

Benjamin Owens

PhD Student, Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto

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EDUCATION

PhD Student, Geography (2023-present)
Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto

M.A., Labour Studies (2020)
School of Labour Studies, McMaster University

B.A., Labour Studies, Minor in Sociology (2018)
School of Labour Studies, McMaster University

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Articles

PhD Research

Leslie, D., **Owens, B.**, Rantisi, N., & Eilender, K. (2026). Navigating precarity for youth in Toronto: The role of work integration social enterprises. *Geoforum*, 176(2026), 1-11.

Owens, B. (2026). Interfaces of precarity and the networks of precarious lifeworlds: Experiences of housing, social supports, and work in youth homelessness. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 58(5), 779-794.

Under Review

Owens, B. (Under review). Governing through precarity: Migration, housing, and homelessness governance in the age of COVID-19. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (special issue on “Urban Migration and the Struggle for Shelter,” guest editors René Kreichauf and Sophie Gonick).

M.A. Research

Owens, B., & Mills, S. (2025). Conceptualizing discrimination against LGBTQ+ workers in the unbounded workplace. *Canadian Geographies/Géographies canadiennes*, 69(1), 1-12.

Mills, S., & **Owens, B.** (2023). Customer abuse and aggression as labour control among LGBT workers in low-wage services. *Work, Employment and Society*, 37(3), 776-793.

Owens, B., Mills, S., Lewis, N., & Guta, A. (2022). Work-related stressors and mental health among LGBTQ workers: Results from a cross-sectional survey. *PLoS One*, 17(10), e0275771.

Professional Research

Noble, A., **Owens, B.**, Thulien, N., & Suleiman, A. (2022). “I feel like I’m in a revolving door, and COVID has made it spin a lot faster”: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth experiencing homelessness in Toronto, Canada. *PLoS One*, 17(8), e0273502.

Book Chapters

Owens, B. (Forthcoming). Understanding the spaces and places of youth homelessness through and beyond precarity: Towards a youth-centred approach. In Nunes A., Hoff, I., & Howard, F. (Eds.). *Youth Studies: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Reports

Noble, A., Thulien, N., **Owens, B.**, Suleiman, A., Loganathan, D.A, Ali, D., Coplan, I., Neal, J., Baja, E., & Ramkissoon, K. (2022). *The Impact of COVID-19 on Youth Experiencing Homelessness: Shifting to a Collaborative, Prevention-Focused Response to Youth Homelessness in a Large Urban Setting*. The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

Owens, B., Suleiman, A., & Noble, A. (2022). *Understanding the Experiences of Youth Who Use Substances: A Needs Assessment of Toronto Youth Experiencing Homelessness*. Covenant House Toronto.

Mills, S., **Owens, B.**, Guta, A., Lewis, N., & Oswin, N. (2020). *Work, Inclusion, and 2SLGBTQ+ People in Sudbury and Windsor*. Work and Inclusion Study, McMaster University.

Mills, S. & **Owens, B.** (2019). *LGBTQ2S+ Work and Inclusion*. Work and Inclusion Study, McMaster University.

Other Non-Refereed Publications

Owens, B. & Mills, S. (2022). *Research Findings: Customer Abuse and Aggression as Labour Control Among LGBTQ+ Service Sector Workers*. American Sociological Association Work in Progress Blog.

Owens, B. (2021). *A Pride Flag by the Door: Creating Safe and Supportive Workplaces*. Our Times: Canada’s Independent Labour Magazine.

FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND AWARDS

2025-2026 Jonathan and Erin Gouveia Fellowship, School of Cities, University of Toronto

2025-2026	School of Cities Graduate Fellowship, University of Toronto
2024	School of Graduate Studies Conference Grant, University of Toronto
2024	Geography and Planning Conference Award, University of Toronto
2023-2027	Faculty of Arts and Science Top Doctoral Award, University of Toronto
2023-2026	SSHRC CGS-D Scholarship
2023	Department of Geography PhD Entrance Scholarship, University of Toronto
2023	Elia Scholarship, York University (declined)
2018, 2019	Labour Studies GS Award, McMaster University
2018	SSHRC CGS-M Scholarship
2017	Undergraduate Student Research Award, McMaster University
2017	Harry Waisglass Book Prize, McMaster University
2017	Alice and Walter Day Scholarship, McMaster University
2017	Mary C. Shane Scholarship, McMaster University
2016	Larry Sefton Scholarship, McMaster University
2015-2016	Dr. Harry Lyman Hooker Scholarship, McMaster University
2015	OPSEU Global Solidarity Scholarship
2014-2015	Social Science Scholarship, McMaster University
2014	Presidential Award Scholarship, McMaster University, McMaster University

PRESENTATIONS

Conference and Event Organizing

Housing Precarity and Homelessness: Resilience at the Housing Margins

Organizer at Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) Annual Conference (2026)

Labour Resilience in Practice

Co-organizer at Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) Annual Conference (2026)

Queer Economic Geographies: A Roundtable Discussion with Daniel Cockayne

Co-organizer at the University of Toronto (2026)

Edge/Work: Critical Labour Geographies on the Edge

Co-organizer at Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) Annual Conference (2024)

Conference Presentations

Owens, B. (2026). "Decolonial Geographies of Homelessness and the 'Third Pillar' of the Welfare State." Canadian Association of Work and Labour Studies (CAWLS) Annual Conference. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Owens, B. (2026). "Governing through precarity: Migration, housing, and homelessness governance in the age of COVID-19." Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) Annual Conference. Victoria, British Columbia.

- Owens, B. (2025). "Interfaces of Precarity and the Entanglements of Precarious Lifeworlds: Housing, Social Supports, and Work." Canadian Association of Work and Labour Studies (CAWLS) Annual Conference. Hamilton, Ontario.
- Owens, B. (2025). "COVID-19 and Unhoused Migrant Youth in Toronto, Ontario." American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting. Detroit, Michigan.
- Leslie, D., Rantisi, N., & **Owens, B.** (2025). "Navigating Labour Market Precarity for Youth in Toronto: The Role of Social Enterprises." American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting. Detroit, Michigan.
- Owens, B. (2024). "The Spatiotemporalities of Precarity: COVID-19 and Youth Homelessness in Toronto, Ontario." International Geographical Congress (IGC). Dublin, Ireland.
- Mills, S. & **Owens, B.** (2024). "Minority Stress in the Unbounded Workplace." Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) Conference. St. John's, Newfoundland.
- Milaney, K., Noble, A., & **Owens, B.** (2023). "Shelter Diversion in Six Canadian Communities: A Paradigm Shift for Youth Homelessness Prevention." International Journal of Homelessness (IJOH) Conference. Chicago, Illinois.
- Noble, A. & **Owens, B.** (2023). "A Dark Intersection: Exposing the Structural Inequities that Lead to Youth Homelessness and Sex Trafficking." International Journal on Homelessness (IJOH) Conference. Chicago, Illinois.
- Noble, A., Power, A., Rogers, J., & **Owens, B.** (2022). "A Dark Intersection: The Relationship between Youth Homelessness and Sex Trafficking." Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) Annual Conference. Toronto, Ontario.
- Owens, B., Yang, N., & Mills, S. (2022). "Beyond Rainbow Capitalism: LGBTQ+ Workers' Perceptions of Union Support in Windsor and Sudbury, Ontario." CRIMT Better Work for a Better Society Conference. Montreal, Quebec.
- Owens, B. (2022). "The Employment Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic for Young People Experiencing Homelessness in Toronto, Ontario." Canadian Association of Work and Labour Studies (CAWLS) Annual Conference. Online.
- Noble, A., & **Owens, B.** (2021). "The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Youth Experiencing Homelessness: Shifting to a Collaborative, Prevention-Focused Response in a Large Urban Setting." Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) Annual Conference. Online.
- Owens, B. (2019). "The Customer is Always Right: Violence and Discrimination Against 2SLGBTQ+ Service Sector Workers in Windsor and Sudbury, Ontario." Canadian Association of Work and Labour Studies (CAWLS) Annual Conference. Vancouver, British Columbia.

Other Presentations

Cockayne, D., Buckley, M., Oswin, N., and **Owens, B.** (2026). “Queering Economic Geography: A Roundtable Discussion.” [Panelist]. Intersections Speaker Series. University of Toronto.

Owens, B. (2026). “Constructing Alternatives: Comparative Perspectives on Creating the Conditions of Possibility for Economic Geography.” [Panelist]. The Society for Socialist Studies Annual Conference. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Owens, B. (2024). “The Spatiotemporalities of Precarity: COVID-19 and Youth Homelessness in Toronto, Ontario.” Austerity and Altered Life-Courses Symposium. University of Manchester. Online.

Noble., A. & **Owens, B.** (2022). “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Youth Experiencing Homelessness/El Impacto de COVID-19 en los/las Niños y Niñas, Adolescentes y Jóvenes en Situación de Calle.” Webinar hosted by Covenant House International.

Mills, S., Paavo, A., & **Owens, B.** (2021). “A Conversation about Work, Inclusion and 2SLGBTQ+ People in Sudbury and Windsor.” Work in the West Podcast.

Owens, B. (2021). “Work, Inclusion, and 2SLGBTQ+ People/Le Travail, L’Inclusion, et les Personnes 2SLGBTQ+.” United Steelworkers National Women’s Committee. Online.

Mills, S. & **Owens, B.** (2020). “Work, Inclusion, and 2SLGBTQ+ People in Ontario’s Smaller Cities, Sudbury and Windsor.” Community Report Launch Presentation hosted by Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Doctoral Research Assistant 2023 – Present

University of Toronto – Cultural Economy Lab

Conducted interviews, literature reviews, and co-authored an article on work integration social enterprises for youth

Research Supervisor 2022 – 2023

Covenant House Toronto

Supervised a team of researchers conducting research and evaluation projects on youth homelessness in Toronto, including for large multi-year and multi-site grants

Research and Evaluation Coordinator 2021 – 2022

Covenant House Toronto

Coordinated local and national research projects on youth homelessness prevention and harm reduction, and led data collection and analysis

Research Coordinator, COVID-19 and Youth Homelessness Project 2020 – 2021

University of Toronto Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work

Coordinated a two-year, mixed-methods exploratory study on the experiences of youth experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic

Researcher, 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion Project 2019 – 2021

McMaster University School of Labour Studies

Co-authored community reports and academic articles on 2SLGBTQ+ workers' experiences of work, health, and substance use

Research Assistant, 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion Project 2017 – 2019

McMaster University School of Labour Studies

Assisted with interview and survey data collection for research on 2SLGBTQ+ workers in Windsor and Sudbury, Ontario

Placement Researcher, CUPE 2017 – 2018

CUPE Local 5167

Developed a labour relations plan based on research on urban labour governance to prepare the Local for their upcoming round of collective bargaining

Student Investigator, Municipal Living Wage Project

McMaster University Department of Labour Studies

2017

Led archival research project on the history of living wage campaigns in Hamilton, Ontario

Research Assistant, Living Wage Project

2016 – 2017

McMaster University Department of Labour Studies

Conducted interviews for a research project on the living wage in Hamilton, Ontario

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Guest Lectures

“Perspectives on Homelessness in Urban Geography,” *GGR339 – Urban Political Geography*, University of Toronto (March 2026)

“Geographies of Homelessness Governance,” *URB337 – Housing and Homelessness*, University of Toronto (November 2025)

“Precarious and Informal Labour,” *GGR221 – New Economic Spaces*, University of Toronto (November 2025)

Teaching Assistantships

Urban Political Geography, University of Toronto (GGR339)

2026

Housing and Homelessness, University of Toronto (URB337)	2025
Geography and Gender, University of Toronto (GGR327)	2025
Labour Geographies, University of Toronto (GGR328)	2025
Environment, Food and People, University of Toronto (GGR107)	2023-2024
Introduction to Labour in Canada, McMaster University (LABRST1A03)	2018

SERVICE

Summer Institute in Economic Geography, University of Toronto <i>Student Organizer</i>	2026
Centre for Graduate Mentorship and Supervision <i>Graduate Student Mentor</i>	2026
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion <i>Peer Reviewer</i>	2026
American Journal of Sexuality Education <i>Peer Reviewer</i>	2025

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Canadian Association of Geographers, American Association of Geographers, Canadian Association of Work and Labour Studies

SOFTWARE

NVivo; Dedoose; Quirkos; STATA; SPSS; Survey Monkey; Qualtrics