

PRE-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS – SPRING RECRUITING ROUND

Full-Time Research Assistant Positions

*Professors Raj Chetty, John N. Friedman, & Nathaniel Hendren
Brown and Harvard Universities*

[Opportunity Insights](#) (OI) is hiring several full-time pre-doctoral fellows to start in Summer 2022 to work with our research group. OI is a nonpartisan research and policy institute focused on improving economic opportunity. Founded in 2018, Opportunity Insight has become a nationally- and internationally-recognized leader in the science of economic mobility and in the use of large administrative data to understand and address inequality. Opportunity Insights has published seminal work on national trends in upward mobility, racial disparities, the role of [neighborhoods](#) and [higher education](#) in upward mobility, and most recently, the use of private-sector data to understand disparate impacts in the current economic recession and recovery. Much of the team's ongoing research uses quasi-experimental methods to identify causal effects and test the predictions of economic and sociological models. Examples of current research projects include: long-term impacts of neighborhoods and place-based policies, the role of colleges in upward mobility, using big data to address health disparities, and measuring how social networks affect mobility. OI's work has shaped policy discussions at the national and local levels, 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.

Fellows will be based at Harvard or Brown Universities under the direction of Professors Chetty, Friedman, and Hendren. 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 to support our research translation and policy work through such resources as the [Opportunity Atlas](#) and the [Economic Tracker](#).

Fellows are 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 and benefits are competitive with other top predoctoral fellowships.

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.

Fellowships will begin around July 1, 2022. Fellows typically work at OI for two years before

applying to graduate school in Economics or another social science.

To apply, please first fill out and upload your resume, transcripts, and writing sample through the [OI online form](#). Within the OI form you will be prompted to submit an additional form through Harvard's job site. Please note that we require both forms completed in order to be considered.

We will review applications, conduct interviews, and make offers in March 2022. Our interview process includes a coding exercise, a first-round interview, and a final round interview.

Applications are due on Friday, February 4th, 2022 at 11:59pm ET. We expect to share decisions from the spring round by mid-March. Questions about the application process can be sent to [hiring.opportunity.insights@gmail.com](mailto: hiring.opportunity.insights@gmail.com).

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. *I applied in the Fall predoc fellowship hiring round. Can I reapply in the Spring round?*

No, persons may only apply to the OI predoc fellowship once per academic year. Persons who applied in the Fall 2021 round and were not selected are not eligible to apply in the Spring 2022 round.

2. *Do you sponsor visas for international candidates?*

Yes, we sponsor J-1 and H-1B visas.

3. *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.

4. *What should I include in my CV?*

Your CV should highlight your work experience, publications, education, awards, and research projects. Specific information about relevant courses and skills is encouraged.

5. *Can I get feedback on my application?*

Given the number of applications we receive, we are sorry that we cannot provide individual feedback.

6. *What are you looking for in an applicant?*

Successful applicants have 1) strong transcripts including advanced courses in economics, math, or computer science, 2) a strong background in economics research, communicated 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.

7. *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.

8. *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.

9. *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 10-day window in order to complete the task.

An example of a data task from an earlier year is available [here](#). In addition, PREDOC.org offers practice data tasks.

10. *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.

11. *If I still have questions, who should I contact?*
Please email your questions to hiring.opportunity.insights@gmail.com.