



Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow/Research Associate - J-PAL North America

Country United States

Education Bachelors

Language Requirement English

Start Date Spring/Summer 2024

Opportunity Overview

J-PAL North America is looking to hire two highly skilled and motivated full time pre-doctoral research fellows / research associates to work for two years as part of Professor Amy Finkelstein's research team. The position will entail close collaboration and assistance with the design and analysis of randomized evaluations of interventions in US health care delivery. Examples of the types of projects pre-doctoral research fellows would work on include studying the effect of [expanding public health insurance](#), analyzing the impacts of healthcare hotspotting on [super-utilizers](#), and studying the effect of [Medicare bundled payment reform](#). Responsibilities include assistance with all stages of empirical research in health economics; preparing data for analysis; conducting empirical analyses; assisting with literature reviews and with institutional review board applications; communicating with research partners about data requests and analysis; and preparing academic manuscripts. These positions are targeted to begin in the spring or summer of 2024 and to work for two years.

About J-PAL North America

The mission of J-PAL North America, a policy lab within the Economics department at MIT, is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. J-PAL North America conducts randomized evaluations, builds partnerships for evidence-informed policymaking, and helps partners scale up effective programs. As a regional office of the global Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, J-PAL North America leverages research by affiliated professors from universities across the world to generate and disseminate rigorous evidence about which anti-poverty social policies work and why. As a member of the J-PAL North America team, you'll be part of a [Nobel-prize](#) winning scientific movement that can transform US policy making.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

At J-PAL North America we understand that inequity is often institutionalized into policies and systems, and that these inequities contribute to cycles of poverty and a lack of opportunity for a great portion of the population, particularly women, people of color and other marginalized populations. We approach our work with the following [staff values](#) and are actively engaged in creating a diverse, inclusive and equitable culture where [everyone](#) can feel a sense of belonging and effectively contribute to the work. We seek applicants with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences that can help to broaden our perspective and approach to economics research and policy. To learn more about our work and team culture, visit www.povertyactionlab.org/na.

Job Responsibilities

- **Data construction:** Work with data sets; clean and run checks to spot errors; prepare data for analysis; prepare data for publication and publishing data; and communication with research partners about data requests and analysis.
- **Data analysis:** Conduct a range of empirical analyses including econometric analysis of RCTs and comparison to alternative quasi-experimental methods, power calculations, and descriptive analyses.
- **General research:** Assist with literature reviews and questionnaire writing, new and renewal institutional review board applications, and the preparation of academic papers being submitted to journals.
- **Process-building and information sharing:** Assist with onboarding new staff. Maintain project documentation and share best practices with other members of the research team.
- **Other duties as needed or required.**

Compensation & Benefits

This full-time, exempt position is classified by MIT as a Technical Associate I position and currently offers a fixed market-based salary range based on experience.

J-PAL North America staff are MIT employees, which means they are eligible for a wide array of institutional benefits. Some of these [MIT benefits](#) include comprehensive health insurance, a 401(k) match up to 5% of salary plus a pension-based retirement plan, [tuition assistance](#) up to \$5,250 per calendar year, commuter benefits, [access to MyLifeServices](#), a generous vacation policy (3 weeks of paid vacation in your first year, and 4 weeks every year after that, plus an additional 12+ paid Institute-wide holidays per year and a winter break), paid leave for sick time, maternity and parental leave, back-up child care benefits and much more.

Professional Development

J-PAL North America supports a culture of learning, with opportunities to attend weekly seminars, engage in small-group discussions with other J-PAL staff, participate in workshops, and take classes for credit at MIT or elsewhere with our generous tuition assistance program.

Qualifications

Commitment to Mission & Values: Cares personally and deeply about policy that has the potential to reduce poverty and the rigorous research that informs it. Demonstrates interest in poverty alleviation in the North American (primarily the United States) context in particular. Demonstrates a commitment to J-PAL North America's staff values.

Education: A bachelor's degree with a strong quantitative background is required. Background in economics a plus, but not necessary (Professor Finkelstein welcomes candidates with strong technical backgrounds who are looking for more exposure to economics). Excellent grades are required.

Experience: This is a junior-level position generally occupied by recent college or master program graduates, which requires demonstrating the equivalent of 2 years of relevant work experience in research or data analysis. This can include experience gained through part-time work, college level coursework, related internships, volunteer experiences, research assistant or teaching assistant experience and/or policy work. Prior demonstrated experience working with communities of color and/or those experiencing poverty in North America is a plus.

Technical Skills: Strong computer skills, including programming, is required. Actively demonstrates the technical skills and expertise to successfully execute tasks to which they are

assigned and can apply those skills/expertise in different formats and to various types of audiences, including the ability to accurately explain basic concepts related to randomized evaluation and other impact evaluation methodologies with minimal support and accurately explain research design, study implementation, results, and/or data systems on assigned projects.

Ownership of Work: Takes responsibility/is accountable for effectively completing assigned discrete tasks or projects with high attention to detail under direct supervision. Produces high quality work in the time expected; identifies and follows up with stakeholders as needed to ensure assignments are completed on time.

Written Communication: Accurately and succinctly communicates in writing with J-PAL staff and stakeholders on assigned projects with minimal supervision from senior-level staff. Clearly communicates technical information to non-technical audiences.

Oral Communication: Demonstrates strong active listening skills and accurately and succinctly communicates information orally to staff and external partners with minimal supervision from senior-level staff.

External Stakeholder Relations: Supports partnership development between researchers and potential implementing partners and/or maintains relationships with existing stakeholders under supervision from researchers or managers.

Task & Project Management: Takes on a process-oriented task, plans and organizes work, delegates appropriately, coordinates with others, establishes appropriate priorities and timelines, exercises follow through, and adds overall value to the process.

Problem Solving/Decision Making: Demonstrates adeptness at analyzing facts, judgment, and strong decision-making ability. Responds to problems, issues, and opportunities that are identified by supervisors. Collaborates to identify a solution or response.

This position is not eligible for any type of visa sponsorship.

How to Apply

Ready to join a team of collaborative, inclusive, and inquisitive colleagues? Apply now.

Note: Authorization for work in the US is required. Employment is contingent upon the completion of a satisfactory background check. This position is based at the MIT J-PAL North America office in Cambridge, MA with the option for a hybrid work model.

Note: Applicants who are interested in working with Professor Finkelstein on economic research using tools other than RCTs are encouraged to also consider applying to [this](#) opportunity (job number 23101) for RA's to work on Prof. Finkelstein's research team based at the MIT Economics Department. Applicants are welcome to apply to both roles and may upload identical materials to each application portal.

Submit an application via MIT's human resources system. Visit <http://jobs.mit.edu/external>, search for job ID 23130 ([Research Associate/Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow](#)), and complete an application.

In a single PDF uploaded to the resume field, please include:

1. A cover letter that includes:
 - a. A brief description of your experience as a research assistant and with any independent research (e.g. thesis or other research projects).
 - b. A description of your familiarity with various statistical and computer packages (e.g. STATA, SAS, Matlab, Python, Perl etc.).
 - c. The names of two references (and their email and phone contact information) who will be providing written references. At least one reference must be someone for whom you have worked as a research assistant. Please indicate which references you have worked for as a research assistant. Letters of reference should be emailed to aecabral@mit.edu. Letters are preferred as soon as possible after the submission of the application but applications can be considered before the letters arrive.
2. A current CV
3. A transcript (unofficial is fine)
4. A condensed transcript. Please provide a written list of classes on the transcript that are in economics, mathematics, statistics or computer science. For each please include columns for the name of the course, the date taken, the school at which the course was taken, and the main textbook(s) used in the course. Please include any courses you are currently taking.
5. The date on which you are available to start work.

We will begin reviewing applications on a rolling basis as we receive them. Short-listed applicants will be asked to complete a technical exercise and may progress to an interview.

MIT is an equal employment opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment and will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin.