Who We Are

Improving schooling outcomes for youth and reducing disparities in achievement are among our nation’s most urgent challenges. Graduation rates of black and Hispanic youth remain far lower than those of their white counterparts, and this gap is mirrored by striking disparities between rich and poor.

We believe that the lack of progress in improving outcomes for low-income youth stems in part from not knowing enough about what works, for whom, and why. Consider the problem, for instance, of reducing cancer mortality among low-income populations. Surely more funding is necessary to ensure that everyone has adequate access to decent health care. But there is also another, perhaps even more fundamental barrier to progress: we desperately need a cure for cancer. We believe that a similar knowledge gap is a barrier to progress in reducing disparities in educational attainment, albeit one that is less visible.

The Education Lab does the most rigorous possible research in close collaboration with local government and nonprofits, to learn about what works and to help scale the most promising solutions. We believe the most promising way to have impact at scale is to carry out demonstration projects with philanthropic support, with the goal of using the results to guide public-sector dollars to those uses that generate as much social good as possible. Under the direction of leading social scientists, we work with partners to use data and evidence to make progress, including: leveraging administrative data to understand a program’s impact, providing technical assistance to agency and nonprofit partners to inform operations and strategy, and conducting research using cutting edge methods and behavioral and social science. Our goal is to assemble a portfolio of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to generate new evidence about what works, for whom, and why, and to conduct benefit-cost analyses of different interventions to enable policymakers to prioritize resources for the combination of strategies that achieve the greatest social good per dollar spent.

For more information about the UChicago Urban Labs, go to http://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/

The Project

In June 2018, AbbVie Pharmaceuticals presented the Education Lab with a $15 million gift to support our partners and to advance our research strategy through 2021. AbbVie is a publicly traded pharmaceutical manufacturer that is committed to using their resources to build stronger communities, invest in sustainable health care systems and improve education programs both in Chicago and around the world. Funds will be used to support programming for young people in Chicago as well as towards research efforts to better understand whether and how those investments are moving the needle for young people in our communities.

Roughly half of the gift will be allocated to existing partnerships between CPS and the Education Lab to evaluate large-scale investments in personalized learning interventions as well as efforts to support socioemotional learning. With the other half of the gift, CPS and the Education Lab are collaborating to design, implement and evaluate a comprehensive new Options Schools model. This innovative approach will not only impact Chicago students, but provide insight and guidance for other cities struggling to serve this population.
The Role
The University of Chicago Education Lab seeks a full-time Project Director to oversee the AbbVie investment and support the effort to ensure that all Chicago Public Schools students receive high-quality supports across academic instruction, socioemotional supports, and postsecondary pathways. The Project Director will:

- Develop a workplan for the project that sets intermediate deadlines and identifies key milestones and critical interdependencies between workstreams.
- Along with the CPS Options Schools Project Manager, establish a governance structure that secures input from key stakeholders on the direction and progress of the project.
- Build strategic partnerships with government agencies, non-profit organizations, Options Schools operators and community organizations.
- Coordinate with Crime and Education Lab Executive Director and Education Lab Research Director to identify staff resources for the project.
- Manage research staff responsible for conducting the evaluations described above.
- Coordinate with Crime and Education Lab Executive Director to interface with the AbbVie Foundation as well as funders on Education Lab project work.
- Ensure that all grant milestones are achieved.

Education and Experience Required

- Bachelor’s degree in public policy, education, social work or a closely related field required; a master’s degree is preferred.
- A minimum of five years of full-time work experience in a professional setting, including at least three years of experiencing managing full-time employees.
- Strong project management skills including demonstrated success navigating various stakeholder interests to produce a common goal. Knowledge of or experience working with high needs or vulnerable populations preferred.
- Previous experience working with a research study preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to manage a large portfolio of projects with multiple partners.

Competencies

- Outstanding interpersonal skills and the ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with a broad array of partners.
- Ability to work independently in a fast-paced environment.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to present complex ideas in a simple and straightforward way for non-technical audiences required.
- Demonstrated ability to exercise sound judgment required.
- Demonstrated ability to work both independently and as part of a team.
- Understanding of research; ability to effectively communicate research to non-technical audiences.
- Knowledge of urban policy, social policy, crime policy, and workforce development preferred.
To Apply: Please submit a resume, cover letter, and references with contact information to the UChicago’s Workday System. Search for requisition number, **JR03231**. **Note:** When applying, all required documents **MUST** be uploaded under the **Resume/CV** section of the application. Please find instructions on how to access the application below.

- 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.
- If you have questions about the Workday application system, please contact: [https://uchicago.service-now.com/sso?id=ssc_sc_cat_item&sys_id=cf359d671316660030c0bcaf3244b02d](https://uchicago.service-now.com/sso?id=ssc_sc_cat_item&sys_id=cf359d671316660030c0bcaf3244b02d).

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