Position: Data Scientist

About the Lab
The California Policy Lab creates data-driven insights for the public good. Our mission is to partner with California’s state and local governments to generate scientific evidence that solves California’s most urgent issues, including homelessness, poverty, criminal justice reform, and education inequality. We facilitate close partnerships between policymakers and researchers at the University of California to help evaluate and improve public programs through empirical research and technical assistance. CPL’s UCLA site sits within CCPR and is a dynamic and growing organization with 20 full-time employees, a half dozen graduate student researchers, and numerous faculty affiliates. CPL is extramurally funded by over 20 different federal and foundation grants supporting over 60 major research projects.

CPL recognizes the value of having a diverse staff at all levels of the organization. We are looking for equity-minded applicants who represent and understand the diverse racial and ethnic, gender identity, sexual orientation, educational, socioeconomic, cultural, and disability backgrounds present in California. When you join our team, you can expect to be part of an inclusive and equity-focused community.

The role
The California Policy Lab is seeking an experienced Data Scientist to contribute to our organization’s proven track record of bridging the gap between academic researchers and government policymakers. The Data Scientist will have the opportunity to work on a portfolio of projects applying machine learning to public policy research in homelessness, criminal justice, poverty, education, and labor.

The successful candidate will be experienced in engineering data pipelines and implementing predictive models in real-world environments. He or she will be passionate about using data science to find innovative solutions to the problems facing California policymakers and citizens. This position requires an individual who is able to work as a part of small research teams running multiple projects concurrently. We seek highly organized individuals with superior written and verbal communications skills and excellent time management ability. The Data Scientist also will be required to follow coding guidelines established by CPL and to contribute to the organization’s efforts to build detailed documentation of the data we use.

The Data Scientist will report to CPL’s Senior Data Scientist and will work collaboratively with CPL’s Directors, staff and partner agencies. This position is based in Los Angeles, California.
Responsibilities

Research and Analysis (60%)
- Perform exploratory analysis on new datasets and identify potential research questions or projects the data could support.
- Contribute to the design and implementation of predictive models in a public policy setting, including the identification of prediction problems, intervention and research design, and ML engineering.
- Apply causal inference methods to the analysis of policy and program impacts.
- Provide in-person progress reports to CPL Directors and research team members.
- Prepare results in creative and visually appealing ways for memos and presentations targeting both policymakers and academic researchers.
- Create or add to existing data documentation that supports CPL’s research projects.
- Write replicable code adhering to CPL’s coding guidelines.

Data Engineering and Data Architecture (40%)
- Collaborate with internal research team members and external agency partners on the design and implementation of efficient and robust data pipelines.
- Consult with internal and external partners on best practices for data engineering and infrastructure, including the identification and adoption of new technology stacks where appropriate.

Education and experience required
Applicants must have a bachelor’s degree in computer science, statistics, economics, mathematics or other relevant field; master’s degree preferred. Applicants must also have at least one year of relevant professional experience (two to three years preferred).

Qualifications
Required:
- Strong SQL skills
- Strong skills in Python or R
- Strong skills in data visualization
- Attention to detail and ability to organize and document workflow
- Strong initiative and a resourceful approach to problem-solving
- Superior verbal and written communication skills, including the ability to communicate technical results and recommendations to non-technical stakeholders
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Ability to multi-task with demanding timeframes
- Ability to work discreetly with sensitive and confidential data

Preferred:
- Experience working in an academic or think-tank environment preferred
- Substantive knowledge or experience in at least one of our core research areas – homelessness, poverty, or labor
• Substantive knowledge of SQL database internals, including query optimization, indexing, and execution plans
• Substantive knowledge of the design and implementation of ETL pipelines, relational databases, and data warehouses. Experience with cloud computing and Big Data frameworks a plus.
• Substantive knowledge of quantitative research methods including machine learning and statistics. Knowledge of causal inference methods a plus.
• The ability to work comfortably in both Python and R.
• Project management experience
• Experience with Business Intelligence (BI) platforms

Salary & Benefits
This is full-time position. Salary is commensurate with experience. Hiring range is $5,167 - $13,233 monthly. For information on the comprehensive benefits package offered by the University visit: https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/compensation-and-benefits/index.html.

To apply
All applicants must apply online at UCLA Career Opportunities using requisition number 33830.

Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Statement
The University of California is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer advancing inclusive excellence. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, protected veteran status, or other protected categories covered by the UC nondiscrimination policy. UC Nondiscrimination & Affirmative Action Policy.