

# RESEARCH SCIENTIST

## OVERVIEW

The American Dream – the aspiration that all children should have opportunities to climb the economic ladder – is at risk. In the 1950s, more than 90% of American children grew up to earn more than their parents did. Today, only 50% of children do so.

The mission of [Opportunity Insights](#) (OI) is to restore the American dream. We seek to develop scalable policy solutions that will empower families to rise out of poverty and achieve better life outcomes. We do this by harnessing the power of big data through high quality research to learn from areas where the American Dream is still thriving. We study economic mobility through lenses such as education, neighborhood environments, and health to understand the drivers of economic opportunity in the country and give local policy-makers customized data and insights to help them craft effective policy solutions. (You can hear an overview of our work on this [Freakonomics podcast](#).)

The project's work to date has shaped policy discussions at the national and local level, with nearly a dozen of its studies covered on the front pages of major media outlets, such as the [New York Times](#) and [Wall Street Journal](#) and cited in congressional testimony and the President's State of the Union addresses. This work has led to direct impacts on a broad range of decisions by local policy makers, ranging from school districts to housing authorities.

Our team, led by MacArthur "genius" award winner [Raj Chetty](#), [John Friedman](#), and [Nathan Hendren](#), consists of leaders from academia, policy, and management, supported by a staff of approximately 40 members who share a passion to revive the American Dream. We are now seeking a Research Scientist who will work with the senior leadership team of OI and to conduct rigorous, high-quality public policy research on the condition and drivers of economic mobility in the US. As a member of the OI policy team, the Research Scientist will leverage OI's primary research and administrative data sets to create new secondary analyses to help cities and other institutions improve economic mobility. He or she will partner closely with the Policy Director to deliver high-quality, evidence-driven policy consulting based on OI's primary research.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### RESEARCH

- Conducts in-depth high quality public policy research with the OI policy team, synthesizing and building on the work of OI's research team
- Develops research concepts, policy questions, and work plans for papers and reports that will directly inform and shape policy projects
- Develops and delivers presentations for policy projects
- Meets with and briefs relevant external contacts on research

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## POLICY PROJECT OVERSIGHT

- Along with Policy Director– serve as a strategic thought partner to the faculty leadership
- Works with the Policy Director to assign and manage policy associates and analysts on research tasks, and direct other research resources to projects

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## COMMUNICATE WITH PUBLIC

- Authors or co-authors policy reports, blogs, op-eds, and other commentary

## REQUIREMENTS

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### BACKGROUND/EXPERIENCE

- Ph.D. or equivalent combination of education and experience in economics or related field

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### SPECIFIC JOB SKILLS

- Able to lead independent statistical and economic research
- Ability to work collegially with staff at all levels and in all job profiles
- Interest in or experience with mentoring junior staff

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### COMPETENCIES

- Initiative
- Confidence and enthusiasm
- Strong technical skills in statistics, economics, and quantitative methods
- Results oriented
- Personal obligation to uphold organization’s expectations
- Strong sense of purpose in holding difficult conversations
- Personal accountability for consistent application of processes and policies

## REPORTING LINES

- Reports to Policy Director and Founding Directors

## LOCATION

- Cambridge, MA

## HOW TO APPLY

Please apply through [Harvard’s online portal](#).