

Senior Research Associate Fellow

The People Lab at HKS

About The People Lab

The People Lab, led by Professor Elizabeth Linos, aims to empower the public sector by producing cutting-edge research on the people of government and the communities they are called to serve. Using evidence from public management and insights from behavioral science, we study, design, and test strategies that can solve urgent public sector challenges in three core areas:

- (1) Strengthening the government workforce** - how to recruit, retain and support diverse talent in the public sector that can effectively and equitably respond to the changing needs of residents.
- (2) Improving resident-government interactions** - how to reduce barriers to equitable access to government services, mitigate the burdens that residents face when they interact with their government, and increase trust and satisfaction through such interactions.
- (3) Reimagining the production and use of evidence** - how to better include historically excluded voices in the design, implementation and evaluation of government innovations, and support the equitable adoption of best practice at scale.

The majority of our projects are co-designed with public sector partner agencies in order to ensure feasibility in the short-term and scalability in the long-term.

Job Summary

The Senior Research Associate Fellow will work closely with a diverse team of scholars who are passionate about conducting applied, data-driven research on key priorities in government. Projects may include large-scale surveys of public sector workers, evaluating strategies for improving employee wellbeing and retention, testing approaches for increasing take-up of government programs, designing experiments to better understand barriers to evidence adoption and evaluating strategies for reducing these barriers. Projects often involve administrative data analysis, surveys and survey experiments, and randomized controlled trials (RCT), often in direct collaboration with government agencies and other public sector stakeholders.

This is a full-time, one-year fellowship appointment, with the possibility of renewal.

Duties and Responsibilities (included, but not limited to)

- Executes the design and implementation of rigorous research studies, including – but not limited to – randomized control trials (RCTs), surveys, survey experiments, and behavioral interventions.
- Conducts statistical and econometric analysis using Stata or R on administrative data sets and/or other incoming data, including developing analysis plans, cleaning data correctly, conducting analysis in accordance with analysis plans, and presenting and visualizing the results in various formats (tables/graphs, etc.).
- Serves as a primary point of contact for government partners, including managing communication, supporting scoping conversations, building relationships, developing partnership proposals, and managing partner deliverables.

- Manages 3-5 projects at any given time, including developing and implementing project timelines, managing deliverables, and ensuring deadlines are met.
- Designs, conducts, and analyzes surveys and survey experiments, both online and in the field.
- Manages research administration processes, including data use agreements, data safety requirements and IRB protocols.
- Helps build broader organizational research processes and infrastructure through adhering to – and improving upon – existing process and coding norms, supporting code review, and developing new processes as needed (e.g., for using AI).
- Provides guidance to junior RAs, where appropriate.
- Supports authorship of academic papers, policy reports, grant reports, and other publications by conducting literature reviews, editing or drafting text, conducting analyses, helping with QA, and preparing manuscripts for submission and publication.
- Other duties as assigned.

Basic Qualifications

- Graduate degree in public policy, economics, statistics, or a related field and/or an equivalent combination of experience/training.
- At least three years of relevant post-baccalaureate professional experience and/or related graduate degree.
- Prior experience conducting applied research.

Additional Qualifications

- Demonstrated experience managing and meeting project timelines across multiple projects and communicating with internal and external stakeholders in a productive, professional, and timely manner.
- Ability to work with complex streams of qualitative and quantitative data across multiple projects in a research setting.
- Experience supporting client relationships and communicating with internal and external stakeholders in a professional and timely manner.
- Experience handling sensitive data securely .
- Experience supporting the design and implementation of randomized controlled trials and / or online surveys.
- Demonstrated experience in quantitative data analysis, including cleaning new data sets and presenting data in various formats for both academic and practitioner audiences.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, including exceptional writing skills.
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail
- Ability to work both independently and as a team member
- Eagerness and ability to learn new skills quickly on the job
- Experience working in the public sector or on public sector challenges.
- Graduate degree preferred.

Application Instructions

- Applications should include a cover letter explaining interest in and qualifications for the position and professional resume/CV. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

- Please submit cover letter and resume as SINGLE PDF files. Please name files using the format “[Last Name] _TPL Sr Research Associate application _[Date]”
- Please send applications via email to peoplelab_admin@hks.harvard.edu and include the position title, “TPL Senior Research Associate Fellow,” in the subject line.

Location

This position is based at the Harvard Kennedy School campus location, with some hybrid work options available.

Compensation

This is a fellowship position. The salary range for this position is \$85,000-\$100,000 per year. Starting salaries will generally be between the minimum and midpoint of the range for the position, based on related experience, expertise, and internal equity.

Harvard University is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, or any other characteristic protected by law.