

Data-to-Benefits

Skills and Training in Action Research (STAR) Fellowship Using College Data to Connect Students with Safety Net Benefits (“Data-to-Benefits Project”)

Request for Applications

The Urban Institute is seeking **one** part-time consultant who will be designated as a Skills and Training in Action Research (STAR) Fellow. A STAR Fellow is a current or recent student who has lived expertise relevant to this position. As a STAR Fellow, you will be a paid member of the project leadership team while also supporting project operations and learning about how to engage in effective research geared toward informing action. STAR Fellowships are an initiative under the [Student-Parent Action through Research Knowledge \(SPARK\) Collaborative](#).

As a STAR Fellow, you will work with a team to identify colleges that are using their own data in innovative ways to connect students—particularly student parents—with social safety net benefits (e.g., cash, food, housing, and child care assistance). You will support virtual (i.e., online) site visits to up to six colleges, which will consist of interviews with administrators, students, and possibly other staff members to understand how they are leveraging data to promote program access. You will be invited to engage with a policy advisory group that will inform the project. And you will be invited to contribute to and coauthor written products for policy and practitioner audiences. This position is supported by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

We are seeking candidates with direct experience relevant to being a parenting student and accessing public safety net benefits.

This contracted position is budgeted until mid-2025, though the project could be extended. We estimate 80 hours for the STAR Fellow (expected effort is about 10-20 hours per month). Compensation will be paid based on hours worked at \$53 per hour as a consultant.

You are welcome to consult remotely and on a nontraditional work schedule. Though there may be prescheduled project meetings you will be asked to attend, we are glad to work with you to accommodate scheduling considerations.

What you’ll do:

- Join team planning and coordination meetings.
- Contribute to project strategic and logistical planning, including developing the research work plan where we identify the strategy for the virtual site visits and develop protocols (i.e., question lists) to guide the data collection.
- Join the policy advisory group meetings to understand more of the context around this work. We may ask you to take notes or otherwise support the operations of the meetings.

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- Contribute to project products, including two briefs and an internal memo. You may also contribute to blog posts or presentations about the work.

What you'll bring:

A successful candidate will:

- Be a current or recent graduate or undergraduate student (enrolled within the last two years: spring term 2023-current term). Students in workforce or noncredit programs are also eligible.
- Demonstrate interest in issues related to parenting college students and the social safety net.
- Have experience with qualitative research or an interest in learning qualitative research methods.
- Be knowledgeable about or interested in learning about social safety net benefits and college data systems.
- Have experience with and willingness to write for internal and external audiences, communicate verbally and in written form, work with a team, work independently, think critically to solve problems, and manage time effectively.
- Understand and demonstrate respectful approaches to engaging and communicating with individuals of differing backgrounds and experience to support collaborative projects.
- Employ strengths-based perspectives when talking about particular groups or particular contexts.
- Show a strong willingness to learn, adapt, and suggest improvements.
- *Preferred but not required:* Has knowledge of college data systems, including financial aid data, student records data, or other student-level data that colleges may have access to.

We value lived and ongoing experience and expertise, and we encourage candidates with personal familiarity with parenting while in college, and/or other parallel lived experiential expertise to apply.

What you'll experience:

No matter your role with Urban, you will contribute to meaningful work that makes a difference for people and communities across the country. And whether you call the Washington, DC area or elsewhere home, you can expect to be part of a welcoming and hybrid workplace. We are committed to cultivating a community and working in a manner defined by collaboration, equity, inclusivity, independence, and integrity.

Urban's greatest asset is our people.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of the work being performed by the people assigned. This posting is not an exhaustive list of all duties, responsibilities, and requirements. Urban management reserves the right to amend and change duties, responsibilities, and requirements to meet business and organizational needs as necessary.

The Urban Institute is an equal-opportunity employer and is committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace. All qualified candidates will receive consideration without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender or gender identity, age, marital status, personal appearance,

sexual orientation, veteran status, pregnancy or family responsibilities, matriculation, disability, political affiliation, or any other protected status under applicable law.

We are committed to equal employment opportunity and providing reasonable accommodations to applicants with physical and/or mental disabilities. If you have a physical and/or mental disability and are interested in applying for employment and need special accommodations to use our website to respond to this request for applications, please contact SPARK@studentparentaction.org.

About the Urban Institute:

At the Urban Institute, we believe in the power of evidence to improve lives and strengthen communities. As a nonprofit focusing on social and economic policy, our researchers and policy entrepreneurs open minds, shape decisions, and identify transformative solutions to the most pressing issues of our time. For more information on the Urban Institute, please visit <https://www.urban.org>.

Our Mission

To open minds, shape decisions, and offer solutions through economic and social policy research.

Our Values

Collaboration, Equity, Inclusivity, Independence, and Integrity.

About the SPARK Collaborative:

The Student-Parent Action through Research Knowledge (SPARK) Collaborative aims to collaboratively build evidence and make the case for policy change to support pregnant and parenting students so that they can meet their education and life goals.

How to respond to this posting:

Please complete [this application form](#) by January 15, 2025. The form asks the following questions:

- First and last name
- Phone number
- Email address
- Are you at least 18 years old?
- Are you a resident of the United States?
- (If yes:) State or territory of residence:
- Are you authorized to work in the United States?
- Do you require sponsorship now to work for an employer in the United States as a foreign worker?
- Have you ever been employed by Urban Institute in any capacity?
- Are you currently a student in a certificate (college or workforce/noncredit), undergraduate, or graduate program?

» Yes

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- » No
- (If no:) Have you been a student in a certificate, undergraduate, or graduate program in the last two years (spring term 2023-current term)?
 - » Yes
 - » No
- Where do you attend school now? Or where did you last attend school?
 - » School name (no abbreviations):
 - » School city:
 - » School state:
- What program level are you enrolled in or were you last enrolled? (Select all that apply if you were in more than one program at the same time.)
 - » Certificate (college or workforce/noncredit)
 - » Associate's degree
 - » Bachelor's degree
 - » Master's degree
 - » Doctoral degree
 - » Other (specify:)
- What degree or certificate programs are you enrolled in or were you last enrolled? Please include your major and/or department as applicable.
 - » Program 1 name:
 - » Program 2 name (optional):
- What is the highest degree or credential you have completed?
 - » High school diploma or equivalent
 - » College or noncredit certificate (specify)
 - » Associate's degree (specify)
 - » Bachelor's degree (specify)
 - » Master's degree (specify)
 - » Doctoral degree (specify)
 - » Other (specify)
- Please describe your direct experience relevant to being a parenting student and accessing public safety net benefits (e.g., cash, food, housing, and child care) or your parallel lived expertise.
- Please describe your experience with and/or interest in qualitative research, especially research in college settings.
- Please describe any special knowledge you have about college data systems, including financial aid data, student records data, or other student-level data that colleges may have access to. Note that this is not a prerequisite for this role, but it is useful.
- Please describe one to three issues that you think could be better understood by the public, policymakers, educators, or administrators related to students' (especially student parents') access to public safety net benefits. For each, describe the issue, why it's important, and how you think it could be better understood through qualitative research. These do not have to be the actual issues you will address in this position, but they should show your interest and thinking about benefit access for student parents.

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- Please describe what else you hope to gain from this opportunity. Be as broad or specific as you would like.
- Is there additional information regarding your educational background that you would like to include?
- Optional: Attach a resume or CV.
- Thank you for the information you provided. Is there anything else you would like the Urban Institute to know?