



Research Associate

Spring 2023

Title

Research Associate

Work Location

Primarily remote, within commuting distance from Philadelphia, PA preferred

The Opportunity

Research For Action (RFA) is hiring a mixed-methods researcher with strong quantitative skills at the Research Associate level, a mid-to-senior level position, reporting to a Senior Research Associate or the Director of Quantitative Research. Research Associates typically have strong training and experience in applied social science research and program evaluation, as well as methodological and content expertise relevant to RFA's mission and areas of work. We expect successful candidates will have their own areas of expertise and will contribute to developing research projects in those areas, but also be open to contributing to a variety of topic areas ranging from educator workforce, postsecondary education, K-12 education and programs, and out-of-school time programs and informal learning environments.

In the first year, the Research Associate will serve as project director of two current quasi-experimental, mixed-methods projects focused on improving kindergarten readiness in Philadelphia. In addition, they will support several early-phase Education Innovation and Research projects as a quantitative lead, working closely with our Chief Statistician and Quantitative Analysts to design and conduct impact evaluations of innovative practices to improve student outcomes in high-needs school systems.

This is a full-time, primarily remote position. We prefer the candidate be based in or within commuting distance of Philadelphia, PA in order to conduct in-person research (estimated 10-20% of time).

About the Organization

RFA is an independent, non-profit educational research organization with a mission of using culturally responsive and community-informed research to promote racial equity and social justice. For 30 years, we have conducted research and developed partnerships to strengthen public schools and postsecondary institutions; provided research-based recommendations to policymakers, practitioners and the public at the local, state and national levels; and enriched the civic and community dialogue about public education.

RFA's portfolio of local and national research, evaluation, and policy studies spans critical topics related to advancing equity for students, families, and communities across the education pipeline. Some of our recent and current projects examine teacher diversity and Black teacher attrition, the impact of statewide developmental education reform on community colleges, gaps in educational

opportunity for minoritized K-12 students across the nation, the implications of new high school graduation requirements on district-wide outcomes, how higher education institutions can address racial equity gaps, the implementation of an anti-violence community program, and the impact of COVID on Head Start and Early Head Start workforce stability. A focus on and commitment to community engagement is a defining component of RFA's research enterprise.

Between December 2022 and November 2023, RFA is engaging in a strategy- and culture-building process to further refine its mission, vision, and values, to chart its theory of action for impact, and to strengthen its culture in the post-COVID remote/hybrid environment. Team members who join RFA during this time will have the opportunity to contribute to shaping how RFA will promote racial equity and social justice through culturally responsive and community-informed educational research.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead or co-lead the design and planning of education research and evaluation projects, with support from senior colleagues, including liaising with project partners, developing and tracking project budgets and timelines, developing data collection instruments and processes, leading analysis and interpretation, and leading the production of project deliverables.
- Lead or co-lead the day-to-day activities of project teams as project director, with support from senior colleagues. Includes developing work plans, delegating tasks to team members, and providing feedback and coaching.
- Develop high-quality project deliverables that clearly convey research findings and impacts to multiple audiences.
- Provide consulting on data collection instruments (e.g., surveys) across multiple research and evaluation projects, as needed.
- Contribute to the development of research proposals and partnerships.
- Contribute to the development and application of RFA's evolving mission-focused research practices.
- Supervise and mentor more junior colleagues.

Qualifications

RFA considers any combination of professional experience, volunteer work, coursework, and other transferable skills as qualifications. Candidates need not demonstrate all criteria to be considered for the role.

- Ph.D. or equivalent experience in a relevant field such as education, sociology, psychology, economics, or public policy with strong training in causal research design, data management, and statistics.
- Demonstrated research interests in at least one RFA expertise area. Interest in program evaluation is preferred.
- Demonstrated experience directing team-based research projects in applied settings, including communicating about progress and decision points with both internal and external audiences.

- Interest and willingness to develop skills in equity-focused and community-informed practices in research partnerships, design, data collection, analysis, and reporting. Experience applying critical race lens to quantitative research preferred.
- Strong research design and analytic skills, including designing and executing experimental and quasi-experimental mixed methods studies. Familiarity with What Works Clearinghouse research and evaluation standards is preferred.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, and the ability to communicate effectively with academic, policy, practitioner, and community-based audiences. Experience as a lead author preferred.
- Advanced technical skills for data management, analysis, and visualization in STATA and/or R with interest or skills in Python, JavaScript, Power BI, and/or Tableau preferred.
- Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to work collaboratively with team members on projects and ease at building rapport with research participants, clients, and colleagues of diverse backgrounds.

Work for RFA

Culture: RFA is a fast-paced, team-based, diverse organization with staff that have a wide range of expertise and experience in various educational settings and research areas. Our staff members strive to engage in self-reflection continually both to support each other and to serve communities with an orientation toward social justice. Currently, RFA is undergoing a strategic planning and culture-building process where staff will be invited to participate in setting RFA's strategic direction and core values. We are seeking individuals who are interested in shaping the direction of the organization, who embrace continual growth and change, and who are excited to critically engage with issues of social and racial justice. RFA welcomes applications from people of all underrepresented backgrounds and credentials.

Salary and benefits: The salary range for this full-time position is \$80,000-90,000 annually. Base pay is dependent on job-related knowledge, skills, experience, and geography. RFA's total compensation package includes a low-cost to the employee health, dental, and vision insurance program, flex spending plans, an employer-funded retirement plan after two years of service, and a generous paid holidays and time off program for all benefits-eligible staff.

Other requirements: The Research Associate position is a full-time position. This is a primarily remote position. Candidates who are located in or within commuting distance of RFA's home city of Philadelphia is preferred. We will consider applicants from the following states: Colorado, Georgia, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, or Virginia. This position will require U.S. travel of up to 20% (dependent on COVID mitigation measures). RFA takes COVID-19 precautions and the health and safety of our staff and their families seriously; proof of vaccination consistent with current CDC guidelines is required for all employees regardless of location.

How to apply

Applications for this position will be reviewed on a rolling basis with initial interviews scheduled as of April 3 until the position is filled.

Qualified candidates should submit:

- A CV or resume with two professional references that can speak to your qualifications as a researcher.
- A cover letter that summarizes: 1) how your professional background and qualifications make you a good fit for the role; 2) motivation for applying to RFA and how this position would advance your career goals, and 3) how your unique experiences and perspectives will contribute to the diversity of our team's efforts to advance social and racial justice through research and evaluation.
- One writing sample in which the applicant authored alone or as a lead contributor that demonstrates the following: Ability to author an applied research product (e.g., report, article, or working paper) or a grant proposal with quasi-experimental research design.
- Salary requirements.

All qualified applicants receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, domestic violence victim status, veteran status, disability, history of disability or perceived disability, or other status protected by law.

Click here to apply: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7092108fa5a94f4cb5007f4ffd09c6b9>