RESEARCH FOR ACTION

Research Associate
Summer 2024

To apply
https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4d6e2bad1fd94bd5b2803a5e819e3d0d

Title
Research Associate

Work Location
Remote-first, preference for proximity to Philadelphia, PA.

The Opportunity
Research For Action (RFA) is looking for a quantitative or mixed-methods researcher to join its team at the Research Associate level. Research Associates are early- to mid-career researchers with strong methodological and content expertise in social science and education research and in applying theoretical frameworks, concepts, and models related to equity in education. Research Associates play a key role in research project development and execution, and project team leadership. They develop and execute intermediate to advanced research designs, direct or co-direct research projects and their teams, manage project partners, develop data collection tools and processes, and lead data analysis and deliverables. Research Associates play a leadership role at the organization by fostering a collaborative and equitable work culture, supporting or initiating efforts that help advance RFA's mission, actively contributing to business development, and supervising other researchers. Research Associates report to Senior Associate-level researchers or Research Directors. The Research Associate position reflects a broad range of skills and competencies, with advancement within the position reflecting increased job responsibility and independence in the execution of responsibilities in the areas of research design, project team leadership, product development, external communications, and business development.

About Research for Action
RFA is an independent, non-profit educational research organization with a mission of using culturally responsive and community-informed methods to promote racial equity and social justice. For over 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 explored responsive, community-informed approaches that advance equity in public education. In 2024, RFA is implementing a strategy- and culture-building process to further establish its mission, vision, and values; to chart its theory of action for impact; and to strengthen its "remote first" work culture in the post-COVID remote/hybrid environment. Team members who join RFA during this time have the opportunity to contribute to organizational change and to implement the ways in which RFA

promotes racial equity and social justice through culturally responsive and community-informed educational research.

Key Responsibilities

- Directs or co-directs projects. Leads and delegates project management responsibilities and tasks to a Project Manager, if applicable. Collaborates with colleagues, administrative team members, and department leaders to proactively support adherence to project budgets and timelines and overall administrative compliance.
- Proactively applies culturally responsive and community informed research approaches and engages in continuous learning related to culturally appropriate methodology.
- Considers and develops/co-develops a variety of culturally responsive and community-informed research designs that closely align research project/partner goals and context with research questions, critical methodologies, instruments, data collection, analysis, writing, and product development.
- Conducts moderately complex to complex data collection and analysis tasks, including developing data collection instruments, with a minimum of direction and revisions.
- Communicates preliminary and final findings and analyses internally and externally in a clear and concise manner. Authors and co-authors advanced drafts of deliverables. Leads and guides team members in producing analytic memos and drafts.
- Takes the lead on distinct proposal development tasks for research/evaluation projects, including developing research questions and research designs that are aligned with the literature and RFA's mission and approach, co-developing development budgets, co-writing proposals, and engaging with project partners and funders.
- Uses human-centered management approaches to manage Analyst-level researchers and interns. Strives to strengthen own and organizational equitable management skills and processes.
- Seeks and engages in on-the-job and external professional development opportunities through project, departmental, and organizational activities. Proactively deploys and grows their leadership, management, and other organizational skills.
- Computer skills: The ability to use a computer and associated technology programs, including the Microsoft Office Suite, video conferencing tools (e.g., Zoom and Microsoft Teams), ClickUp work management software, and other software used for research and/or collaboration, is required.
- Actively participates in and contributes to developing successful departmental and organization-wide research, community engagement, and administrative communications, meetings, and activities.

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, with preference for cost effectiveness study experience.

- Research experience in educational and applied research settings, including designing and executing mixed-method studies involving in-person and virtual fieldwork; program evaluation experience valued.
- Strong research design and analytic skills, including designing and executing experimental, quasi-experimental, and mixed-methods studies.
- Advanced technical skills for data management, analysis, and visualization.
- Demonstrated ability to lead research/project team with strong organizational and interpersonal skills, including ability to work collaboratively and build rapport with interviewees, project partners, and colleagues of diverse backgrounds.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, and the ability to communicate effectively with academic, policy, and practitioner audiences.
- Passion for RFA's mission and demonstrated understanding of core concepts pertaining to white supremacy, racial equity, social justice, systems change, and critical approaches to research.
- Demonstrated research expertise in or directly relevant to at least one of RFA's content areas of focus (e.g., PA policy, educator diversity, school or campus climate, out-of-school time, teaching and learning, early childhood education, postsecondary access and success).
- Experience leading work that examines racial and other structural inequities, in collaboration with colleagues and/or community members.
- Demonstrated ability to grasp complex issues, identify patterns in challenges, design and manage solutions, and help to move the work forward while communicating with internal and external audiences.
- Ability and interest in building strategic collaborative relationships with a wide range of external partners and networks, and in effectively promoting organizational work.
- Interest in and demonstrated ability to thrive and manage others in a fast-paced and changing environment.
- Willingness to travel locally, regionally, and nationally to conduct in-person fieldwork and other project activities and disseminate or represent RFA's work.

Other Requirements

- The Research Associate position is a full-time, exempt position. This is a primarily remote position. Candidates who are located in or within commuting distance of RFA's home city of Philadelphia are preferred. We will consider applicants from the following states: Colorado, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, or Pennsylvania.
- RFA is unable to sponsor or take over sponsorship of an employment Visa at this time.
- Physical work environment: RFA operates in a remote-first work model. Remote-first work is primarily completed remotely in a home office setting with at least one day per week in an office setting for proximal staff, defined as individuals residing within a 50-mile radius of Philadelphia *and* whose positions are not designated as remote.
- This position may require episodic project-related U.S. travel of up to 20% (dependent on COVID mitigation measures).
- Virtual work environment: While performing the duties of this position in the virtual setting, the ability to use verbal and non-verbal communication skills to foster and maintain engagement, including listening, speaking, and appearing on camera, is required.

- Health and safety: All employees are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 consistent with CDC guidelines. This position may be asked to mask while on fieldwork in accordance with specific COVID mitigation measures and facility guidelines.
- This position may occasionally require nights and weekends (e.g., site visits, conference attendance, organizational events).

Work for RFA
Culture:
RFA is a nimble, 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 continuous self-reflection to support each other and to serve communities with an orientation toward social justice. We are seeking individuals interested in implementing the organization's direction, 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.

How to apply:
Applications for this position will be reviewed on a rolling basis with initial interviews scheduled as of mid-May until the position is filled, with an anticipated start date on or after July 1, 2024.

Complete an application online with the following documents:

- A resume and two professional references that can speak to your qualifications as a researcher.
- A writing sample as the lead author or primary contributor that demonstrates your ability to author an applied research product (e.g., report, article, or working paper) or a grant proposal with rigorous research design/methodology.
- A cover letter that summarizes:
    - How your professional background and qualifications make you a good fit for the role
    - Your motivation for applying to RFA and your commitment to equity and/or social justice

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. For questions about this position, please contact Suzanne Delap at hr@researchforaction.org.

Click here to apply:
https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4d6e2bad1fd94bd5b2803a5e819e3d0d