

Position Description

Director of Research & Evaluation

David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality

A unit of the Forum for Youth Investment

TITLE:	Director of Research & Evaluation
SUPERVISOR:	Managing Director of the Weikart Center
SUMMARY:	The Director of Research & Evaluation will play an instrumental role in advancing the Weikart Center's research-driven youth development and quality improvement initiatives. The director will lead an applied research and evaluation team to design, conduct and manage a range of collaborative research and evaluation projects that support our clients, partners and the youth development field in leveraging continuous improvement approaches to strengthen practices and programs. The director will execute formative and summative evaluations; create and enhance measurement tools; and promote data use for continuous improvement internally and externally. The Director will work closely with the Forum for Youth Investment's senior leadership team to fully utilize the knowledge resources of the organization toward advancement of mission and growth. The ideal candidate will blend superior quantitative and methodological skills with content knowledge in youth development, education and improvement science to drive quality, increase the value and impact of services, and strengthen the field. The position will be based in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Organization Background

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, **the Forum for Youth Investment** is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan "action tank" committed to changing the odds that all children and youth are ready for college, work, and life. It provides ideas, services, and professional networks that leaders need in order to make more intentional decisions that are good for young people. The Forum helps leaders increase their capacity to more effectively make the case for and manage the collaborative efforts that are needed to change the odds for youth, improve the alignment and appropriateness of child and youth policy agendas and investments, and strengthen programs' and practitioners' capacity to create environments in which youth thrive across all the systems and settings where young people spend time.

In 2008, the Forum created the **David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality** to build the capacity of public and private agencies to implement quality improvement and performance systems that simultaneously foster professional learning and whole-child development with the purpose of improving social-sector outcomes. The Weikart Center's research-based core products and services are currently used nationally in over 4,700 out-of-school time settings and form the basis for quality improvement systems in over 125 publicly and privately funded systems. The Weikart Center empowers education and human service leaders to adapt, implement, and scale best-in-class, research-validated, quality-improvement systems to advance child and youth development.

The Forum is a thriving organization with a budget of over \$9.6 million, a staff of 48, and headquarters in Washington DC. This position is based in Ypsilanti, Michigan, at the Weikart Center. The Center has an annual budget of over \$4 million and a staff of 24. Although the Forum overall is funded by a mix of foundations and corporations, with a growing fee-for-service contract base, the Weikart Center's budget is funded predominantly (80+%) by fee-for-service contracts. For more information, please visit <http://www.forumfyi.org/>.

Position Responsibilities

Research & Evaluation (50%)

- Serve as principal investigator on major initiatives and lead the development and delivery of high quality research and evaluation services that meet the needs of system leaders and practitioners in the allied youth fields.
- Develop partnerships with other leading researchers and research organizations to position the Weikart Center in national thought leadership conversations and broaden the scope of researchers and practitioners tapping Weikart's expertise and data.
- Strengthen existing business offerings and cultivate new opportunities that leverage performance information and data products, research and evaluation services, and/or networks of practice-focused researchers or data analysts.
- Design and lead research and evaluation projects on a range of topics including, but not limited to 1) measurement and tool development; 2) management and staff practices that improve program quality and 3) the relationship between quality practices and programs to youth outcomes.
- Support the research team to develop research protocols, draft manuscripts, and collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data, including psychometric evaluation of measures, estimation of primary effects, and secondary analyses using multi-level models and other appropriate techniques.
- Ensure appropriate protocols, protections and legal agreements are in place for work with human subjects and for data collection, management, security, and sharing.

Organizational Strategy (30%)

- As part of the Weikart Center's leadership team, create and manage a 3-5 year plan for research and evaluation strategy and business development related to the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tools and resources as well as broader questions about improving equity, quality and readiness for young people, in alignment with the Forum's overall goals and vision.
- Stay current on field and policy trends in order to provide guidance to the Forum senior leadership team regarding the use of research and evaluation resources and talent to execute strategy, reach business goals and fulfill mission.
- Collaborate with other leaders across the organization to promote organizational health, alignment and achievement of strategic goals.

Project Management (15%)

- In partnership with other directors, lead the development and implementation of grants, contracts and internally funded projects to support translating research to practice and practice to research, ensuring that all deliverables have met or exceed expectations and financial/budgetary reports are tracked and within financial parameters.
- Lead and/or participate in cross-functional project teams.
- Coordinate and manage third-party evaluators conducting impact evaluations.
- Lead the submission process for research aspects of funding proposals in collaboration with all units.

Supervision & Administration (5%)

- Build the Weikart Center's internal research capacity and technical expertise through direct mentoring and coaching of staff on applied research methods, how the work impacts the field, professional development opportunities, and alignment to organization goals.
- Provide targeted recruitment of new applied research talent.
- Hire, train, supervise, evaluate, and develop assigned staff to support a healthy and vibrant workplace.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Performance/Character Requirements

The successful applicant will be a highly motivated, organized leader who demonstrates strong communication skills, both written (e.g., experience with APA format, technical and grant writing) and verbal (e.g., experience leading webinars, facilitating stakeholder discussions, presenting at conferences, and speaking in front of large groups); is committed to superior client service, both internal and external; and demonstrates the Forum's core values around collaboration, accountability, and comfort

with complexity. The candidate must have strong quantitative and qualitative skills; effective project management abilities; and be committed to the Forum's mission of changing the odds that all children and youth are ready for college, work and life.

Professional Qualifications

A Ph.D. in a relevant discipline is required. The successful candidate will have served as a principal investigator on one or more major research initiatives and have demonstrated advanced proficiency with SPSS, Microsoft Excel, and other widely used statistical software packages (e.g., SAS, Mplus, R, Tableau), as well as familiarity with the advanced features of Microsoft Outlook, Excel, Word, and PowerPoint.

In addition, the ideal candidate should possess:

- A minimum of 7-8 years of experience, including five years with project management responsibilities that include designing and leading multiple, simultaneous research/evaluation projects within community-based settings.
- Extensive applied research and evaluation experience, preferably in the youth development, education and/or out-of-school time fields.
- A record of scholarly or other technical publication.
- Substantial and sustained experience with advanced statistical methods (e.g., multi-level modeling, pattern-centered methods, and/or psychometrics), observational measurement, and applied program evaluation design.
- Advanced level of analytical and problem solving skills
- Experience managing personally identifiable information using standard industry data security protocols.

Working Environment

Flexibility is required to adapt to the dynamic work environment of a small non-profit research and consulting organization that has national clients and exposure. The climate is informal but mission-driven. Excellence is valued in every position. Travel is up to 10% of time.

Position & Compensation

The salary range, duties, and responsibilities of this position meet the requirements of Section 13 (a) (1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act and therefore qualifies as an "exempt" position. The Director of Research & Evaluation will be based in Ypsilanti, MI.

Please send resume and cover letter with salary requirements to: jobs@cypq.org. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. If your application is selected for an interview, you will be contacted directly. No telephone calls or inquiry emails, please.

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The Forum for Youth Investment is committed to creating a diverse work environment and is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer and drug-free workplace, and to comply with ADA regulations as applicable. All applicants are considered for all positions without regard to race, religion, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical/mental disability, severe/morbid obesity, medical condition, military/veteran status, genetic information, marital status, ethnicity, alienage or any other protected classification, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. We encourage individuals of all backgrounds to apply. If you are a qualified candidate with a disability, please email us at jobs@forumfyi.org if you require a reasonable accommodation to complete your application.