



# NC RURAL CENTER

## Position Announcement Director of Research & Data Management

The NC Rural Center is seeking a director of research and data management with a deep passion, drive, and curiosity to understand what makes rural communities thrive. The director will oversee and conduct research and manage data 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 and data management will report directly to the Rural Center's vice president of public affairs.

### **Research Responsibilities:**

- Work with the vice president of public affairs, the Rural Center's management team, and program directors to identify the economic, demographic, and environmental forces affecting rural people and places.
- 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.
- Curate external 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).
- Guide the development of research and 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 places and people of color.
- Facilitate regular conversations with program staff to support program research and development needs.



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- Regularly educate, inform, and alert Rural Center staff and leadership on emerging data trends and recent mission-related research publications and findings.
- Lead in the development and analysis of survey instruments for quantitative and qualitative feedback from the Center's external constituents, colleagues, and clients.

## **Data Management Responsibilities:**

- Manage the collection and analysis of the Rural Center's internal data systems related to its client relationship management software and small-business lending data.
- Maintain a repository of primary and secondary data resources and information to be routinely shared internally and externally with Center staff, board, constituents, and funders.
- Collaborate with team leads, information technology staff, and external vendors to build proficiency in the Center's various database systems to generate large-scale data reports for analysis and publication.
- Oversee the large-scale analysis and mining of the Rural Center's small-business lending data for external reports and internal program evaluation.
- Act as the central point of contact for the Center in the management of internal measurement and evaluation efforts conducted by external consultants and vendors.
- Assist leadership and program leads in the interpretation and analysis of data and findings from measurement and evaluation results.

## **Administrative Responsibilities:**

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

## **Requirements:**

- Minimum of master's degree in economics, public policy, business administration, planning, mathematics, statistics, computer science, geography, or related field.



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- Minimum of eight years of experience in a relevant field, analyzing data trends, conducting original and secondary research analysis, 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, political affiliations, 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.
- Proficiency with Tableau data visualization software, basic relational database systems, and Microsoft Excel required. Experience with Salesforce preferred.
- 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 salary range for this position is \$80,000 - \$90,000, commensurate with experience. The NC Rural Center offers excellent benefits, including 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:



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- Prepare a cover letter and resume specifically tailored for this opportunity and email them as a Word or PDF document to [hr@ncruralcenter.org](mailto: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](mailto:tbrantley@ncruralcenter.org).