

IFF
Position Description

Title:	Research Associate, Education Specialist
Department:	Department of Research and Evaluation
Department Purpose:	Strengthening non-profits and the communities they serve through research, analytics and program evaluation. The Research department provides actionable insights to inform strategic plans and guide investments.
Reports to:	Vice President of Research and Evaluation

The Organization

IFF improves the world by strengthening nonprofits and the communities they serve. IFF uses our expertise in capital solutions, real estate and community development to improve the lives of people in low-income communities and with disabilities. Key to our success is our deep sense of purpose, a broad perspective, and a relentless focus on achieving positive results.

Throughout the Midwest, IFF works with nonprofits in every sector, including human service agencies, health care centers, early education providers, schools, affordable housing, and grocery stores. Although the Research and Evaluation Department is housed in our Chicago headquarters, it provides research support across the Midwest to our six regional offices: Milwaukee, Wisconsin; St. Louis, Missouri; Indianapolis, Indiana; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Columbus, Ohio and Detroit, Michigan.

IFF proves that social return can coincide with financial return. IFF is a U.S. Department of the Treasury certified community development financial institution (CDFI), a member of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago and the Opportunity Finance Network, and a past recipient of the \$5.5 million Wells Fargo NEXT award for Opportunity Finance. IFF is the largest nonprofit CDFI in the Midwest and one of only a few nationally to repeatedly earn the top AERIS rating. Since 1988, we have made over \$640 million in loans, leveraged \$1.7 billion in community investments, and grown our total managed assets to \$308 million. The real estate services department has completed over \$408 million in construction projects.

Accessing all the resources of IFF, the Research Department improves the lives of low-income and disabled persons by providing data and analytics to inform strategic investment by IFF and our government, foundation and nonprofit partners. The Department produces actionable insights and direction through Big Data analytics; high-impact research reports; spatial analysis and ongoing analytics. Working with top level elected officials, non-profit executives and sector leaders, the Department brings together diverse stakeholders and creates a single vision, mission and strategic direction based on data and analytics.

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IFF is looking for candidates with a commitment to the mission of IFF and the nonprofit clients we serve. Someone who can demonstrate his/her creativity, detail-orientation, diligence, efficiency, enthusiasm, flexibility, organization, thoughtfulness, and sense of humor.

Basic Job Function

Research Associates complete high-impact research consulting projects. The reports are widely distributed and publically available on IFF's [webpage](#). In addition to writing reports, Research Associates coordinate an advisory committee; collect, wrangles and analyzes data to provide actionable recommendations and presents findings to top-level elected officials, nonprofit executives and leaders of foundations.

The Research Associate, Educational Specialist focuses on projects that increase educational opportunities for all children. His/her work shapes the early education and K-12 public school sectors. S/he works with diverse stakeholders, often with competing agendas, to produce objective and transformational reports. S/he unites stakeholders in a shared vision, based in data and analytics, and informed by the shared goal of increasing educational opportunity for all children. The studies inform the allocation of resources, school reform strategy, public policy, identifying sites for new schools or early education centers, facilities and program investments and reform strategy. There may be opportunities to work in other sectors, depending on the knowledge and interests of the candidate.

The Research Associate, Education Specialist, will work independently and as a member of a team in planning and executing research projects: collect, compile, validate, interpret and analyze data and trends. Compiles, merges and aggregates data using statistical software (SPSS); and prepares documents, reports, briefs, charts, and graphs that describe and interpret findings. The current position will have a content focus on early childhood education and care, and K-12 education.

Job Duties and Responsibilities

- Leads inter-departmental and diverse stakeholder teams to complete multi-disciplinary research projects that provide solutions to IFF colleagues and external partners. Uses standard practices and techniques to execute qualitative and quantitative research-consulting projects.
- Writes SPSS syntax to automate data analysis processes to facilitate annual updates to study questions. Problem-solves SPSS issues in automated syntax programs.
- Oversees and coordinates team members to complete annual updates to education-related databases and produce annual high-needs maps and performance metrics tools.
- Presents findings visually, orally and in writing. Must have excellent presentation skills and writing skills. Designs and produces visualizations of quantitative data. Interprets and describes findings, and identifies spatial and statistical relationships.
- Clearly communicates knowledge and findings of research projects to internal and external clients, and represents the Research Department and IFF in a professional

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manner. Manages client relationships. Clear and consistent communication with clients and colleagues on progress of project.

- Values life-long learning. Strives for continuous professional growth and development, and the pursuit of excellence.

Performance Measures

- Successful completion of projects and project support according to budget, timeframe and goals set forth at the beginning of each project and department's policies and procedures.
- Expert at SPSS syntax, problem-solving syntax issues, writing macros and automating statistical analysis with SPSS syntax. Expert at asking statistical questions and solving challenging statistical problems that can guide high-impact and actionable outcomes.
- Communicate and work effectively with diverse stakeholders. Relationship-management and communication with internal and external clients is client-centered. Ability to work independently and as part of a team. Internal and external meetings are organized, professional and meaningful to participants. Client-center interactions with internal and external clients. Written and oral presentations are well-organized, persuasive and communicate actionable insight(s).
- Research products consistently high-quality. Written drafts, outlines, analyses, visualizations, tools, reports and oral presentations are complete, accurate, comprehensive and clear. Appropriate supporting material and visual aids are well-utilized and enhance oral and written presentation. High level of colleague and client satisfaction with respect to services and analytics provided; and reports, tools and visualizations produced
- Values life-long learning. Consistent focus on high-impact, actionable research. Innovates to support clients and IFF as learning organizations.

Position Qualifications

Education:

Advanced Degree in education, early childhood development, public policy, community development or a social science required.

Previous Experience:

At least five years relevant experience in schools, research-related community development, public policy, nonprofit or think-tank position required.

Special Knowledge & Skills:

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Background in and content knowledge of early childhood education and care, or K-12 education or both required. Familiarity with education policy, school reform issues, charter schools, early education issues and public/private partnerships in education.

Ability to focus on details and data concurrent with analysis of systemic and organizational implications of research projects. Advanced critical thinking skills, exhibited by the ability to take information from a wide variety of sources and synthesize/analyze the information in the context of a research project. Demonstrated advanced proficiency in IBM SPSS Statics. Proficiency in Microsoft Office suite required. Knowledge of Python preferred. Knowledge of Tableau and ArcGIS beneficial.

Unusual Requirements: Minimal regional travel may be required. Occasional evening and weekend work may be required.

IFF is an equal opportunity employer.

Application Instructions: Please submit a cover letter, resume and salary requirements to jkraemer@iff.org with “Research Associate, Education Specialist” in the subject line.