study participants will be invited to proceed with their Pursuit Fellowship applications at this time.

What are the benefits and risks of participating? Participation is voluntary. By taking part in this study you will help Pursuit, the research team, policymakers in your community and state, and other employment agencies learn new things about training programs that could help others. We do not believe that you will experience any significant risks to your well-being by participating in this evaluation. The risk associated with sharing your information is minimal since researchers are taking several steps to ensure that any information collected for study purposes remains strictly confidential.

How will my information be kept confidential? The research team will follow strict rules to protect your privacy. Any information you provide is confidential. Researchers will securely store your personal information, program information, and responses to surveys and interviews. Only staff who need to use this information to do research will be able to access the information.

Identifiable data will never be shared outside the research team. De-identified information (i.e., data without your name or any other personally identifiable information) from this study may be shared with the research community, with journals in which study results are published, and with databases and data repositories used for research. They may also be used for future research studies. These data will not be able to be linked back to you in any way.

Contacts & Questions: If you have questions or concerns about the study, you can contact the researcher team at pursuit.study@povertyactionlab.org.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, feel you have been harmed, or wish to discuss other study-related concerns with someone who is not part of the research team, you can contact the University of Chicago Social & Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office by phone at (773) 702-2915, or by email at sbs-irb@uchicago.edu.

Consent: Participation is voluntary. If you choose to leave the evaluation, you also have the right to remove your data from the evaluation. If you choose to withdraw, please contact pursuit.study@povertyactionlab.org.

By clicking “Agree” below, you confirm that you have read the consent form, are at least 18 years old, and agree to participate in the research. Please print or save a copy of this page for your records.

☐ I agree to participate in the research

☐ I do NOT agree to participate in the research