



**POSITION:** Research Director

**LOCATION:** Toronto, Ontario

**REPORTS TO:** Executive Director

**WEBSITE:** [samaracanada.com](http://samaracanada.com)

**DATE POSTED:** Thursday, April 15, 2021

**DATE UPDATED:** Monday, May 10, 2021

### **THE ORGANIZATION**

The Samara Centre for Democracy is a non-partisan charity dedicated to strengthening Canada's democracy, making it more accessible, responsive, and inclusive. The Samara Centre produces action-based thought leadership—as well as tools and resources for active citizens and public leaders—designed to engage Canadians in their democracy.

Over the past dozen years, the Samara Centre has become a trusted, non-partisan champion of increased civic engagement and a more positive public life. Based in Toronto, Ontario, the organization's ambitious national mandate is realized by a passionate team of experts. The organization's efforts fall into three categories: Research, Education, and Programming.

The Samara Centre is committed to maintaining its non-partisan reputation despite much of its activity touching highly political spaces and people. Samara's reports are independently researched, drawing upon different vantage points from across the democracy ecosystem to expose aspects of Canadian public life to scrutiny.

Central to the Samara Centre is this action-oriented research that, in conjunction with communications, education, and advocacy, drives positive change in the way politics and engagement are done in Canada. Samara's research is implemented through tools and resources that everyday Canadians, active citizens, and public leaders can use to increase participation in our democracy. Its experts produce accessible, engaging, and often-cited analyses, hold in-person and virtual events, and speak to media, decision makers, and community-based leaders and teachers.

## **THE POSITION**

The Research Director position is full-time and based remotely, pending the eventual re-opening of the Samara Centre's downtown office in Toronto.

The Research Director, in consultation with the Executive Director, will be responsible for setting and executing a vigorous research agenda that brings forward the evidence and reforms to drive positive change in Canadian politics and transform representative democracy. Action-oriented, comparative, and multilevel, this research focuses on three areas central to the health of Canada's democracy: legislatures, political parties, and citizen participation.

This research informs everything the Samara Centre does, from public reports and events to media interviews, online webinars, and testimony before parliamentary committees. Samara's research receives extensive press coverage, informs legislation, is used to train new Members of Parliament, and appears on university curricula across the country.

The Samara Centre's two flagship research initiatives—the MP Exit Interview Project and the biennial Democracy 360 Report Card—have evolved significantly. Samara's research now encompasses a variety of projects and partnerships, taking on a more purposeful direction, exposing salient obstacles to the functioning of a healthy democracy, and advocating for specific reforms by employing strategic outreach. For example, recent work has exposed the undemocratic nature of federal nomination processes, evaluated how political leaders and institutions have adjusted to the pandemic, and pushed for more effective use of digital tools by politicians.

The Samara Centre's research is designed and executed with the intention of making Canadian politics more accessible, responsive, and inclusive. Priority areas include:

- How political leaders are recruited, trained and exercise influence within the parliamentary system;
- How Canadians perceive political institutions and political leaders; and
- How Canadians' inclusion and participation in politics is facilitated and encouraged.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a member of the senior leadership, and working with Samara Centre staff, external advisory boards, third-party researchers and other stakeholders, the successful candidate will have responsibility in four major areas.

1. Building upon the Samara Centre's previous work, you will set the direction for a vigorous research agenda:
  - Develop a 3-year working plan that will incorporate the release of ongoing research and develop new research initiatives;
  - Working with the Executive Director, set and maintain an annual research budget;

- Craft consultation plans, consult with stakeholders, set timelines and schedules, undertake necessary background research; and
  - Develop partnerships to achieve added impact for the research agenda.
2. Oversee research projects from conception to release:
    - Plan and execute research projects that may include a mix of primary and secondary research, as appropriate;
    - Oversee staff, contractors, advisors and volunteers for data collection and analysis;
    - Work with communications staff to ensure research releases are accurate, compelling, and fulfill Samara's intended impact; and
    - Support tracking and evaluation of outcomes against the research plan.
  3. Support strategic engagement with key stakeholders to push for change, while maintaining the Samara Centre's non-partisan reputation:
    - Map Samara's research stakeholders and maintain contact details in Samara's database;
    - Monitor key developments in Canadian politics, and advise/prepare for windows of influence (e.g. appearance at committee, drafting op-eds);
    - Help generate event ideas that ensure Samara's research is taken up;
    - Be a public face for the organization, presenting Samara's research regularly via radio and news broadcast, print-media op-eds, and in parliamentary committees; and
    - Ensure that Samara's data are used accurately by external bodies.
  4. Support the Samara Centre's organizational capacity:
    - Where appropriate, assist with reports to Samara's governance board and funders;
    - Attend events hosted by Samara or relevant events Samara is invited to; and
    - Help build a stronger community of interest and financial support for Samara.

### **CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS**

- Graduate degree in sociology, education, economics, political science, or a related field with a strong knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Experience developing and implementing original research projects that have a public impact. Related knowledge in some of the following areas is preferred: Canadian politics, social movements, political institutions, social policy, citizenship, electoral fairness, democratic functioning, and civic engagement.
- At least 5 years of research experience, preferably in a post-secondary, non-profit, government, or research firm environment.
- Experience in grant coordination, development, submission, and reporting (e.g. SSHRC applications, ethics applications, budget justifications).

- Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in research.
- Experience writing and editing academic publications and non-academic publications (e.g. peer-reviewed articles, reports, briefings, conference presentations,).
- Knowledge mobilization skills and ability to convey findings to diverse audiences.
- Project management experience with ability to coordinate with team members and partners on project milestones and hiring of research assistants.
- Strong leadership, mentorship, and supervision abilities with a collaborative approach.
- An ability to work and communicate in both English and French is an asset.

## **COMPENSATION**

Salary negotiable and starting at \$80,000.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

We strongly encourage applications from persons of colour, women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, persons of various sexual orientations and gender identities, and others who may contribute to the building of a democracy that is inclusive and diverse. Applicants may confidentially self-identify in their cover letter.

Please attach the following materials **in one document** and submit your application to Christine Latimer at [christine.latimer@samaracanada.com](mailto:christine.latimer@samaracanada.com). Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

- a) Cover letter
- b) Résumé/Curriculum vitae
- c) One or two recent work samples (e.g. links to academic or non-academic publications, panel presentation(s), media interview(s)).

*Please note: Candidates who submitted an application before the posting was updated on May 10, 2021, will still be considered for the position.*