



Position Description

Research & Evaluation Specialist

David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality

FULL TITLE: Research & Evaluation Specialist

SUPERVISOR: Director, Research & Evaluation

PURPOSE: The Research & Evaluation Specialist will manage contracts with youth serving organizations (primarily networks of out-of-school time programs) who are designing, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining continuous quality improvement systems that center racial equity and social justice and are based on the Weikart Center's Youth Program Quality Intervention approach. Working on evaluation projects and serving as a thought partner to data savvy organizational partners, the Research Specialist blends their evaluation expertise and knowledge of youth development best practices with demonstrated excellence in project management to support youth serving systems as they collect and use data to improve programs.

SALARY: Targeted in the high \$50's with a comprehensive benefits package

Organization & Background

Founded in 1998, the **Forum for Youth Investment** is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan "action tank" committed to changing the odds that all children and youth are ready for college, work, and life. The Forum connects leaders to ideas, services and networks that can help them make more intentional decisions that are good for young people, even in the face of limited resources. It helps leaders who are trying to improve & align policies, plan & partner for impact, and/or strengthen programs & adult practice across all the systems and settings where young people spend time.

In 2008, the Forum created the **David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality** to strengthen programs and adult practice by building the capacity of public and private agencies to implement quality improvement and performance systems that simultaneously foster professional learning and whole-child development. The Weikart Center's research-based core products and services are currently used in over 4,500 out-of-school time settings nationally and form the basis for quality improvement systems in over 140 publicly and privately funded systems. The Weikart Center helps youth-serving systems build the safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging environments that are foundational to youth development. From data-driven tools to expert trainings, we equip leaders who serve young people with the positive youth development and SEL-informed resources they need to create a culture of continuous improvement for staff and for youth.

Position Responsibilities

	% of Time
<p>(1) Project Management: Manage contracts with youth serving organizations (e.g., national organizations, statewide 21st Century Community Learning Centers; local community-based organizations, etc.) focused on designing, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining quality improvement systems that center racial equity and social justice in youth-serving settings using the Weikart Center’s Youth Program Quality Intervention approach. Essential tasks include (1) project management, including project design, planning, cost estimation, billing, and regular communication in response to client needs; (2) evaluation management, including design, data collection, analysis and reporting, using best practices in applied research and data visualization to communicate results that are accurate, practitioner-friendly, and action-oriented; (3) coordination of training and technical assistance delivery; and (4) regular communication with internal teams to ensure all contracts, invoices, and deliverables are on track.</p>	50%
<p>(2) Data Processes & Systems: Oversee the day-to-day administration and utilization of multiple online systems for data collection, monitoring, and reporting. Establish and manage both internal and external protocols and training resources for system use and quality assurance. Facilitate coordination and communication across Weikart Center teams to ensure successful design and implementation of research processes, reports, and insights.</p>	35%
<p>(3) Knowledge Management: Effectively support the organization’s vision for continuous quality improvement and positive youth development that centers racial equity and social justice with clients and field partners. Prepare and present research summaries, briefs, and other non-technical publications for practitioners, policymakers, funders, and other national audiences. Advocate for evidence-based practices related to continuous quality improvement in OST and other youth-serving settings. Leverage evidence-based insights support new opportunities for the Weikart Center’s work.</p>	10%
<p>(4) Assume responsibility for other projects and new assignments related to the scope of this role. Contributes to unit and organization-wide priorities and special projects as appropriate.</p>	5%

Performance/Character Requirements

We are looking for emerging superstars poised to grow rapidly into dynamic leaders. People who have an insatiable desire to grow and learn, and are passionate about youth development, data use, racial equity, and social justice. People eager to constantly try new things, adapt, learn, and improve. People who are analytical, see the big picture, and suggest strategic shifts of direction – while simultaneously keeping track of details and making sure the work moves forward. People who work hard and take pride in their work and support colleagues to do the same. We love what we do and want you to as well. The **Research & Evaluation Specialist** position is an exciting opportunity for those who enjoy working on a team that values relationships, helping to understand and solve problems with research evidence, data, and an empathetic heart, and encouraging and celebrating the growth of others.

Qualifications

Five or more years of experience leading research and evaluation projects in youth serving settings and/or supporting continuous quality improvement efforts, A degree in youth development, social work, education, or related fields is required.

Preference for candidates who have researcher/practitioner experience in using insights from research and data to center racial equity and social justice and improve the quality of learning opportunities for young people.

In addition, the successful candidate will have:

- Demonstrated expertise in applied research and analytics that translates results into concrete and practical applications for non-research audiences
- Proficiency with SPSS and online survey design and data collection tools
- Direct experience with data use in out-of-school-time (OST) contexts
- Knowledge of the Weikart Center's Youth Program Quality Assessment, Youth Program Quality Intervention, social and emotional learning resources, and/or low-stakes quality improvement policies and systems

Working Environment

Flexibility is required to adapt to the dynamic work environment of a small non-profit research and consulting organization that has national and international clients and exposure. The climate is informal but mission-driven. Excellence is valued in every position. The Forum's Weikart Center team transitioned to be fully remote during the COVID-19 pandemic and is hiring staff to join our fully remote team. Occasional

travel, when deemed safe to resume, is expected for in-person team meetings and client/partner meetings (estimated 5-10% time).

Position & Compensation

The salary range, duties and responsibilities of this position meet the requirements of Section 13 (a) (1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act and therefore qualifies as an "exempt" position. The salary is targeted in the high \$50s, with a comprehensive benefits package that includes medical, dental, and vision insurance; short- and long-term disability; a 403(b) retirement program; and generous paid vacation, sick and holiday time.

Please send resume and cover letter to: jobs@forumfyi.org. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. If your application is selected for an interview, you will be contacted directly. No telephone calls or inquiry emails, please.

**

The Forum for Youth Investment is committed to creating a diverse work environment and is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer and drug-free workplace, and to comply with ADA regulations as applicable. All applicants are considered for all positions without regard to race, religion, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical/mental disability, severe/morbid obesity, medical condition, military/veteran status, genetic information, marital status, ethnicity, alienage or any other protected classification, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. We encourage individuals of all backgrounds to apply. If you are a qualified candidate with a disability, please email us at jobs@forumfyi.org if you require a reasonable accommodation to complete your application.