

University Title: Research Specialist 3
Poverty Lab Title: Project Director
Location: Chicago
Desired Start Date: TBD
Reporting to: Carmelo Barbaro, Executive Director

Our Focus

Concentrated poverty remains an endemic feature of American cities. Residents of low-income communities suffer higher rates of crime victimization and greater exposure to environmental contaminants. Their children experience worse schooling outcomes and limited access to healthy food. Many struggle with irregular employment and unstable housing. The path to social mobility is foreclosed by limited opportunities to gain new skills, and limited availability of affordable financial products. While social enterprises work hard to address these challenges with innovative solutions, policymakers and practitioners struggle to make sustained progress due to a lack of evidence about what works.

We launched the University of Chicago Poverty Lab in 2015 to test innovative approaches to addressing the intersecting challenges faced by low-income residents of our cities. We bring the best science and “big data” analysis possible to bear on the problem of policy design, leveraging government administrative data to guide local policy and to generate high-quality evidence about what works. We believe that carrying out this work in very close collaboration with policymakers helps keep us focused on the most important real-world problems, and increases the chances that our findings translate into real-world impact.

Who We Are

The Poverty Lab is led by Marianne Bertrand, the Chris P. Dialynas Distinguished Service Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Co-Director of Social Enterprise Initiative at Booth, and Director of the University of Chicago Poverty Lab. Her research, which covers labor economics, corporate finance, and development economics, has been published widely. She is a member of the board of directors for the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Our full-time staff currently consists of an executive director and eight full-time staff, including data analysts and program managers at our main office in downtown Chicago. Our constantly evolving portfolio of projects spans workforce development, housing and homelessness, postsecondary education, and income support policies.

The Project

The University of Chicago Poverty Lab was recently awarded a four-year grant from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation to support an ambitious project aimed at addressing the needs of more than 50,000 young people who are not engaged in school or work. The Poverty Lab will partner with City and State agencies to bring together data that can illuminate the needs of these young people, and will partner with Thrive Chicago, the Department of Family and Support Services, the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, and others to design and test programs and policies that can support this diverse group of young people.

The Role

The Poverty Lab is seeking a full-time Project Director to lead the complex, multi-year project described above. The Project Director will:

- Develop a workplan for the project that sets intermediate deadlines, and identifies key milestones and critical interdependencies between workstreams;
- Establish a governance structure that secures input from key stakeholders on the overall direction of the project;
- Build strategic partnerships with government agencies and non-profit organizations to successfully execute the project, securing permissions and data access as necessary;
- Coordinate with the Executive Director to identify staff resources for the project;
- Manage research staff responsible for conducting the analyses and evaluations described above;
- Support the Executive Director in securing additional funding for the project; and
- Ensure that all grant milestones are achieved.

The Project Director will report to the Executive Director of the Poverty Lab, Carmelo Barbaro, and will work closely with the Research Director and Faculty Director of the Poverty Lab.

Education and Experience Required:

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in public policy, economics, sociology or other relevant field; a master's degree is preferred. Applicants must have at least five years of full-time work experience in a professional office environment, including at least three years of experience managing teams of full-time employees. Strong project management skills are required, as is a demonstrated ability to build and maintain relationships with external partners. Basic familiarity with urban policy issues is required. Preference will be given to candidates with knowledge of the local policy context in Chicago, experience working in education or workforce development, and / or knowledge of research and evaluation methods.

To Apply:

Submit resume, cover letter, writing sample, and reference contact info <https://jobopportunities.uchicago.edu>, requisition **102205**.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, protected veteran status or status as an individual with disability.

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