RESEARCH SPECIALIST

Job Overview
The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska is seeking applications from qualified individuals for the position of Research Specialist. The Research Specialist will support research activities associated with the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) and the activities of the Institute strategic plan. Responsibilities will include research and evaluation planning, data collection, data management, analyses, and writing. The PDG is a three-year award (subject to availability of federal funds) to implement projects that support alignment of Nebraska’s early care and education system with a priority on providing equitable access to quality programs for all children and families. The funding agency is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with oversight by Nebraska DHHS and other state partners.

Buffett Early Childhood Institute Profile
Envisioned as a new model for how public higher education is engaged in the first years of life, the Buffett Early Childhood Institute (https://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu) is a four-campus, university-wide, multidisciplinary research, education, outreach, and policy institute of the University of Nebraska committed to helping transform early childhood development and education in Nebraska and across the nation. A long-term goal of the Institute is to be a leading center where scholars, practitioners, community members, and policymakers collaborate to advance a unified approach that can improve the lives of young children and families and the systems that support them.

Applicants should note that the goals of the Institute are university-, state-, and nation-wide, but the location of the Institute administration is in Omaha. This position will work primarily out of the Omaha office.

Job Responsibilities
This section describes major responsibilities for the position but is not an exhaustive or exclusive statement of duties, responsibilities, or requirements. Employees may be required to perform other job-related instructions as requested.

- Work closely with Buffett Institute personnel to plan and prioritize evaluation needs.
- Contribute to the development of research and/or evaluation plans for current and future initiatives.
- Conduct literature reviews and contribute to products, including research briefs, reports, and presentations.
- Collaborate with cross-disciplinary partners (program, research and evaluation) at the university, local, and state levels for evaluation planning and implementation.
- Engage with stakeholders across Nebraska to develop and implement context-appropriate evaluation, and communicate findings.
• Lead and coordinate data collection efforts, including collecting and analyzing (qualitative and quantitative) data (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, document reviews).
• Train and support graduate students in evaluation and research processes.
• Develop and maintain analytic datasets.
• Analyze data to identify patterns and trends.
• Integrate data from multiple data sources, using Excel and related software.
• Present evaluation content (data, findings, etc.) to stakeholders and other evaluators.

Required Qualifications
• A master’s degree in education, psychology, research methodology, or a related discipline that included advanced coursework in research methods and statistics; PLUS four years related research work experience
• Experience in using data analysis software such as SAS, SPSS, R, STATA, NVivo, Atlas TI
• Knowledge of advanced quantitative methods (e.g., multi-level models, HLM, SEM)
• Training and/or experience with qualitative methods

Preferred Qualifications
• A doctoral degree in education, psychology, research methodology, or a related discipline that included advanced coursework in research methods, statistics, and/or program evaluation
• Experience conducting secondary data analyses
• Experience working with multiple data sources, such as state-, school-, and community-level data systems
• Excellent analytical and quantitative skills
• Experience with production of data visualizations (e.g., charts or maps)
• Knowledge of early childhood development and learning

An equivalent combination of education and experience from which comparable knowledge and abilities is acquired may be considered.

How to Apply
Applications are processed through the online job posting at https://careers.nebraska.edu. Follow instructions to complete the Standard Application. Along with your application, attach a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three professional references. Direct questions about the position to: humanresources@nebraska.edu. Direct questions about the online application process to: (402) 472-3701.

The University of Nebraska is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and participates in E-Verify. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or protected veteran status.

ADDENDUM FOR GRANTS FINANCIAL SPECIALIST

Competencies
• Nature/Complexity of Work
Strong research skills, as well as organizational and project coordination skills, and the ability to prioritize and manage multiple tasks. Self-initiative, good follow-through and ability to work without supervision. Ability to work collaboratively. Ability to integrate, synthesize, and report information. Excellent communication skills, including spoken and written communications for presentation (multiple audiences) and publication (report and peer-review).

- **Problem-Solving/Decision-Making**
  Problem-solving and appropriate decision-making will be required as an element of this position. This position requires independent judgment and self-direction to complete tasks assigned, determine the tools and approach to be used in developing analyses, and to use judgment in determining the degree to which detail and information is needed to adequately respond to a request. Collaborative decision-making is also required, with the individual leading decision-making processes.

- **Strategic Input**
  This individual is required to be proficient and conscientious when representing the office of the Buffett Institute at all times. Any errors reflect unfavorably on the individual, the Institute, and potentially the university as a whole. The individual is accountable for taking appropriate steps to correct any errors.

- **Know-How**
  This position demands the ability to take initiative, work as a member of a team, yet operate independently when necessary, and thrive in an entrepreneurial environment. The incumbent must demonstrate proficiency with database management and analysis software (qualitative and quantitative); be detail-oriented and accurate; able to prioritize effectively, multi-task, and quickly respond to shifting priorities; possess strong research skills including the ability to collect, compile, and analyze facts, draw conclusions, and recommend solutions; and have a willingness to learn and use new technologies and train others, when needed.

- **Technical Skills**
  Adept with computer technology and software, and related program or applications. These include software to support literature reviews, data management and analyses, data reporting and visualization, and writing for publication. Ability to learn new technical skills and programs quickly.

- **Interactions**
  Employee will work extensively with all staff at the Buffett Institute, UNCA, campus representatives, and other community partners.

- **Supervision**
  This position exercises no direct supervision over others. This position reports to the Director for Research and Evaluation.

**General Information:**
Job Family: Specialist
Job Code: 49363300 (Specialist)
Salary Range:
FLSA: Exempt
Position Number:
Org. Unit Number: 50008150 (BECI)
Date of Last Update: 5/27/2020 by K. Harper, Associate Executive Director for Operations

**Physical Requirements and Work Conditions**

The physical requirements and work conditions described here are representative of what an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Attendance at the workplace is critical. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is routinely required to have vision for up close and far away, talk, hear, sit and use hands to touch, feel, handle, and operate routine office equipment. The employee is occasionally required to stand, walk, climb stairs, bend, reach, twist, and lift, carry or move up to 15 pounds. The employee is required to occasionally travel to and participate in meetings and conferences that may require the ability to drive a motor vehicle or stay overnight.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate, and there are frequent interruptions as the Institute staff conduct business in cubicles, walled office space, and conference rooms.