

Research Associate

Thrive Chicago seeks to hire a Research Associate to be part of a bold start-up enterprise that aligns services providers, city agencies, funding organizations, and non-profits around outcomes that are proven to help children succeed from cradle to career.

Mission

Thrive Chicago (www.thrivechi.org) has used the StriveTogether Theory of Action as its approach to collective impact and building civic infrastructure. Collective impact relies on the actions of individuals to dramatically improve results at scale. Whether a funder, practitioner, community leader, volunteer, parent, guardian, or engaged citizen, there are actions anyone can take to support every child from cradle to career.

To accomplish its work along the cradle-to-career continuum, Thrive Chicago is changing the way adults collaborate to help young people succeed. Thrive Chicago priority strategies include:

- **Activate research and data** – Identify and build awareness of promising practices that improve youth outcomes and local disparities across various demographic groups and geographies
- **Test and scale innovate practices** – Work with and through Change Networks to understand and implement those practices that can lead to citywide change
- **Build capacity of leaders and practitioners** – Ensure those working most closely with youth have the data, skills, partners, and resources they need to be successful

Thrive Chicago operationalizes its strategies through Change Networks – working groups that include key leaders from city agencies, nonprofits, funders, higher education and businesses that help individuals and organizations understand how they fit together. By using continuous improvement tools to analyze data, these teams pick strategies to undertake collectively and adjust if they are falling short.

Change Networks

Academic & Enrichment Activities
College Completion

High School Graduation
Workforce

The start-up mode demands an entrepreneurial staff that thrives in creating something new, something ambitious, and celebrates the power found when human, financial and institutional resources, and leadership are rallied toward a common goal.

Position Description

Thrive Chicago seeks a Research Associate to help build and support a growing organization. This is a critical position that requires focus and flexibility as well as a willingness to work with the leadership team and staff to divvy up responsibilities in the most efficient manner. The role requires a highly resourceful individual with strong emotional intelligence, self-motivation, and effective organizational skills. The ability to operate in a fast-paced “start-up” environment is

essential. This full-time position reports directly to the Chief Strategy Officer and encompasses the following primary accountabilities:

Day to Day Responsibilities

- **Research-Informed Briefings:** The Research Associate is responsible for creating research-informed briefings to help guide Thrive Chicago's leadership with strategic direction and communication with key stakeholders including practitioners, city agencies, funders, and board members aimed at improving outcomes for Chicago's youth. Briefings could be sourced from existing national or local models on evidence-based programs or best practices, research literature, policy reviews, economic analysis, and/ or stakeholder interviews. Stakeholder interviews should include community and youth voice as often as possible.
- **Asset/ Need Map of Youth Services in Chicago:** The Research Associate is responsible for sourcing and maintaining a database of youth serving organizations in Chicago and performing asset mapping that helps youth navigate services in local communities. The Research Associate is responsible for identifying gaps between assets and youth need helping to mobilize the Thrive Chicago community towards closing those gaps, especially those that align with Thrive Chicago's cradle to career outcomes.
- **Thrive Chicago's Cradle to Career Outcomes:** The Research Associate is responsible for maintaining relationships with local research organizations and keeping up with the latest research on Thrive Chicago's cradle to career outcomes to ensure that all of Thrive Chicago activities are aligned with those outcomes and are scalable if proven effective.
- **Data-informed Action Teams:** As needed, provide guidance and support to Change Network Managers for the monthly Action Team meetings including reviewing research publications and/ or publications on youth development best practices to help facilitate conversations in the various steps of the Action Team Life Cycle, helping to ensure progress towards demonstrable impact.

Qualifications and Skills

In any new enterprise, start-up staff must excel in a fluid environment, innovating on the fly, and willing to take on tasks as needed to move forward. Thrive Chicago is no exception. Successful candidates will have the following qualifications and characteristics:

- **MISSION-DRIVEN** – A demonstrated commitment and belief in the need to improve educational outcomes for every child, cradle to career, with a particular emphasis on the needs of youth often left behind by the current system.
- **LEADERSHIP** – Exceptional leadership skills, with the ability to inspire others and be inspired. Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to develop productive relationships with stakeholders across functional and organizational lines.

- **ANALYTICAL** – A bold and original thinker with an ability to ask critical questions and draw insights from the data to help problem solve. Is able to use data from a variety of sources to impact change.
- **ARTICULATE** -- Excellent writing and verbal communication skills, with an ability to communicate complex information clearly and effectively.
- **UNFLAPPABLE** – Excels in a fast-paced, entrepreneurial culture with contagious joy and positive energy.
- **DETAIL-ORIENTED** – Has strong attention to detail and strong task and project management skills.
- **COLLABORATIVE** – A team player that lends a helping hand when needed.
- **STRENGTHS-BASED** – Can recognize the talents in others and help identify areas for alignment among team members and partners.

Requirements

- Minimum of three years of relevant work experience.
- Bachelor's degree required; relevant advanced degree (e.g. MBA, MPP) preferred.
- Educational and/ or professional background must include direct experience in data analysis or performance management; knowledge of collective impact and systems change research strongly preferred.
- Experience writing research or policy briefs required

Application Process

Thrive Chicago is building a diverse staff that is reflective of the city and is dedicated to ensuring a diversity of applicants. Interested parties are encouraged to apply early, as candidates will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Candidates can learn more about Thrive Chicago at www.thrivechi.org.

Applications will only be received via e-mail at info@thrivechi.org with YOUR NAME and “Research Associate” in the subject line. Applications must include:

- ✓ **A current résumé/CV**
- ✓ **A cover letter describing how the applicant's skills and experience suit this position and describing the reasons for interest in the position.**