POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, DEMOCRACY
About Sightline Institute

Founded in 1993, Sightline Institute is committed to making Cascadia, stretching from Alaska to northern California, a global model of sustainability—with strong communities, a green economy, and a healthy environment. We are the largest progressive think tank in our region, and we promote smart policy and monitor the region's progress.

Sightline provides research reports and commentary; maps, graphics and tools; framing and messaging guidance; and Sightline Daily—news and views for the Northwest. We advise, inform, and advocate to public officials, change makers, and the media, and we collaborate with diverse allies in pursuit of our mission. Learn more at www.sightline.org.

About Sightline’s Democracy Program

Climate change, housing shortages, and inequality threaten communities in Cascadia and beyond. To confront these challenges, we need institutions of democracy that represent all of us and that all of us can believe in. Yet, at this crucial moment, our institutions are showing their cracks and flaws. We must mend those cracks and reform those flaws. Sightline’s democracy program works on three fronts: ensuring every citizen can exercise their right to vote, giving everyone a voice in elections, and seeking equal representation for all. In recent years, we have:

• Helped Alaska pass Measure 2, which will implement open primaries and ranked choice voting in all state and federal races.
• Armed election administrators and advocate in every state with information they needed to urgently ramp up voting by mail in advance of the 2020 election amidst coronavirus.
• Contributed significantly to designing and passing Seattle’s first-in-the-nation Democracy Vouchers program.
• Contributed to the movement to successfully pass Automatic Voter Registration in Washington.
• Successfully pushed Oregon to join the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.
• Helped build support for a bill that would allow local jurisdictions in Washington to adopt proportional ranked choice voting.
• Built the case for using proportional election methods to elect a more representative city council in Portland, Oregon.
Research Associate Position

The Research Associate reports to the Director, Democracy & Climate and works closely with communications staff. They conduct research and analysis in support of writing articles and reports, public speaking, advocacy, and other activities. They will eventually develop into co-authoring or authoring articles, representing Sightline in communications with allies or decision makers, and communicating with our audiences to advance Sightline’s mission.

Primary Responsibilities

Research and Outreach

Conduct research as directed by the Director, Democracy & Climate. You may also conduct outreach under the guidance of more senior Communications staff members. This might include:

• Delving into an assigned topic and delivering a scrupulously accurate and thoroughly documented write-up on the subject and/or a spreadsheet and/or other research products;
• Helping to finalize articles or graphics for publication;
• Preparing PowerPoint presentations and speaking notes for your supervisors’ public appearances;
• Creating charts and graphs for publication and presentations;
• Helping coordinate outreach lists with Sightline’s communications staff;
• Coordinating with graphic designers and research specialists to develop supporting charts, maps, and other supplementary pieces;
• Undertaking special projects, from photo editing to video production to investigative reporting, as suits your skills and Sightline’s needs; and
• Exemplifying the attention to detail, accuracy, and compelling storytelling that have established Sightline’s reputation.

Professional Development

Sightline is committed to professional development and often promotes researchers from within, so Research Associates begin to develop their own expertise and grow into helping write and publish articles, eventually under their own names. In time and as possible, they may also make public presentations, under the direction of senior staff, and may represent the organization at meetings, events, and other gatherings. They may speak on Sightline’s behalf with the media.
In addition, as for all Sightline staff members, the Research Associate is expected to:

- Participate fully in the life of the organization, contributing to Sightline’s cohesiveness and supportive working environment and fostering its culture of collaboration and consensus seeking.
- Treat all fellow staff members, interns, and volunteers with integrity and goodwill and without prejudice in regard to race, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, or other personal attributes irrelevant to job performance.

The Ideal Applicant

- 1-3 years of relevant research or analytical experience.
- INSATIABLE CURIOSITY. You love to learn more, dig deeper, overturn every rock until you figure out how things really work.
- WRITER. You are always striving to get better at communicating complex ideas in a way that helps readers understand.
- ANALYST. You get excited about data and spreadsheets.
- COMMUNICATOR. In addition to honing your skills communicating to readers, you are also comfortable communicating with co-workers.
- FLEXIBLE. You relish examining problems from different angles, taking in new information, changing your mind.
- TEAM PLAYER. You enjoy jumping in where needed.
- Comfortable communicating about what you’re working on, where you’re stuck, when you need guidance, when you don’t understand or don’t agree with the direction of a project.
- METICULOUS. We are a policy think tank. We get the facts right or we lose credibility. Like us, you hate typos (they happen to everybody) and strive to make sure you understand the big picture context and get the details right.
- BELIEVE IN OUR MISSION. You are committed to making our institutions of democracy fairly representative so that, together, we can pass the policies that will create strong communities, a green economy, and a healthy environment.
- EQUITY. You center equity and inclusion in your work, always striving to conduct culturally relevant research, write with a variety of audiences in mind and generally bring an equity lens to everything you do.
- RESPECTFUL AND OPEN. You treat all fellow staff members, interns, and volunteers with integrity and goodwill and without prejudice in regard to race, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other personal attributes irrelevant to job performance.

Flexibility

We most likely will hire a candidate who is at the “Associate” level of skill and experience, as just described. We are, however, flexible and will consider candidates who are more experienced and skilled, at Sightline’s “Senior Associate” level. Candidates with 3-7 years of experience would qualify for the Senior Associate level and duties, expectations, and compensation would ramp up to adjust for experience level. We look for the overall promise of the candidate to contribute to our mission over the long term.
Compensation and Benefits

Target salary for the Research Associate is $40,000-$50,000 (plus 10 percent retirement, as noted below). Candidates at the Senior Research Associate level would be eligible for a salary band above this range.

We offer a robust package of benefits including a 401k plan with employer contribution of 10% of salary (added to, not subtracted from, pay); full medical and dental insurance for self and partial coverage for dependents; four weeks of paid vacation, nine paid holidays, and two weeks of paid sick leave per year, and a three-month paid sabbatical leave every seven years. Sightline’s staff members work hard but enjoy balanced lives and a collegial organizational culture.

Location

Though Sightline Institute is headquartered at an office in Seattle (during non-pandemic times), we employ staff in five Cascadian cities in four states, and contractors in far more locations. This position will be remote for the foreseeable future. We prefer candidates located in the PST time zone with knowledge of the Cascadia region.

To Apply

Please send a resume and cover letter detailing your interest in the role and how your skills translate to the position and a writing sample (of which you are sole author and that is similar to Sightline’s published works in its style and form of argument) to jobs@sightline.org. (For models of comparable work, you might review articles published by current Senior Researchers on Sightline’s staff: here and here.) We prefer all application materials be assembled in a single PDF and labeled with the applicant’s name. Please also tell us in your email where you found this position; this information helps us streamline our recruiting processes.

THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MARCH 19, 2021, and applications received by that date will be given priority, but we will accept applications until the position is filled. First round Zoom interviews will take place through March 24, 2021. Second round Zoom interviews will take place through late March/early April and we anticipate extending an offer before the end of April.

Sightline Institute is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. Applicants will not be discriminated against because of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, religion, national origin, citizenship status, disability, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, medical condition or any protected category prohibited by local, state or federal laws.