

## Innovation Field Lab New York - Research Assistant

### Program Background

---

The Innovation Field Lab New York is a program that provides direct support to cities to improve government operations in code enforcement through data-driven governance, community input and organizational capacity building. The IFL NY works with a unique collaborative of cities and organizations, under a state-led initiative called Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement (Cities RISE), that provides funding and technical assistance to pilot creative and forward-thinking initiatives that fight problem property conditions and neighborhood distress. The ten New York cities include Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Elmira, Mt Vernon, Newburgh, Niagara Falls, Syracuse, Rochester and White Plains.

Given the trailing impacts of COVID-19, the next several months will be crucial for effective, efficient, and equitable government. Current municipal finances and capacity are extremely limited. It is important that the technical assistance meet evolving needs in a timely manner, to ensure that city investments are optimized to reach those most in need and that neighborhood conditions improve for local residents.

### Nature of Work

---

The Ash Center's Technical Assistance interfaces directly with cities to advance grant-awarded innovation strategies. Given the impacts due to COVID-19, certain work plan activities have shifted in priorities and programming to meet Cities RISE objectives and timelines as well as evolving city needs. As a result, implementation efforts are briskly underway. Cities are working on a variety of awarded projects, which include a community ambassador program to help owners, tenants, and landlords navigate enforcement actions, implementation of policies and procedures to create more equitable code enforcement operations, and a series of innovative virtual engagements to increase housing policy & rights knowledge.

### Job Details

---

An ambitious graduate student would be instrumental in:

- Advancing COVID-related support through learning and sharing across cities
  - Includes organizing city exchanges as necessary (to share challenges and successes) and development of webinars of best practice
- Developing detailed analysis to support abovementioned efforts for specific cities
  - Including city-specific data analysis or specialized research to address particular needs
  - Supporting in the design and evaluation of community engagement efforts
  - Guiding the establishment of a public-facing 311 citizen engagement dashboard
- Developing IFL New York publications, including lessons learned and highlights of city innovations

**We are looking for a Research Assistant for the Fall semester thru December 2020**, with the opportunity to continue through March 2021 if mutually agreeable. We are offering \$20 per hour, not to exceed 14 hours per week. There is no anticipated travel and the work will be entirely remote.

### Skills and Experience

---

The ideal candidate would have experience (or deep interest) in municipal government and resident-focused governance, including collaboration with city administrators, residents, front-line city employees, and community stakeholders. Candidates should have strong communication skills, comfort with ambiguity, and willingness to work independently with limited direct supervision. **Interested candidates please email Lindsay Woodson ([Lindsay.Woodson@hks.harvard.edu](mailto:Lindsay.Woodson@hks.harvard.edu)) with a resume and one-page Statement of Interest.**