

Faculty Research Fellow Opportunities at the Center for Social Research

The Center for Social Research (CSR) is seeking multiple UHart faculty members to join us as **Faculty Research Fellows** in 2026, collaborating with our team on research and evaluation projects in Hartford related to the development and sustainability of North Hartford Ascend, an initiative focused on developing a network of integrated and coordinated supports for children and families residing in the North Hartford Promise Zone (comprised of Upper Albany, Clay Arsenal, and Northeast neighborhoods). This work focuses on collaborative and sustainable systems change to improve educational outcomes for students, strengthen families' protective factors (e.g., resilience), promote social justice, and support community development, empowerment, and well-being. It is funded through a Promise Neighborhood grant from the US Department of Education through the end of 2026.

We are looking for inspired, motivated, and capable faculty to help conduct applied research, including analyzing and reporting on primarily quantitative data (though qualitative data may also be used) and using data to inform system development and quality improvements in services in order to improve lives and outcomes for the community. Through data sharing agreements with the State Dept. of Education, CT Data Collaborative, DataHaven, Hartford Public Schools, the City of Hartford, CBOs, and CT Children's, the research team will have access to large datasets including student education records, records of participation in school- and community-based programming, and community-, school-, and program-based survey data. In addition, there may be limited opportunities to collect additional relevant data through interviews, focus groups, and other qualitative and quantitative methods, at the discretion of Dr. Younts and according to the overall needs of the project.

Relevant skills and experience include, but *are not limited to*:

- Statistical analysis of quantitative data (basic to advanced) – propensity score matching, regression modeling of categorical and continuous dependent variables, longitudinal data analysis, latent growth curve analysis, etc.
- Social Network Analysis focused on the relationships between programs/services comprising the system.
- Pilot testing strategy implementation using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) methodology to support quality data collection and reporting and the use of data to inform practice.
- Designing and conducting semi-structured, face-to-face (and/or virtual) interviews and focus groups with service providers, community agencies, residents and/or families.
- Co-authoring reports and presentations for a variety of stakeholders.
- Writing literature reviews and technical reports on relevant topics.

Relevant content area expertise includes, but is *not limited to*:

- Sociology – urban, housing, education, health, inequality, race/ethnicity, crime and public safety, etc.
- Education, including primary, secondary, and post-secondary education and career prep
- Math and English Language Arts education, supports/interventions, and standardized testing

- School attendance and absenteeism
- Student physical, mental, and behavioral health, including nutrition, school discipline practices, substance use treatment, social determinants of health, and access to care
- Special Education and individualized education plans
- Early childhood and child development, including prenatal and post-partum health of mothers and babies
- Adolescence and the transition to adulthood
- Social service programs supporting children and families
- Social Work and clinical interventions
- Public safety, crime, and perceptions of safety
- Community-based organizations
- Public policy

Expected Contributions and Compensation

Faculty selected as 2026 Faculty Research Fellows will each receive \$15,000 in summer pay.

All Faculty Research Fellows will be expected to:

- Participate in a Learning Community with CSR staff and other Faculty Research Fellows, led by Dr. Younts, during the spring semester. This involves participating in and contributing to ***at least 8*** collaborative learning sessions, including leading at least one session on a topic of interest relevant to the project. The goals are for each Fellow to:
 - Develop a comprehensive understanding of the overall project and community.
 - Develop deeper knowledge in one focus area related to the overall project and of interest to the community (such as in one of the content areas listed above).
 - Construct a proposal to address a practical research question related to that focus area. Proposal topics will be developed collaboratively with the other members of the Learning Community and will focus on analyses that can leverage the data CSR has already collected/obtained (e.g., educational records; program participation records; surveys of students, families, and residents; social network survey data) or that could be reasonably obtained within current time constraints (i.e., by mid-summer), such as publicly available housing, employment, crime, health, or Census data. The proposal must include a reasonable and detailed plan for obtaining any data not already available. All proposals must be approved by Dr. Younts.
- Perform any data collection or obtain any publicly available data and conduct all data analyses outlined in the approved proposal before the end of the summer, with support from Dr. Younts, CSR research staff, and other Fellows in the Learning Community.
- Present their research to the community (e.g., residents, service providers/practitioners, other Promise Neighborhood grantees), outlining the research/data and summarizing the key findings and their implications for the overall project. For instance, the work may be presented at one or more of the following: Ascend Community Conversation or Data

Walk; Ascend Service Provider or other workgroup meeting; the CSR 50th Anniversary Celebration, colloquia, or other events hosted by CSR; a Promise Neighborhood Community of Practice; or the Dept of Education Promise Neighborhood Conference.

- Author a report (e.g., white paper, brief evaluation report, conference paper, policy brief, peer-reviewed research article) outlining the research question, supported by a review of relevant background literature; describing the research design, methods, and data used; presenting and interpreting analysis of the data; and summarizing the key findings and their implications for the overall project.

To Apply

Submit a copy of your CV and a brief cover letter (around 500 words) describing:

- Why you are interested in joining CSR as a Faculty Research Fellow.
- Your research training/experience and areas of interest and expertise that you believe are relevant and how you envision yourself contributing to this work.
- Your knowledge and experience related to North Hartford communities, *or similar communities*, including lived/personal experience as well as any experience conducting research in North Hartford, Hartford, or similar communities.

NOTE: Faculty who have applied and/or participated as Fellows in the past are welcome to re-apply for 2026!

Send materials to Dr. Wes Younts at younts@hartford.edu. Review of materials will begin immediately and will continue while positions are available.

Candidates who are bi-lingual in Spanish and English, faculty of color, and individuals with lived experience in Hartford are especially encouraged to apply!

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

The **Center for Social Research**, located within the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Hartford, conducts applied research and evaluation projects in collaboration with community partners and University faculty and students. The primary mission of CSR is to generate and disseminate knowledge that will strengthen communities, offer solutions to social problems, inform public policy, improve human service programs, and support organizing communities. CSR is entering its 50th year at UHart, and Wes Younts (PhD in Sociology) has been the Director since 2014. He is supported by one full-time Doctoral-level and three full-time masters' level researchers.

ABOUT NORTH HARTFORD ASCEND

This role supports North Hartford Ascend (Ascend): a place-based, cross-sector initiative that integrates schools and community and social services and supports to help children and families reach their full potential. In addition to the core responsibilities outlined in the job description, this position will:

- 1) Support a coordinated pipeline of services
- 2) Support a parent-, family-, and community-driven agenda
- 3) Embrace targeted universalism to increase access to services
- 4) Support strengthening families' protective factors
- 5) Support early identification, referral, and linkage to community and social services and supports
- 6) Support data collection and analysis to monitor implementation and impact of Ascend

Ascend is funded by a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhoods program and sponsored by Connecticut Children's.