

Attendance Works
www.attendanceworks.org

Job Description

Position Title: Director of Evaluation and Research
FLSA Status: Full-time (1.0 FTE), Exempt
Reports to: TBD
Salary Range: \$141,250-\$168,000

About Us

Attendance Works is a national, non-profit initiative, fiscally sponsored by Community Initiatives in Oakland, CA. Operating virtually, Attendance Works (www.attendanceworks.org) is the nation's go-to resource for attendance policy and practice. Attendance Works advances success in school and beyond for all students by reducing chronic absence pre-k-12. Funded by a combination of grants and fees, we employ a diverse team of staff located throughout the United States.

Our website (www.attendanceworks.org) is our primary vehicle for communication with the broader public. While many offerings and products are available without charge, including the website, webinars, methods for data collection, toolkits, research and attendance messaging, a variety of fee-based services are also available to schools, districts and/or states. These include individualized consultation, technical assistance, coaching and peer learning networks.

Position Summary

The Director of Evaluation and Research collaborates closely with Attendance Works' CEO, Vice-Presidents, Directors and Associate Directors to lead the organization's approach to measuring impact across programs and initiatives as well as using data and research to engage in continuous improvement.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

1. Organizational Impact

- a. Analyze national, state, and district-level attendance data to identify trends, disparities, and opportunities for impact.
- b. Develop credible frameworks to assess attribution, contribution, and influence where direct causality may be difficult to isolate.
- c. Lead development of an Impact evaluation plan for the organization aligned with Attendance Works' strategic plan and our goal of reducing chronic absence by 50%. The plan should reflect Attendance Works commitment to serving as a field catalyst.

- d. Establish standards for evidence claims used in external communications, fundraising, board materials, and thought leadership.
- e. Ensure impact statements are rigorous, defensible, and clearly communicate limitations.

2. Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

- a. Work with program staff to ensure that research findings are incorporated into TA activities and inspire action
- b. Design and oversee formative and outcome evaluations of Attendance Works programs, tools, and technical assistance initiatives aligned with Attendance Works' Strategic Plan.
- c. Based on analysis of findings, recommend improvements to programmatic strategy and practice aligned with broader organizational goals. Regularly reviews findings with the advisory board, leadership team and all hands.
- d. Build an inclusive research culture that centers the voices and experiences of students and families most impacted by chronic absence.
- e. Provide expert feedback to organization leadership regarding continuous improvement including support with process evaluations for new and existing initiatives to assess implementation quality, reach, fidelity, participant engagement, and operational effectiveness. Integrate quantitative and qualitative evidence.

3. Creation of Dashboards and Tools

- a. Partner with internal teams, partners, and external vendors to design, build, and improve dashboards with data visualizations, reporting tools, data systems, and collection instruments.
- b. Translate business/program needs and grant objectives related to evaluation and research into technical requirements for vendors.
- c. Manage external vendor relationships specific to dashboard and data tool creation including developing scopes of work, timelines, budgets, quality standards and ensuring timely completion of deliverables on budget
- d. Ensure data quality, usability, governance, and reporting consistency.
- e. Manage implementation of new measurement systems or platform enhancements.
- f. Assist with updating and improving data tools including the DATT (District Attendance Tracking Tool) att and SATT (School Attendance Tracking Tool)

4. Lead Strategy to Influence and Disseminate Research

- a. Develop and lead the organization's multi-year research and learning agenda aligned to strategic priorities in partnership with CEO and VPs. This includes identifying and developing strategies to address research gaps as well as cultivating external research partnerships.
- b. Ensures the convening and facilitation of research exchanges — including the Chronic Absence and Attendance Research Exchange (CAARE) and the Attendance Research Consortium (ARC) — that bring together researchers, practitioners, and cross-sector partners to share knowledge, surface insights, address research gaps, and accelerate learning across the field.
- c. Reviews research findings to ensure methodological rigor, evidence standards, as well as practical relevance to ensure what we share is credible, defensible and useful.
- d. Codifies and disseminates findings to translate research into actionable guidance. Partner with the communications team to amplify research findings through digital channels and public engagement.
- e. Partners with State and District impact teams to build capacity of states and districts to adopt evidence based practice
- f. Maintains organized digital research infrastructure to ensure knowledge is accessible, current, and shared across the field."
- g. Represents Attendance Works at conferences and convenings as a credible voice on attendance-related research.
- h. Synthesizes and translates existing research into accessible, publications, briefs, reports, and tools that are accessible to practitioners, prospective funders, partners, and the public.

5. Management Responsibilities:

- a. Manage research consultants, fellows, and potential future staff including hiring, new staff orientation and onboarding, individualized professional development planning, regular performance feedback, and annual evaluation processes."
- b. Support grant proposals and funder reports by providing rigorous evidence of impact and research summaries.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Comfort operating within a **field catalyst organization** that advances systems change through convening, learning, strategy, and cross-sector partnership, including the ability to navigate ambiguity and drive progress through influence and collaboration rather than

direct authority. Brings rigorous thinking, creative problem-solving, and clear, compelling communication to complex challenges across diverse audiences and contexts.

- **Strategic Leadership** Ability to serve as a thought partner to executive and senior leadership on research strategy and organizational learning. Ability to develop and lead a multi-year research and learning agenda aligned to organizational strategic priorities. Ability to establish organizational standards for evidence claims used in external communications, fundraising, and board materials. Understanding of continuous improvement frameworks (e.g., Plan-Do-Study-Act, implementation science). Familiarity with nonprofit funding landscapes, grant reporting expectations, and funder accountability frameworks.
- **Research & Evaluation Methods** Knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research design, including experimental, quasi-experimental, and observational methods. Familiarity with formative, process, outcome, and impact evaluation frameworks. Understanding of Results-Based Accountability (RBA) or similar performance management frameworks. Knowledge of attribution, contribution, and influence methodologies in applied settings where causality is difficult to isolate.
- **Education Data & Policy** Deep knowledge of chronic absence as a field, including national, state, and district-level attendance data systems, metrics, and policy landscape. Understanding of K–12 education systems, student outcome data both overall and disaggregated. Familiarity with federal and state education data sources (e.g., EDFacts, CRDC, state longitudinal data systems).
- **Data Systems & Technology** Knowledge of data governance principles, data quality standards, and reporting consistency practices. Familiarity with dashboard development tools and platforms (e.g., Tableau, Power BI, Looker, or similar). Understanding of data collection instrument design and data management best practices.
- **Analytical & Technical** Proficiency in statistical analysis using tools such as R, Python, Stata, or SPSS. Skill in translating complex datasets into clear, actionable findings for non-technical audiences. Working knowledge of **emerging issues with AI** as they are relevant to research, Evaluation, Continuous Improvement, development of dashboards etc.
- **Writing & Communication** Demonstrated skill in writing briefs, reports, and blog posts for varied audiences — practitioners, funders, policymakers, and the public. Skill in presenting complex findings in accessible, compelling, and visually engaging formats. Ability to craft evidence-based impact statements that are rigorous, defensible, and transparent about limitations.
- **Project & Vendor Management** Skill in scoping, managing, and evaluating vendor relationships, including developing contracts, timelines, budgets, and quality standards. Ability to manage multiple concurrent projects, priorities, and deadlines. Skill in managing consultants, fellows, and staff using a coaching and development orientation.

- **Facilitation & Convening** Skill in facilitating research learning communities, advisory bodies, and working groups (such as CAARE and ARC). Ability to synthesize and codify learnings from diverse stakeholders and disseminate findings effectively.
- **Student and Family Centered Practice** Ability to build and sustain an inclusive research culture that centers the lived experiences of students and families most impacted by chronic absence.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration** Ability to partner effectively both in person and in virtual environments with internal program, communications, and operations teams, as well as external partners, funders, and vendors. The ideal candidate combines research and analytical expertise with a collaborative and learning-oriented spirit, enabling them to engage with colleagues and external partners with a wide range of expertise to apply insights toward achieving greater educational impact

Education and Experience:

- Proven track record of developing organization wide evaluation plans and frameworks.
- Proven track record of developing data dashboards
- Fifteen years of progressively responsible experience in research, evaluation, data analytics, impact measurement, or related functions.
- Experience analyzing large-scale education, youth, or public-sector datasets and translating findings into practice, policy and strategy.
- Experience working in education, nonprofit, public-sector, philanthropy, or systems-change environments preferred.
- Experience producing reports, briefs, board materials, or public-facing thought leadership for diverse audiences.
- Experience managing multiple projects, budgets, timelines, and cross-functional stakeholders.
- Masters degree required, Relevant Doctorate Degree strongly preferred.
- Proven ability to conceptualize, develop and implement evaluation plans
- Proven experience strategizing to meet measurable goals.
- Experience working with national organizations and advancing education initiatives at a statewide and district level.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed. They are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required of personnel so classified.

This is a full-time (1.0 FTE), salaried, exempt position with benefits.

Employee Signature and Date