

Appalachian Family Innovations

Director of Research and Evaluation

POSITION PROFILE

The Research Environment

Appalachian Family Innovations (AFI) offers a rich and varied opportunity for applied research in natural community settings. With nine well articulated and cutting edge programs operating successfully in counties around the Carolinas, the agency affords a unique opportunity for important child and family field research (see our web site at www.familyinnovations.org for detailed descriptions of our current programs). In many respects, these programs and their community-based operating environments constitute a working, real-world laboratory for important and needed exploration of issues of program relevance, efficiency, and efficacy. Some avenues of such research have already been established; others remain to be identified and pursued. The AFI Director of Research & Evaluation (DRE) will enjoy unlimited access to the programs, staff, and data this unusual research environment offers.

Position Overview

The DRE position encompasses several principal components including various responsibilities in the areas of: *A. program outcome research and program/results dissemination; B. grant seeking to support those activities; C. research coordination with ASU faculty and graduate students; D. leadership with recurrent practitioner performance evaluation activities; E. academic program coordination and university teaching; F. supervision of the professional staff of the AFI Research and Evaluation (R&E) Division; and, G. general agency support.* The DRE activities in these areas are summarized below.

A. Program Outcome/Efficacy Research

AFI does and will continue to aspire to assess the ongoing effectiveness of the programs it offers on relevant dimensions of the success of the clients of those programs. This effort, which has begun with some but not all of our current programs, needs to be systematized and broadened to include all AFI programs and individual program enhancements as those are attempted. The purpose of such research is: 1. To guide program development and refinement; 2. To produce and publish data that may be useful to other organizations working with similar problems and populations; and, 3. To establish all AFI programs as at least “evidence-informed” and, eventually, as “evidence-based” according to the changing standards associated with the evidence-based movement. The DRE will play a principal role in the design, conduct, and preparation of such research for publication or other dissemination.

In addition to the publication of data-based articles in applied professional journals as indicated

above, the DRE will assist in the broader dissemination of related program information via presentations at state and national conferences and by preparation of occasional informed articles for the newsletter of our national association, the TFA Newsletter, and for AFI's quarterly newsletter, Innovations.

B. Grant Seeking

The DRE will be expected to actively pursue and administer extracurricular funding to forward the research activities just mentioned, i.e., to develop and submit competitive applications for public sector and foundation funding for the efforts.

C. Research Coordination/Collaboration with ASU Faculty/Graduate Students

In connection with the above research activities, the DRE will be expected to cultivate faculty contacts at ASU for purposes of jointly pursuing research activities of mutual interest to them and to AFI. Such efforts may include graduate level students at the university.

D. Leadership/Oversight of Recurrent Practitioner Evaluations

Each of the constituent programs of AFI aspires to regularly and meaningfully evaluate the professional performance of its practitioners in the interest of ongoing integrity to the program models they follow. Some of our programs have effective and longstanding program evaluation protocols in place, notably the Teaching-Family Model (TFM) protocol used with our group homes, our Home Remedies Family Specialists and mentioned below under **F**. Others are still constructing those protocols and will benefit from conceptual oversight and methodological guidance from the DRE to assist individual program directors and coordinators in the design and implementation of such protocols as well as any attendant data analysis that may be helpful to make meaningful use of those.

E. Program Coordination/Teaching with the AFI Teaching-Parent Master's Degree Program Through ASU

The DRE serves as Program Coordinator for this program and also serves as the professor of record in various courses in that program. Such courses are usually taught in an independent studies format. Typically, four to six students are enrolled annually. Some core courses are taught by ASU faculty members in their regular classes at ASU. Our master's program is offered primarily to qualified practitioners in the Teaching-Family Model group homes and to current employees of the agency, and most pursue the course work toward their degrees on a part-time basis. The program offers those students substantial flexibility in terms of content and pace, and is well respected within the university and in the communities where our students work.

Among the AFI-based courses that are frequently offered to our students are, *introduction to behavior management, advanced behavioral concepts, introduction to Teaching Family Model, field training in the Teaching-Family Model, comprehensive review of evidenced-based*

programs, program evaluation in the Teaching-Family Model, and foundation grant seeking.

In order to fulfill this teaching responsibility, the DRE must qualify for either full or associate membership in the ASU Graduate Faculty. Full membership requires the terminal degree (preferably in the behavioral sciences, e.g., psychology, sociology, social work) and “sustained evidence” of teaching excellence and scholarly accomplishment. Associate membership requires the terminal degree or promise of imminent completion of it and “... evidence of commitment to graduate teaching, research, and the goals of graduate study at ASU.” Determination of graduate status is the province of ASU.

F. Supervision of the Staff of the Research & Evaluation Division

The position of DRE has historically been attached to the research and evaluation division of AFI and will, as it has, represent the senior and thus supervisory staff position in that area of the agency. That division is principally responsible for the conduct of recurrent performance evaluations of practitioners in TFA group homes around the region, and its administrative and professional staff typically number between three and five. The protocol used in these evaluations is among the best refined in the agency and may serve as a template for the DRE oversight/guidance with the DRE activities described in **D.**, above.

G. General Agency Support

The DRE has historically provided occasional, non-research related guidance and expertise, as required, to forward the general goals of the agency and its constituent programs as well as those of the Director of Development.

As suggested, the performance of the DRE research, teaching, and other responsibilities will benefit importantly from a strong interest and background in behavior analytic precepts and applications.

Application Process

Candidates may apply by:

- Submitting a letter that includes a rationale for interest in and qualifications for the position with explicit responses to the required qualifications;
- Submitting a current curriculum vita; and,
- Providing names of five references currently familiar with the candidate’s work with addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers.

Review of completed applications will begin April 1, 2008, and the position will remain open until filled. Salary is negotiable and commensurate with experience and qualifications. Target date for filling the position is July 1, 2008.

Send application materials, preferably in pdf electronic format, to:

patrice.white@familyinnovations.org

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