

Research Employment Opportunities for Graduating Sociology Majors

Research employment in the social sciences is available for those with a variety of educational backgrounds. Researchers are employed at the PhD, MA/MS, and BA/BS levels. Jobs in data collection are also available for non-college graduates.

Individuals entering a research position with a BA/BS degree are frequently employed in data collection management positions and as entry-level analysts on a research team. While many senior employees have advanced graduate training in sociology and other disciplines, experienced researchers with a BA/BS degree can attain project director and senior analyst positions. Many individuals work for a few years and subsequently acquire advanced degrees. In fact, graduate admissions committees look favorably on full-time research experience. Many of the companies below also offer fellowship programs for students, and these companies have relationships with universities to support degree completion while working.

Attending graduate school expands one's research opportunities greatly. Indeed, the academic sector has thousands of research centers at universities and colleges across the US, staffed by faculty and graduate students. However, employment options at universities and colleges are not listed in this document.

Private Sector Employment

The American Enterprise Institute

<http://www.aei.org/>

The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research is a small to mid-sized private, not-for-profit institution with research in three program areas: Economic Policy Studies, Foreign and Defense Policy Studies, and Social and Political Studies. Although officially non-partisan, those with a politically conservative background are a good fit for AEI.

American Institutes for Research (AIR)

<http://www.air.org/>

AIR is a large non-profit research firm headquartered in Washington, DC. Areas of social science research include Health Policy, Education and Human Development, International Development, and Workforce Research and Analysis.

The Brookings Institution

<http://www.brookings.edu/>

Located in Washington D.C. the Brookings institution is a large independent think tank funded by private endowments that produces research reports and other scholarly products. Brookings conducts social science research in the areas of Foreign Policy, Economics, Governance Studies, Global Economy & Development, and Metropolitan Policy.

The Economic Policy Institute (EPI)

<http://www.epi.org/>

EPI is a small nonprofit social science research firm headquartered in Washington D.C. Those with a politically liberal background are a good fit for EPI. Areas of social science research include Living Standards and Labor Markets, Government & the Economy, Trade and Globalization, and Education.

GALLUP

<http://www.gallup.com/>

GALLUP is a large for-profit research corporation. Famous for the GALLUP Poll, they have a variety of applied research programs in social science fields as well as marketing research and publishing.

The Milken Institute

<http://www.milkeninstitute.org/>

The Milken Institute is a small endowed research company. The research focus at Milken is on applied economic and social policy to promote struggling economies in the U.S. and elsewhere, especially education and job growth.

The National Opinion Research Center (NORC)

<http://www.norc.org/homepage.htm>

NORC, in Chicago, IL is a large non-profit research firm closely affiliated with the University of Chicago. Areas of social science research include Criminal Justice, Education, Health, International Policy, Labor and Employment, Organizations, Special Populations, Society and Culture, and Substance Abuse.

PRESS GANEY

<http://www.pressganey.com/>

Press Ganey is a for-profit company that conducts assessments of health care providers, including survey research.

Rand Corporation

<http://www.rand.org/>

The RAND Corp (derived from 'research and development') is a large non-profit research firm headquartered in Santa Monica California, but with offices around the country and world. Areas of social science research include Health, Education, National Security, International Affairs, Law and Business, and the Environment.

The Research Triangle Institute (RTI)

<http://www.rti.org/>

RTI is a large non-profit research firm headquartered in the research triangle park (Durham, NC), but with offices around the country and world. With close ties to three major research universities in North Carolina (Duke, UNC, NC-STATE) RTI conducts research in a variety of social and physical sciences. Areas of social science research include Education, Health Policy, Survey Research, and Economic and Social Development.

The Tobin Project

<http://www.tobinproject.org/>

The Tobin Project is an independent, non-profit research organization motivated by the belief that rigorous scholarship on major, real-world problems can make a profound difference. With an interdisciplinary network of over 350 leading scholars across 80 universities, from Nobel Laureates to the most promising graduate students, the Tobin Project is currently focused on four core research inquiries: Government & Markets, Institutions of Democracy, Economic Inequality, and National Security.

The Urban Institute

<http://www.urban.org/>

Located in D.C. and overseas, the Urban Institute is a mid-sized company conducting research on Crime & Justice, Economy & Taxes, Education, Healthcare, Housing, Welfare, and Work & Income.

WESTAT

<http://www.westat.com/>

WESTAT is a large employee-owned research corporation headquartered in Rockville, MD, with offices around the country. Areas of social science research include Education, International Policy, Employment, Training, and National Service, Social Services, Housing, Transportation, and Survey Research & Polling.

Public Sector Employment

A variety of large federal research bureaus and many small ones conduct social science research. The list below is not an exhaustive list, but includes many of the largest Bureaus and those that conduct research that overlaps with sociological inquiry. Many more government agencies sponsor research by universities and corporations. This list contains only intramural research bureaus, those that have large numbers of research positions available in-house.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/index.html>

ACF has a small research branch that conducts research and policy analyses to assess child and family welfare program performance and inform policy and practice.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bis/>

Collects, analyzes, publishes, and disseminates statistical information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics

<http://www.bls.gov/home.htm>

Primarily employs economists, but also survey researchers.

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics

<http://www.bts.gov/>

Compiles, analyzes, and makes accessible information on the Nation's transportation systems.

The CENSUS Bureau

<http://www.census.gov/>

The CENSUS Bureau is a branch of the federal government (Department of Commerce). The CENSUS Bureau conducts a variety of survey research, not just the official census. In addition to the D.C. Headquarters, there are 12 regional CENSUS offices.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

<http://nces.ed.gov/>

NCES is the research division of the U.S. Department of Education.

STATE Agencies

Each state has a variety of departments in which research is conducted. For example, each state has a department of public instruction (DPI), or similar office that oversees educational administration, and which conducts research. State departments typically include a small research division conducting applied research at the state level.

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