

State of California - Department of Social Services

DUTY STATEMENT

EMPLOYEE NAME:

(Vacant)

CLASSIFICATION:

Research Data Supervisor I

POSITION NUMBER:

659-5734-001

DIVISION/BRANCH/REGION: (UNDERLINE ALL THAT APPLY)

Research, Automation & Data Division (RADD)

BUREAU/SECTION/UNIT: (UNDERLINE ALL THAT APPLY)

Research Bureau/Evidence Based Policy/ERU

SUPERVISOR'S NAME:

Eric Schroer

SUPERVISOR'S CLASS:

Research Data Supervisor II

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS OF POSITION (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- ☐ Designated under Conflict of Interest Code.
- ☐ Duties require participation in the DMV Pull Notice Program.
- ☐ Requires repetitive movement of heavy objects.
- ☐ Performs other duties requiring high physical demand. (Explain below)
- ☒ None
- ☐ Other (Explain below)

I certify that this duty statement represents an accurate description of the essential functions of this position.

I have read this duty statement and agree that it represents the duties I am assigned.

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE

DATE

SUPERVISION EXERCISED (Check one):

- ☐ None ☒ Supervisor ☐ Lead Person ☐ Team Leader

FOR SUPERVISORY POSITIONS ONLY: Indicate the number of positions by classification that this position DIRECTLY supervises.

Four positions: 4 Research Data Specialist I

Total number of positions for which this position is responsible:

FOR LEADPERSONS OR TEAM LEADERS ONLY: Indicate the number of positions by classification that this position LEADS.

MISSION OF ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT:

This position will lead the Exploratory Research Unit (ERU) within the Evidence-based Policy Team (EPT). The ERU leads exploratory research and knowledge management activities and contributes to impact evaluations to further the EPT's three goals: 1) improve program service delivery and decision-making, 2) produce timely, rigorous, people-centered research, and 3) enhance the analytic capacity of the department.

This position resides in the Research Bureau of the Research Automation and Data Division. The Research Bureau is the Department's in-house research team that uses quantitative research, computational methods, and insights from cutting-edge social science to drive CDSS program decision-making and improve department processes.

The mission of the California Department of Social Services is to serve, protect, and support the people of California experiencing need in ways that empower wellbeing and disrupt systemic inequities.

CONCEPT OF POSITION:

Under the direction of the EPT team lead, the RDS I Supervisor will lead strategic direction of exploratory analysis and knowledge management activities, overseeing a unit of researchers and a portfolio of research projects about CDSS programs and the people they serve. The unit supervisor will collaborate closely with the Research Bureau and Program to develop a high-priority, high impact research portfolio and as appropriate, carry out or contribute to descriptive and evaluation projects to further exploratory research, improve access, service delivery, or program impact. This position will achieve cutting-edge, actionable, and empathetic research by combining a passion for CDSS' mission with a commitment to rigorous and quantitative research.

A. RESPONSIBILITIES OF POSITION:

25%: Manage research projects that utilize literature reviews, CDSS administrative data and statistical and/or computational methods to generate insights about CDSS programs that will inform policy and service delivery. This requires working collaboratively with CDSS program leaders, RADD and Research Bureau leadership, and other project stakeholders on identifying problems, needs, opportunities, and as appropriate, annual learning agendas. This requires pitching research project ideas through relationships, power point slides, email correspondence, and pre-analysis plans. This further requires detailed note taking in meetings with project stakeholders, drafting work plans, and documenting decisions made through the research project life cycle. This also includes overseeing technical project management tasks such as developing analysis plans to answer questions of interest, documenting code and data, drafting data use agreements, and using tools like Quarto, Snowflake, and Git and Azure DevOps.

20%: Design and implement evidence synthesis or quantitative analysis aimed at improving CDSS program outcomes and/or understanding of the people served by CDSS programs. This involves writing code and building efficient data pipelines using programming languages such as R, SQL, and/or Python to process and/or link administrative data and operationalize analysis. Identify the right tools to advance department learning goals, using the simplest and most transparent methods that deliver actionable insights. This ranges from collating existing literature, careful descriptive analysis, and/or advanced statistical models such as causal inference methods or machine learning algorithms.

20%: Either independently or in conjunction with Research Bureau analytic and modeling subject matter experts, advise ERU staff in identifying the right analytical and computational tools for their exploratory analysis or impact evaluation and ensure that they are appropriately applied. Ensure research conducted by the unit adheres to methodological and technical standards. Create or enforce systems to support adherence to these standards. These standards pertain to initial data validation, analytic code review, version control and reproducibility, literature reviews, project management, data documentation, clear communication of research methods and findings to nontechnical audiences, and to a much lesser but still notable degree, legislative and policy analysis. This also involves proactively identifying common challenges across these research domains and improving upon existing procedures, documentation, or systems of support to address those challenges.

15%: Direct the development of analytic products that explain our research and distill insights for CDSS decision-makers. This includes preparing written research products, such as executive summaries and written reports, and tailoring the findings based on the needs and interests of the audience. It also includes delivering spoken briefings or presentations and using data visualization to socialize the findings of our work with non-technical audiences.

10%: Contribute to RADD's Knowledge Management work by tracking the latest advances in social science and maintaining a repository of academic and applied research relevant to CDSS programs. Determine when applying these methods or findings could lead to significant improvements in CDSS program capabilities versus when they only promise marginal improvements. Summarize and identify insights from external research that can inform policy and program service delivery. Direct ERU staff to summarize or incorporate insights from external research into their projects or communications as applicable.

5%: Manage ERU staff by providing regular feedback on performance, identifying professional development goals and opportunities to grow, and ensuring compliance with staff policies/procedures (time sheet review, annual performance reviews, etc.)

5%: Perform other duties as appropriate.

B. SUPERVISION RECEIVED:

The RDS I Sup reports to the EPT RDS II Sup, but the position requires initiative and independent judgment.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY:

The RDS I Sup is responsible for all management functions of the ERU including support and oversight structures for their staff.

D. PERSONAL CONTACTS:

The RDS I Sup consults with managers from fiscal and other program areas on research priorities and the state of their evidence base. The incumbent must be able to gain the confidence and support of key stakeholders.

E. ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES:

Development of knowledge management resources utilized by Research Bureau staff and in service of Program administrators in support of various research and evaluation projects. Failure to collate the evidence base and complete replicable work would result in incorrect statistical or research information being released on CDSS programs that is used by Department management and other state agencies.

F. OTHER INFORMATION:

Desirable qualifications include:

1. Experience using statistical models (principally regression methods) and policy evaluation methods. Computational methods (such as machine learning) are a plus.
2. Lived experience interacting with CDSS or other social safety net programs.
3. Programming experience in R, Python, SQL, SAS, Quarto, and/or other languages.
4. Experience with version control (Git) and cloud-based, relational databases (Snowflake)
5. Knowledge of experimental and quasi-experimental research methods.
6. Experience working or strong interest in safety net, child welfare, and/or child care policy.