



RESEARCH IMPROVING PEOPLE'S LIVES

Research Scientist/Economist

About us: Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL) is a nonprofit tech-for-social-impact organization that works with governments to help them use data, science, and technology to improve policy and lives. We work with faculty research affiliates from research universities across the country to provide actionable, scientific-grade insights at the speed of policy directly to policymakers so that they can solve pressing social challenges, positively impact lives, and build their capacity to innovate and measure success going forward.

RIPL supports policy and process improvements in health care, education, social insurance, civic participation, workforce and economic development, and criminal justice. We use economics and behavioral science to design technology-based products that help government programs measurably increase impact for the people they serve while lowering cost of delivery. Examples include AI/chatbots which help low-income students prepare for and successfully enroll in college and a recommendation engine that uses administrative data to better connect displaced workers with new skills and careers. During COVID-19, we worked with Rhode Island to make it the first state in the country to pay out Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits to support Rhode Island workers after they lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

We are a small and growing team working to measurably improve policy impact with objective research and scalable, sustainable technology in partnerships with a growing portfolio of state and local governments. We are positioned to add several new team members. If you are motivated to apply the research tools of economics and behavioral science to improve policy through data-driven research, you may be an excellent fit for RIPL!

Role Description

RIPL scientists use economics, behavioral science, statistics, and machine learning to proactively identify innovative approaches to improve lives across domains including education, health, labor, social insurance, civic participation, criminal justice, and economic development. We are an interdisciplinary team which combines the talents of science and engineering to develop and deliver solutions that measurably achieve policy goals that alleviate poverty, improve equality of opportunity, and result in government products and services that better serve the people who use and need them.

We are looking for outstanding research scientists and economists who are able to develop analytic structure around complex and often ambiguous policy problems, distill those ambiguous problems into specific, scientific questions, and test those questions using the best empirical techniques and administrative data to generate actionable insights for policy leaders and end users. The ideal candidate



RESEARCH IMPROVING PEOPLE'S LIVES

will work with engineers and computer scientists to estimate models and algorithms on large scale data, design pilots and measure their impact, and transform successful prototypes into improved policies and programs at scale in partnership with government policy leaders and community stakeholders. We are looking for creative thinkers who can combine economic theory and econometric skills to complement technical skills of other researchers. Successful team members have a desire to learn from and contribute to our results-driven approach to research and analysis. They will know how to execute and deliver impact as part of an interdisciplinary science and technology team.

Expectations:

Ideal candidates will:

- Lead the development of scientific models, data analysis, modeling, and experimentation that is necessary for developing and measuring policy improvement;
- Produce research papers and other written products in collaboration with other RIPL researchers, academic affiliates, and policy counterparts;
- Work closely with policy partners and strive to understand end users from diverse backgrounds in order to develop science-driven policy innovation that solves the most important policy challenges;
- Collaborate well in a team setting with individuals from diverse disciplines and backgrounds;
- Serve as an ambassador for scientific rigor and its application to policy improvement;
- Work closely with engineering teams – at RIPL and as part of cross-sector partnerships – to develop scalable data resources to support rapid insights, and take successful models and findings into production as new products and services;
- Design and manage team research, and manage multiple research projects, to meet (potentially competing) deadlines and deliverables for real-world policy improvements in collaboration with project managers and engineering teams;
- Be a good listener and ideator; listening to end users, policy leaders, and team members from multiple disciplines; incorporating their feedback to deliver successful scientific solutions to policy challenges.

RIPL researchers may be based anywhere in the United States with travel necessary (estimated 10%) to RIPL offices and partner locations once travel is broadly possible.

Qualifications:

- PhD in economics, public policy, quantitative marketing, or other quantitative discipline. We are open to early-career researchers as well as candidates with up to 5 years post Ph.D. experience.



RESEARCH IMPROVING PEOPLE'S LIVES

- Demonstrable research experience in reduced-form econometric analysis, for example, experience empirical studies of causal effects using panel data, difference-in-differences, regression discontinuity, or instrumental variables. Predictive modeling and causal machine learning algorithms a plus. Designing and administering large-scale social science surveys is a plus.
- Research experience in health economics, education economics, public economics, labor economics, and/or behavioral economics with demonstrable experience communicating analysis precisely and accessibly through clear writing and data visualization
- Advanced coding ability in a scripting language such as Stata, R, and Python. Familiarity with SQL, relational databases and project and research management software such as Git, Bitbucket, JIRA or similar is a plus. Additional skills and background in computing and computer science are a plus.
- Mission-driven, and passionate about using data, science, and technology to improve lives across The United States. Experience working directly with government stakeholders is a plus.
- Proven track record in research and solution of business problems leveraging techniques from economics or related disciplines is a plus.
- Prior work experience in applying research to drive decisions in public policy or business is a plus.

At RIPL, you'll develop a solid understanding of the technology, the power of scientific-grade research, how to productionize science for lasting impact, and how to navigate government partnerships to build lasting capacity for data-driven improvement as well as solving immediate policy needs. Our staff are located all over the country, but stay connected with online chat, regular coffee hours and in-person time when travel is possible. As an organization we value quality over quantity. To learn more about what we value, check out our [leadership values](#).

If interested please send:

- 1) Current CV
- 2) Cover letter
- 3) Job market paper or similar example of your ability to communicate technical analysis to professional and/or policymaker audience
- 4) Online or offline research papers and research code repository.

to join@ripl.org, with "Economist/Research Scientist" in the subject line. We look forward to speaking with you!