American Foundation for the Blind – Career Opportunity

Research Specialist

About the American Foundation for the Blind

American Foundation for the Blind’s mission is to create a world of no limits for people who are blind or have low vision. AFB mobilizes supporters, engages leaders, advances understanding, and leverages research to champion policies and practices that improve the lives of its constituents.

AFB has a long, proud history of removing barriers, ensuring inclusion, and creating positive change in the world for millions of people with vision loss. AFB believes that vision loss must never stand in the way of dreams. Founded in 1921 by M.C. Migel to serve blinded World War I veterans, AFB quickly expanded its mission to serve all Americans with vision loss. Helen Keller, the world-famous deafblind author and activist, joined the organization in 1924 and, with AFB, paved the way for significant social change in America. Today, AFB uses its strengths and the “no limits” determination modeled by Ms. Keller to support blind or low vision people in employment, education, rehabilitation, community building, and advocacy.

Despite a century of progress, much work remains to ensure a level playing field for people who are blind or have low vision. Today’s social and economic systems continue to produce and perpetuate staggering inequalities among people with vision loss, leading to higher levels of unemployment, increased isolation, lower graduation rates, and poverty. AFB is committed to creating a more inclusive and just society by mobilizing leaders and influencers, championing impactful policies and practices, and promoting understanding of the most effective drivers of change. Our vision is a world without limits, where people who are blind or have low vision are working, going to school and participating in community life, unhindered by barriers.

Career Opportunity

Reporting to the Director of Research, the Research Specialist will be responsible for providing specialized knowledge and expertise in the development and analysis of AFB’s research and program evaluation to further AFB’s public policy and research agendas and to support AFB’s mission, strategic plan and annual initiatives. This is a full-time position with the opportunity to work full or part-time out of AFB’s Arlington, VA office if desired or remote.

# Duties and Responsibilities

1. As a member of the research team, proposes, develops and implements research projects, including but not limited to scientific and policy research, demographic studies, and program and product/service evaluation. Sets up a study, collects, cleans, and analyzes data, and reports data both in writing and orally. Offers expert guidance to other AFB staff undertaking research-related activities. Assists with the formulation of research-based public policy and program evaluation recommendations.

2. Undertakes and supports the dissemination of original research and research-based knowledge through public presentations, discipline-specific seminars, professional peer-reviewed publication, and consultation. Participates in the design and delivery of research-related sessions and roundtable activities at AFB/other sponsored live and virtual events to foster discussion, debate, and information sharing.

3. Provides reliable expert support for the articulation of data and research findings both orally and in writing for lay and professional audiences. Presents research in support of AFB’s public policy agenda to federal agencies and Congressional representatives. Responds to demographic and related information requests and coordinates communication of responses with various AFB departments.

4. Expertly supports writing grant proposals and assists with the management of outside-funded projects (federal, state, and/or private), helping to advance and implement AFB's research objectives. Monitors and assesses potential grant opportunities and other opportunities for research revenue. Serves as grant peer reviewer for federal agencies, as appropriate and assigned.

5. Serves as an authority on AFB's behalf, participating in disability-based and discipline-based coalitions and other venues to advance AFB's public policy agenda and to promote partnership opportunities among interested stakeholders for conducting and disseminating research.

6. Maintains professional development in research techniques, and social and policy issues affecting people and services in the vision loss and disability fields, in order to integrate the "state of the art" into AFB's research efforts.

7. Performs other duties as assigned.

# Qualifications

Master’s degree required, but Ph.D. preferred. Must possess demonstrable professional/academic proficiency in quantitative and qualitative research methods and policy analysis. Preference for those who have experience in quantitative analytic techniques (such as descriptive and inferential statistics), qualitative analytic techniques (e.g., thematic coding), and/or programming online surveys. Demonstrated exceptional speaking and writing skills. Expertise in labor research, public health, public administration, or disability-related disciplines strongly preferred. Knowledge of and experience in vision loss/disability studies, and experience with involving members of under-represented groups in research are a plus. Ability to manage multiple competing priorities and projects simultaneously in a fast-paced environment under deadlines necessary. This is a full-time telecommuting position with opportunity to work full- or part-time out of AFB’s Arlington, Virginia office if desired. Some travel required.

Must embrace and role model AFB’s mission and Core Values of Learning, Excellence, Collaboration and Impact.

# Demonstrate Key Values & Competencies Including:

Integrity & Respect

Collaboration

Job Excellence & Impact

Life-Long Learning

Initiative

Communication

Desire to Serve

Leadership

Compensation: Salary based on experience, market analysis and location.

How to Apply: Interested parties, please email a Cover Letter, Resume/CV to [hr@afb.org](mailto:hr@afb.org).

At AFB we do not just accept difference, we celebrate it.  AFB is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate based upon race, religion, color, national origin, gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, status as a protected veteran, status as an individual with a disability, or other applicable legally protected characteristics.

If you need assistance or an accommodation due to a disability, you may contact Human Resources at [hr@afb.org](mailto:hr@afb.org).