

Job Title: Qualitative Research Assistant, Academic Year

Location: Chicago, IL

Reporting to: Research Manager

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.

Our Values

Conduct science in service of cities: We feel a sense of urgency to do research that improves people’s lives. We select projects that lead to solutions for policy, practice, and increased investments on the ground. Our research is rigorous and informed by the historic and current contexts that shape urban residents’ lives.

Foster lasting relationships: We collaborate with policymakers, practitioners, and people with lived experience to understand multiple perspectives and figure out what works.

Elevate equity & inclusion: We aim to hire people with a range of personal and professional backgrounds, skillsets, and identities. We expand access to evaluation for a broad range of organizations and we conduct work that affirms the dignity of all people.

Check our privilege: We recognize the power and privilege we have as members of the University of Chicago. We practice humility and recognize that expertise comes in many forms and there are limits to our own.

Embrace a growth mindset: We invest in our people and develop our skills and content knowledge together. We work respectfully as a team to achieve our shared goals.

For more information about the Poverty Lab or the UChicago Urban Labs, go to <http://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu>.

The Role:

The University of Chicago Poverty Lab is seeking a Qualitative Research Assistant with experience collecting qualitative data to support policy research. This is a great opportunity to learn about social policy research and evaluation while further developing qualitative research skills in interviewing and participant observation. This position will be on a project related to criminal justice and involves interviewing people from various backgrounds, including individuals who have been charged with felonies. The position will average 12 hours per month, but hours may vary. Please note that our office is located in downtown Chicago, but most work hours will occur onsite at our partner organization in North Lawndale.

Responsibilities:

- Conducting one-on-one semi-structured interviews
- Conducting participant observation at various stages of the criminal justice process
- Following a qualitative research protocol
- Identifying where changes in the research protocol may improve responses and communicating those changes with the research team
- Updating the IRB, as necessary
- Qualitative data entry, reviewing, and coding
- Scheduling and communicating with multiple parties
- Ability to travel to sites in North Lawndale and downtown Chicago

Competencies:

- Knowledge of criminal justice policy and reform
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Strong listening skills
- Ability to foster trust and develop understanding with research participants
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Sound critical thinking skills
- Superb analytic skills and attention to detail

Education and Experience:

- Some relevant research experience required (coursework with relevant field experience counts toward requirement)
- Bachelor's degree or coursework towards degree in sociology, public policy, economics, education, social work, or other relevant field preferred
- Individuals with lived experience working and living in communities disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system encouraged to apply

Technical Knowledge or Skills:

- Proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite
- Ability to manage recording software

To Apply:

Please submit a resume and cover letter to the University's Workday system, search for requisition number JR06490. Please note, when applying, all documents MUST be uploaded under the Resume/CV section of the application. Please be advised that this job announcement is formatted differently on the University of Chicago "Workday" Job Board.

- If you have an active UChicago Workday employee account, you will need to complete the Internal Candidate application process.
 - Internal Candidate instructions: Log into Workday and select the career worklet.
 - External Candidates should apply to the position at <https://uchicago.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/External>
- If you have questions about the Workday application system, please contact: https://uchicago.servicenow.com/sso?id=ssc_sc_cat_item&sys_id=cf359d671316660030c0bcaf3244b02d.

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