Research Assistant Job Description

An Affiliate of the Harvard University Department of Economics seeks a part-time Research Assistant (undergrad or master’s level). The Research Assistant will work with Chika Okafor, a PhD Candidate in Economics at Harvard University and JD Graduate of Yale Law School. The R.A. will join an ongoing project to quantify and characterize how different characteristics of prosecutors influence their decision-making, and the role such factors have played in the emergence of mass incarceration in the United States since the 1980s. This work will contribute to national and local efforts on reforming the criminal justice system. The project will use a variety of quasi-experimental methods to better understand the relationship between political party, race, age, gender, and other factors on the severity of prosecutorial decision-making.

The R.A. candidate should have experience with cross-sectional and panel data. The primary programming language is R, with potential supplemental work in Stata. Experience in Microsoft Excel is required. Experience producing reproducible code with markdown, git, and LaTeX is preferred, but not required. The position will entail building datasets of prosecutor characteristics and election outcomes and performing literature reviews on prosecutorial discretion and its impact on outcomes for criminal suspects and for society. The R.A. will also do some basic data analysis, such as descriptive statistics and simple regressions, as well as some data visualization.

The workload is approximately 5-10 hours per week for the rest of the semester. As funding allows, there may be the possibility of renewal for Summer 2020 and the Fall 2020. The pay rate is commensurate with experience and degree program.

Given current public health crises, the desired location is remote. Access to Zoom Video Communications is required. Chika Okafor will be located in Harvard Square, Cambridge.

To apply, please send a cover letter, CV, and sample code (minimum 100 lines of an .R or .do file) to Chika Okafor, Esq., at chikaokafor@g.harvard.edu.