



NC RURAL CENTER

Position Announcement Director of Research

The NC Rural Center is seeking a director of research with a deep passion, drive, and curiosity to understand what makes rural communities thrive. The Director of Research will oversee and conduct research to support the Center's leadership, engagement, small-business development, and policy programs; conduct internal exploratory research to guide future program development; and manage mission-focused, externally funded research endeavors that support North Carolina's rural people and places.

For more than 30 years, the Rural Center has been committed to its mission of developing, promoting, and implementing sound economic strategies that improve the quality of life of rural North Carolinians, with a special focus on individuals with low-to-moderate incomes and communities with limited resources. Research has been a critical function of the Rural Center's existing programs and long-term planning, and has been foundational in the Center's empirically driven approach to informing the larger public discussion around North Carolina's rural communities.

The director of research will report directly to the Rural Center's vice president of public affairs.

Responsibilities:

- Work with the Rural Center's management team and program directors to identify the economic, demographic, and environmental forces affecting rural people and places.
- Oversee management of the Rural Center's research team and its network of consultants and contractors, instilling a sense of accountability by modeling transparency and oversight of organizational and individual performance standards.
- Manage and oversee the ongoing growth and professional development of direct reports.
- Support the Center's leadership and community engagement teams in educating local and regional rural leaders on the larger demographic, economic, and environmental trends that are impacting their communities.
- Produce and authorize data and research to be included in internal and external presentations made by the Center's management team, program directors, and other staff, as needed.
- Support the Rural Center's advocacy and policy team in the analysis and review of the Center's Rural Counts policy platform for a variety of audiences, including policymakers, community members and organizational stakeholders (to name a few).
- Maintain a repository of data resources and information to be routinely shared internally and externally.



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- Guide the development of data products for use by the advocacy, leadership and engagement and small business lending business units.
- Apply an equity lens to all aspects of internal and external research endeavors with an ability to identify the unique barriers facing rural people and places of color.
- Facilitate regular conversations with program staff to support program research and development needs in a consistent and fair manner across the organization.
- Oversee the analysis of the outcomes of the Rural Center's small-business lending programs.
- Regularly represent the Rural Center in public presentations and media interviews.
- Monitor, analyze, and communicate emerging trends and long-term drivers of change that may impact rural North Carolina and assist internal Center staff in planning for new programs and initiatives in response.

The director of research will direct, supervise, and evaluate the performance of assigned staff, and will also direct and evaluate relationships with external consultants and vendors on a quarterly basis.

Requirements:

- Minimum of master's degree in economics, public policy, planning, or related field.
- Minimum of ten years of experience in a relevant field, analyzing data trends, conducting original research, and monitoring research products across a variety of disciplines.
- A deep understanding and appreciation of the value and importance of rural people and places, and a dedication to improving the lives of low-to-moderate income individuals living in communities with limited resources.
- The ability to see systems connections across economic sectors, and policy issue areas, for example, to see how health conditions have economic outcomes, to name just one of many.
- Exceptional organizational and time-management skills and a proven ability to handle competing external and internal deadlines in a fast-paced environment. The ability and temperament to pivot priorities on short-notice is an essential requirement.
- A commitment to collaborate, communicate, and engage effectively with people and communities of diverse backgrounds and histories, including communities where English is spoken as an additional language.
- Exceptional written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills.
- Proven experience in translating data into relatable narratives and to a wide variety of audiences.



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- Proficiency with Tableau data visualization software, basic relational database systems, and Microsoft Excel required.
- A deep knowledge of national and state data sources essential to understand the dynamics of change in rural places.
- Ability to work as a strong team player but independently as needed—but always with a sense of purpose and good humor.
- High standard of excellence, accuracy and consistency, personal integrity, and accountability.
- Strong organizational skills and proven results-driven goals.
- Energetic, self-motivated, and comfortable in public speaking situations.
- Familiarity with rural North Carolina, rural America, and attraction to the mission of the NC Rural Center highly desired.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The NC Rural Center offers excellent benefits and salary commensurate with experience. Benefits include health, vision and dental insurance, retirement contributions, holidays, and paid time off. The NC Rural Center is an equal opportunity employer.

How to apply:

- Applicants will be evaluated on their ability to follow instructions:
 - Prepare a cover letter and resume specifically tailored for this opportunity and email them as a Word or PDF document to hr@ncruralcenter.org; the subject line of the email should include your name and the position title.
 - Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and positions will remain open until filled.
 - For questions not covered above, contact Todd Brantley, vice president of public affairs, by emailing tbrantley@ncruralcenter.org.