



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

**CLAIRMONT CENTRE
FOR COMMUNITY
SAFETY RESEARCH**

Funded graduate opportunity for a project on alternatives to policing

The research project “Governance and legitimacy in the new institutions of crisis response” is recruiting up to **two** graduate students (at MA or PhD level) to Dalhousie’s Sociology and Social Anthropology (SOSA) Department, to conduct research on alternatives to policing, non-police crisis response services, or police reform.

Project

In response to widespread public pressure for improvements to crisis mental health response, coupled with advocacy targeted at removing police response from low-risk and non-criminal incidents, civilian-led crisis response (CCR) services have quickly become part of the emergency response landscape across Canada and the USA. While there are now hundreds of these services in operation – with many more planned – CCR services exhibit a wide range of service delivery, partnership, and governance models. This rapid development of services represents a significant change in the institutional environment of urban order maintenance, policing, and social service provision, and raises several empirical, theoretical, and normative questions requiring attention.

This research project therefore seeks to answer three key questions:

1. What formal mechanisms have been, or are being, established to provide governance, oversight, and accountability in CCR services?
2. What are the emerging institutional norms, rules and values in these services, and how do these norms, rules and values align with the formal governance mechanisms?
3. How do these services attempt to maintain legitimacy with other organizations and key actors within their broader organizational field?

The project will answer these questions through a mixed-methods approach involving policy and document analysis, interview research, and observational fieldwork, leading to peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, and a symposium aimed at government and practitioner audiences that are developing or operating CCR services. The project is funded through a SSHRC Insight Development Grant, with funding available until 2026-27.

The opportunity

Up to two graduate students (MA or PhD level) can receive funding through this project, for up to two years. Minimum funding through this opportunity is \$12,200 per year for two years, and additional funding may be available based on candidate qualifications. Minimum funding includes:

- A \$5,000 per year (for two years) graduate funding payment (similar to a scholarship) to support your own project in the SOSA Department. Your proposed project should be on a

topic relevant to alternatives to policing, non-police crisis response services, or police governance and reform.

- A two-year Research Assistant position at the Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research for at least 20 hours per month at a minimum rate of \$30 per hour (equivalent to \$7,200 per year), depending on prior experience and capabilities, supporting the SSHRC-funded project described above.
- Students continuing beyond two years (e.g., at PhD level) may be eligible for additional Research Assistant positions with the Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research.

Students selected to join this project will have to enroll in a [graduate program](#) in Sociology or Social Anthropology offered at the [Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology](#) (SOSA) at [Dalhousie](#). Our [graduate programs](#) draw on the strengths of our two disciplines—sociology and social anthropology—by recognizing their distinct intellectual and methodological heritages, while emphasizing how they complement each other. SOSA graduate students study theory, research methods and design, and conduct research culminating with a thesis.

The students joining this project will be supervised by [Dr. Chris Giacomantonio](#), Assistant Professor in Sociology and Director of the [Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research](#). Dr. Giacomantonio has worked for over a decade on issues of police governance, police reform, and applied community safety research.

How to Apply

Interested students should email Dr. Chris Giacomantonio (chrisgiac@dal.ca), attaching the following:

- Statement of interest (one page max.)
- Curriculum vitae
- Unofficial transcripts
- Writing sample (fifteen pages max.)

Review of applications will begin on December 6, 2024. Late applications may be considered in exceptional circumstances. Only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted. Interested candidates may also make informal inquiries by email to Dr. Giacomantonio at any time.

Students selected for this funding opportunity must also [apply for admission](#) to Dalhousie's Faculty of Graduate Studies and to the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology to commence studies in **September 2025**. The deadline to apply is January 15, 2025.

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

We are all Treaty people.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.