

Hilary Olson

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📄 Summary

As an interdisciplinary researcher skilled in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, I am interested in conducting policy-relevant research and program evaluations. Specializing in social innovation, my research interests include social finance, international development, collaborative governance, co-production, and systems change.

🎓 Education

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Public Policy and Management May 2024
Sol Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California

- Title of Dissertation: Outcomes-Based Contracting through Impact Bonds - Ties to Social Innovation, Systems Change, and International Development.

Master of Public Policy (MPP), Certificate in International Policy and Planning May 2018
Sol Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California

- Price Women and Allies Board Member.

Bachelor of Arts (BA), Diplomacy and World Affairs (Major), Economics (Minor) May 2012
Occidental College

- Microfinance Investment Fund Board Member.

👤 Professional Experience

Research Assistant Los Angeles, CA
Price Center for Social Innovation Aug 2018 – July 2023

- Collaborated on research projects assessing social finance tools such as Social Impact Bonds and Emergency Aid funds.
- Managed research assistants and liaised with clients throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation of social innovation programs.
- Conducted literature reviews, interviewed program participants and stakeholders, and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data using Stata and NVivo.
- Co-authored three peer-reviewed articles, an evaluation report, and a policy briefing.
- Shared findings through six academic conference presentations and a podcast.

Research Assistant Los Angeles, CA
Gould School of Law Sept 2017 – May 2020

- Provided research assistance on topics related to immigration detention and Community Bail Funds.
- Reviewed academic literature using legal resource databases such as WestLaw.
- Collected and cleaned data for quantitative analysis using Excel and Stata.
- Awarded two research fellowships from the Immigrants and Global Migration Initiative and the Linnie and Michael Katz Endowment.

Student Consultant Los Angeles, CA
University of Southern California Aug 2017 – May 2018

- Worked on a seven-person consulting team for the Italian Civil Protection Agency.
- Created a person-centric approach to disaster response, with a focus on social media.
- Met with members from the local media, nonprofit, and private sectors in Milan to identify major stakeholders and objectives.
- Helped prepare final report and present findings to the Agency in Milan.

Research Assistant, Center for the Future of Aging Los Angeles, CA
Milken Institute Aug 2017 – Dec 2017

- Researched initiatives for successful aging programs in support of the Mayor's Pledge, a campaign to make communities more livable for older populations.

- Cleaned, analyzed, and visualized data in support of the Best Cities for Successful Aging report.
- Provided research support as-needed for conferences and presentations.

Student Consultant

University of Southern California

Los Angeles, CA
Jan 2017 – June 2017

- Worked on a seven-person consulting team for the Italian Civil Protection Agency.
- Created a person-centric approach to disaster response, with a focus on social media.
- Met with members from the local media, nonprofit, and private sectors in Milan to identify major stakeholders and objectives.
- Helped prepare the final report and presented findings to the Agency in Milan.

Account Executive

Charity Brands Consulting

Los Angeles, CA
Oct 2016 – May 2017

- Researched companies whose corporate social responsibility objectives matched our clients' interests.
- Identified organizational alignments for public-private partnerships and mission-driven campaigns.
- Wrote memoranda outlining client strategies and potential partners.

Teaching and Mentorship Experience

Mentor

Price Professional Mentorship Program, University of Southern California

2024 – 2025

Future Faculty Teaching Institute Certification

Center for Excellence in Teaching, University of Southern California

Spring 2023

Teaching Assistant (Masters-Level)

University of Southern California

Jan 2017 – Jan 2020

- Applied Econometrics for Program Evaluation (Fall 2020)
- Policy Analysis Practicum (Fall 2019, Spring 2020)
- Economics for Policy, Planning and Development (Summer 2017)

Publications

Program Design to Ease Administrative Burden in Times of Crisis: An Evaluation of Two Emergency Aid Programs in Los Angeles

Jan 2025

Jeimee Estrada-Miller, Hilary Olson, and Gary Painter.

Social Policy & Administration

Can a Focus on Co-Created, Strengths-Based Services Facilitate Early-Stage Innovation within Social Impact Bonds?

June 2022

Chris Fox, Hilary Olson, Harry Armitage, Susan Baines, and Gary Painter.

International Public Management Journal

Are social impact bonds an innovation in finance or do they help finance social innovation?

Apr 2022

Hilary Olson, Gary Painter, Kevin Albertson, Christopher Fox, and Christopher O'Leary.

Journal of Social Policy

An evaluation of the emergency aid programs at the University of Southern California and Los Angeles Community College District

May 2021

Hilary Olson, Kalen Cornelious, Riley Carbonneau, Victoria Ciudad-Real, Dr. Jovanna Rosen, Cynthia Barboza-Wilkes, Hannah Lee, and Gary Painter.

Sol Price Center for Social Innovation

Social impact bonds 2.0? Findings from a study of four UK SIBs

Dec 2020

Chris Fox, Hilary Olson, and Harry Armitage.

Sol Price Center for Social Innovation

Honors and Awards

- Henry Reining Best Dissertation Award (2024)
- Price Fifth Year Fellowship (2022-2023)
- USC Graduate School Summer Research and Writing Grant (2022)
- Price/Graduate School Fellowship (2018-2022)
- Immigrants and Global Migration Initiative Research Fellowship (2019)
- Linnie & Michael Katz Endowed Research Fellowship (2018)
- Robert P. Biller Award for Best Policy Analysis (2018)
- Price Dean's Merit Scholarship (2016-2018)
- Distinction on Occidental College Senior Thesis (2012)
- Occidental Trustee Scholarship (2008-2012)

Skills

- Qualitative & Quantitative Methodologies
- Research Design, Policy Analysis, & Program Evaluation
- Writing Academic Articles, Evaluation Reports, & Policy Briefings
- Presenting & Communicating Findings to Broad Audiences
- Stakeholder Engagement & Cultural Competency
- Experience with STATA, NVivo, ATLAS.ti, ArcGISPro, & Python

Languages

English: Native proficiency

French: Advanced proficiency

Spanish: Basic proficiency