

PRE-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS – FALL RECRUITING ROUND

Full-Time Research Assistant Positions

Professors Raj Chetty & Nathaniel Hendren, Harvard University

John Friedman, Brown University

We are hiring several full-time pre-doctoral fellows to start in summer 2022 to work with our research group, [Opportunity Insights](#). Our team’s mission is to develop scalable policy solutions that will empower families throughout the United States to rise out of poverty and achieve better life outcomes. We pursue this mission primarily by conducting rigorous, scientific research that harnesses the power of “big data” using an interdisciplinary approach. Much of the team’s ongoing research uses quasi-experimental methods to identify causal effects and test the predictions of economic and sociological models. Current projects study the long-term impacts of [neighborhoods](#), the role of [colleges](#) as a pathway to upward mobility, how social networks may affect poverty, and the impacts of historical place-based policies on residents. Results from these projects have appeared in the [New York Times](#) and [Wall Street Journal](#) and have been widely cited in policy discussions, including the President's State of the Union address.

The positions will be based at Harvard University under the direction of Professors Chetty and Hendren and at Brown University under the direction of Professor John Friedman. The fellowship will include a variety of tasks that provide preparation for graduate school, such as analyzing data, developing statistical models, creating presentations, and editing research papers. In addition to working with faculty as research assistants, the pre-doctoral fellows frequently co-author papers with other students or faculty members. Fellows will interact regularly with professors and their collaborators – such as David Deming, Matthew Jackson, and Larry Katz – in a team-oriented lab environment, with weekly lab meetings, seminars, and other events. Fellows also have the opportunity to speak with members of the media about our research and support our policy team’s work with partners around the country.

Fellows are also invited to participate in broader activities at Harvard and Brown, including seminars and courses. The program serves as an ideal bridge between college and graduate school for students interested in empirical economics. Most [previous fellows](#) have gone on to top Ph.D. programs. Salary will be competitive.

As an organization focused on economic mobility, we value having a diverse research staff and particularly encourage applications from groups traditionally under-represented in Economics. Applicants should be completing (or have completed) a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree, have strong quantitative skills and experience with empirical research methods. Candidates with research experience are strongly preferred, especially those with programming experience in Stata, SAS, R, and/or Python. Candidates need not be Economics majors, though they should have a strong interest in and some experience with Economics. Successful candidates have come from a variety of backgrounds (including from undergraduate and graduate programs, industry jobs, and other research assistant positions), and have a range of skill levels and experience with coding.

Candidates would ideally begin around July 1, 2022 and work for us for two years before applying to graduate school in Economics or another social science.

To apply, please:

- 1) Submit a formal application through [Harvard University’s job site](#) and [Brown](#)

[University's job site](#) (REQ174496).

2) Upload your resume, cover letter (optional), transcripts, and a writing sample through [our group's online form](#).

We will review applications, conduct interviews, and make offers throughout fall 2021. Our interview process includes a coding exercise, a first-round interview, and a final round interview. Applications for our fall round are due on Oct. 19 by 11:59pm. We expect to share decisions from the fall round by November 15, 2021. Questions can be sent to [hiring.opportunity.insights@gmail.com](mailto: hiring.opportunity.insights@gmail.com).

We will also be hosting informational zoom sessions to answer any questions potential candidates might have. [The first will be held on Friday, September 24@ 3:30pm EST](#) and will give a broad overview of OI's research and a more in-depth look at the work of the predocs. [The second will be on Friday, October 1 at 3:00pm EST](#) and will focus on guiding applicants through a sample data exercise, a common component of the application process for these positions.

We are 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

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Do you sponsor visas for international candidates?*
Yes, we sponsor J-1 and H-1B visas.
- 2. What kind of writing sample should I submit?*
The writing sample should ideally be an economics research paper, but you may submit whatever you feel best demonstrates your analytic and writing abilities. It can be any length.
- 3. What should I include in my CV?*
Your CV should highlight your work experience, publications, education, awards, and research projects. [This guide](#) (starting on page 48) includes helpful information on how to write a CV.
- 4. Can I get feedback on my application?*
Given the number of applications we receive, we are sorry that we cannot provide individual feedback.
- 5. What are you looking for in an applicant?*
Successful applicants have 1) strong transcripts including advanced courses in economics, math, or computer science, 2) demonstrated interest in and experience with economics research, through the writing sample and CV, and 3) a passion for our mission. Students with strong backgrounds in programming and computer science, even with less (though not zero) experience in economics, are particularly encouraged to apply.

6. *Are there any summer research assistant opportunities?*

Our group only hires full-year pre-doctoral fellows. We encourage students to apply in the final year of their undergraduate or master's program.

7. *I have another offer with an upcoming deadline - can my application review be expedited?*

If you have a deadline, we will do our best to accommodate review of your application. Please email hiring.opportunity.insights@gmail.com with the subject line "Request for Expedited Review - Pre-Doc Fellowship Application" and include your deadline. Note that because of the depth of applications for our program, offers are made via expedited review only for exceptional candidates.

8. *How much time will I have to complete the coding task, and when would this be?*

We ask a subset of applicants to complete an empirical coding exercise in order to demonstrate their skills in quantitative analysis and programming. We typically reach out in the weeks following the application due date, at which point you will be able to choose a 48-hour period within a 6-day window in order to complete the task.

9. *Can I take classes for credit as a pre-doctoral fellow at Opportunity Insights?*

We encourage fellows to participate in the thriving intellectual environment at Harvard University and more generally in the Boston area through courses, seminars, and other events. Fellows may take certain courses for credit that are necessary for Ph.D admissions, like Real Analysis, and can audit other more "elective" courses. Fellows are eligible for subsidized tuition for courses at Harvard University.