RESEARCH ANALYST

Who we are

Action Research works with child welfare systems across the country, providing information, analysis, and support to illuminate paths to better outcomes for children, youth, and families. We partner with government leaders, frontline staff, think tanks, service providers, and foundations to generate insight and drive system reform. We are nationally recognized for our child welfare expertise and for producing innovative research to drive decision-making.

What we do

We work on a range of policy topics within child welfare including foster home recruitment, kinship placements, permanency, and prevention services, among other areas. We tailor each project to the needs of our partner and produce accessible results that program staff and funders can use to make concrete decisions.

Our work takes multiple forms:

- We conduct operational and exploratory research to understand how child welfare policies, practices, and systems are functioning, translate findings into strategic recommendations, and then help our partners leverage these recommendations to improve outcomes for children and families.
- We evaluate program models and interventions to learn what is working – and what work remains to be done. We seek to understand the context, history, strengths, and challenges of particular approaches, complementing statistical quantitative techniques with focus groups, interviews, and on-the-ground work to assess program operations.
- We help develop and launch strategies to analyze system outcomes and performance. We design and support systems that utilize administrative data to allow leadership and staff to monitor progress, strengthen services, and improve outcomes.

In addition to rigorous designs and multiple research methods, we tap into sources of knowledge that are often overlooked. We have developed particular expertise in analyzing administrative data, an under-utilized resource that often produces findings unobtainable elsewhere. We pair the results of data analysis with the perspectives of clients, front line workers, middle managers, executives, and external stakeholders to form a comprehensive picture of how policies and programs are experienced.

We are committed to creating strong relationships with our partners. We invest in building trust with stakeholders, seek to minimize the burden of research on operations, and communicate actionable insights as they develop. With our wide range of clients, we have a reputation as an “information Switzerland”: a place that the child welfare community can rely on for accurate, reliable, and useful information.
What we are looking for

Action Research seeks an enthusiastic and self-motivated individual with a background in social science or applied research, a passion for child and family services, and a strong drive to enhance their quantitative and qualitative research skills to work as a Research Analyst on a variety of projects aimed at improving child welfare and juvenile justice-related programs. This is an excellent opportunity for someone building an applied research career and/or a career within government using data to drive tangible system improvements.

Ideal candidates will have:

- A passion for improving outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families – you recognize that contact with the child welfare system has long and lasting impacts on children and families, and are committed to advancing work to keep children safe, stable, and in families;

- A dedication for using data to generate actionable insights – you see data as a powerful tool to provide insight and inform change;

- Great attention to detail – you recognize the importance of getting it right, and are comfortable operating on a team where we check and recheck our work; and

- Comfort working both independently and as part of a team – while you can advance a project on your own, you are excited to collaborate with others; you know when to ask for support from your colleagues.

We are committed to inclusion, embrace diversity as an organization, and believe these values are essential to our work. The American child welfare system has a history of disproportionately impacting families of color, low-income communities, and LGBTQ youth. As an organization that seeks to make child welfare systems more responsive to clients and more effective in its services and operations, our staff must reflect diverse backgrounds, experiences, and cultures.

Role you would play

Working with a small dedicated team, the Research Analyst will analyze administrative data and conduct qualitative research (including surveys, interviews and focus groups) to better understand programs, systems, and opportunities for improvement. You will draft and help present insights from this work with government leaders, practitioners, nonprofit executives, youth and parents, and other stakeholders. You will actively contribute to the growth and quality of our organization, serving as a thought partner for colleagues and participating in proposal development. Specific projects and activities may include some or all of the following:

- Supporting the monitors of federal child welfare class action litigation, by analyzing administrative data to verify progress towards required reforms and performance goals;

- Supporting the implementation of new and innovative services to allow children and youth to stay safely at home, rather than enter foster care;

- Engaging in all aspects of evaluation for programs that support older youth transitioning out of foster care;
• Conducting analysis to improve the recruitment, training, support, and retention of foster parents; or
• Designing strategies to increase reunification, and where that is not possible, streamline adoption and subsidized guardianship of children and youth in foster care.

Specific requirements
• Bachelor’s degree and two years of relevant experience, or Master’s degree in public policy, data science, economics, sociology, public health, public administration, or related field;
• Familiarity with and interest in data analysis, performance measurement, business process analysis, and other types of public policy assessment;
• Significant experience using SPSS, Stata, R, SAS, or similar statistical package (syntax writing required);
• Excellent writing and communication skills;
• Strong organizational and interpersonal skills; and
• Proficiency in Microsoft Office, especially Excel and PowerPoint, and comfort using online applications including Box, Slack, and other coordination tools.

Additional valued strengths that are appreciated but not required
• Substantive knowledge of child welfare and/or New York City public policy and demographics;
• Familiarity with SQL, QGIS or other mapping software, and other analytic software;
• Experience in grant-funded research and/or qualitative research methods; and/or
• Spanish fluency.

What you can expect from Action Research
• Salary and excellent benefits competitive with national high-quality nonprofit research organizations – Benefits include health insurance, student loan repayment program, pre-tax flexible spending account, pre-tax transit check, and after one year, eligibility for 401(k) and education benefit. Generous holiday, vacation, personal, and sick time.
• Intentional professional development – As part of a small and highly active team, the Research Analyst will have opportunities for government and other client interactions. Action Research will also invest in your professional growth and help you develop and advance both subject matter and technical expertise.
• Vibrant and flexible work environment – Our office is just one block from Industry City in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, but you can work from home when you need to. You will get to know your colleagues through weekly “learning lunches” which provide opportunities to share and explore interests, including those that may not be apparent in our day-to-day work.
How to Apply

Please send a cover letter explaining your interest in the mission of Action Research; a resume; an original sample of command line syntax using statistical software; and a short writing sample to hr@actionresearch.io with a subject line of “Research Analyst Opportunity”.

Due to the large number of applications, emails and phone calls to Action Research staff are strongly discouraged. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Action Research is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. All qualified applicants will be considered for employment without unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender expression, military status, prior record of arrest or conviction, citizenship status, current employment status or caregiver status.