

Postdoctoral Fellow in Sociology (Eviction in America Project)

The Department of Sociology at Harvard University seeks applicants with a background in data analysis, economics, quantitative social science, and/or computer science to fill a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in the urban social sciences. Funding is available for up to two years and the position is expected to begin July 1, 2017. Candidates are expected to have a PhD by the start date.

The postdoctoral fellow will join a new initiative on eviction in America, directed by Professor Matthew Desmond. The project stems from the fact that little is known about the prevalence and consequences of eviction, yet today the majority of poor renting families in America spend over half of their income on housing costs and eviction is fundamentally transforming low-income communities. This study will build the nation's first database of evictions, consisting of millions of court records combined with neighborhood- and individual-level data. Analyses of this dataset will generate a national estimate of the prevalence of eviction; identify and explain variation in eviction rates across neighborhoods and cities; evaluate the effectiveness of different housing and eviction laws; and estimate neighborhood and individual-level consequences of housing instability. The findings of this study will inform evidence-based policies designed to prevent eviction and family homelessness, raise awareness of the centrality of housing in the lives of low-income families, and deepen our understanding of the fundamental mechanisms driving poverty in America.

We seek self-driven, creative thinkers with strong quantitative skills to help supervise a team of researchers tasked with gathering, organizing, and analyzing eviction data. Successful candidates will be comfortable with data management and mining; advanced statistical and/or computer programming skills is a plus. They will co-supervise a team of four full-time post-baccalaureate research assistants and three graduate research assistants who will help to build and explore a national database comprised of millions of eviction records. Postdoctoral fellows will validate and organize eviction data; merge eviction records with the other data sources, at both the individual- and population-level; and analyze eviction data with statistical modeling to generate original research documenting the prevalence, causes, and consequences of housing instability in national perspective. They will also collaborate on grant writing and publications. A working knowledge of the literature on housing instability and urban sociology is not required but useful; an intellectual interest in applying rigorous data to real-world problems is essential.

Overall, it is expected that the postdoc will engage in high level research and be involved in analysis and publication on projects currently underway at Harvard. He or she would also be encouraged to maintain an independent set of research interests. The role will be supported by an array of resources at Harvard University and funded by the Gates Foundation.

Salary is highly competitive and commensurate with experience and is benefits-eligible. Applicants should submit a dossier including: (1) a complete *vita*, (2) a cover letter of interest, and (3) names and contact information of up to three persons who can serve as references. All materials should be submitted on line to <https://academicpositions.harvard.edu/postings/7178>. Materials submitted by regular mail or email will not be accepted. We are an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard

to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

