Position Announcement

Research Associate

About NCHEMS

Our Mission & Purpose

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) is a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to improve strategic decision-making in postsecondary education for states, systems, institutions, and workforce development organizations in the United States and abroad. Our purpose is to create opportunities for all people to prosper.

Our Work

Grounded in extensive research and practical experience, NCHEMS has a long history of supporting policy design and in providing action-oriented analysis in areas as diverse as demography, finance and affordability, postsecondary governance and organization, instructional delivery models, workforce outcomes, and student learning outcomes and accreditation. NCHEMS’ projects range from rapid-response projects focused on data analysis and interpretation to large-scale strategic engagements. Through close collaboration with sponsors and deep stakeholder outreach and a commitment to the rigorous application of data and evidence and by striving to ensure its proposed solutions carefully fit specific needs and context, NCHEMS has developed a well-known reputation for taking contemporary challenges in postsecondary education with independence and impartiality. As a result, NCHEMS’ projects routinely create impact in better serving strategic objectives and students’ needs, improving efficiency and affordability, and closing equity gaps.

A project-based organization, NCHEMS offers ample opportunities and a variety of ways to play a role in innovating changes that ensure postsecondary education is working for states and students in the decades to come.

Position Overview

Reporting to the Vice President, the Research Associate is responsible for conducting detailed, data-driven analyses in support of NCHEMS activities, grants, and projects. Drawing on a wide range of skills, the Research Associate collects, manages, analyzes, and presents quantitative and qualitative data in service to a diverse group of stakeholders and partners. Critical thinking and good problem-solving skills are essential as is the application of mathematical and statistical techniques to analyze complex and diverse datasets. The Research Associate also contributes to the development of proposals and project deliverables and creates content for dissemination through routine website updates, blog posts, and social media channels.

The ideal candidate demonstrates capability with accessing and creatively using data to help inform public policy in postsecondary education and its linkages to workforce development. They are effective at communicating both orally and in writing. They take initiative, show a willingness to learn and grow outside of their comfort zone or area of expertise, and they actively pursue ways to contribute without...
being directed. Where appropriate, they seek out and capitalize on opportunities to engage with external partners and collaborators. They are detail-oriented and comfortable working both independently and as part of a team.

Duties and Responsibilities
• Gather, interpret, and analyze quantitative data from a diverse array of datasets, including publicly available data sources, as well as other data that NCHEMS may obtain in the course of its work (e.g., state-level unit-record datasets).
• Develop interactive tools and visual representations of data suitable for high-level decision-makers to use in evaluating policy options.
• Assist with qualitative research activities, including interviews and focus groups.
• Draft policy briefs and reports and assist with the preparation of presentations to project stakeholders.
• Assist with the development of fundable project ideas and prepare proposals and scopes of work.
• Positively represent NCHEMS by building relationships and working successfully with a diverse group of external partners.

Required Qualifications
• A master's degree and at least two years related experience and/or training, or equivalent combination of education and experience.
• Advanced quantitative data analysis skills, including the ability to design and implement analytical strategies, manage and query datasets, and analyze and interpret results.
• Capability to use relevant data sources, such as NCES IPEDS, U.S. Census Bureau/American Community Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Bureau of Economic Analysis.
• Excellent written and oral communication skills.
• Ability to work on several concurrent projects and to effectively collaborate with internal and external stakeholders.
• Commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
• Ability to travel 10% of the time and attend off-site meetings as needed.

Preferred Qualifications
• Knowledge of higher education policy issues, such as access, equity, affordability, finance, college completion, and workforce outcomes.
• Advanced skill in composing insightful and data-driven visualizations to communicate findings effectively to a wide variety of policymakers and non-technical audiences.
• Ability to design and develop analytical models, e.g., simulations, as well as inferential analyses.
• Familiarity with working in non-profit, project-based organizations.

Compensation
Salary will be commensurate with experience and education with a potential range of $70,000 to $86,000. NCHEMS provides an excellent benefits package.

Location
NCHEMS’ offices are located in Boulder, Colorado at the State Higher Education Policy Center (SHEPC)--also home to the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). The candidate for the Research Associate position may choose to work regularly in the office or entirely remotely.

December 2021
Application Process

Please apply by email to Erin Barber (erin@nchems.org) and include the following:

1. Letter describing how you meet the requirements of the position, addressed to Erin Barber, Director of Administration, NCHEMS, 3035 Center Green Drive, Suite 150, Boulder, CO 80301.
2. Resume or curriculum vitae.
3. Names and contact information of three academic or professional references.
   (References will not be contacted until you have given permission for us to do so.)

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled, but full consideration will be given to those received by January 18, 2021. NCHEMS is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. Diverse candidates are encouraged to apply.