



POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Researcher, Housing + Cities



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About Sightline Institute

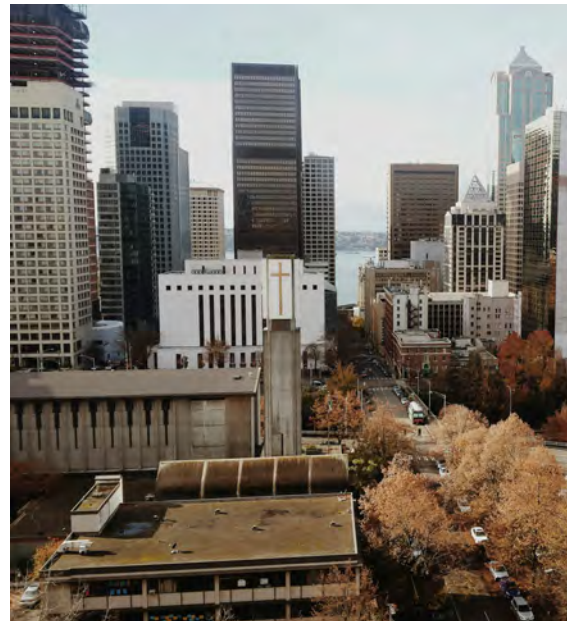
Founded in 1993, Sightline Institute is committed to making Cascadia, a region stretching from Alaska to northern California and the Pacific to the Rocky Mountain States, a global model of sustainability—with strong communities, a green economy, and a healthy environment. We are among the largest think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



In programs for housing and cities, democracy and elections, climate and energy, and farms and forests, Sightline provides research reports and commentary; maps, graphics and tools; framing and messaging guidance; and Sightline Daily—news and views for Cascadia. 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.

Opportunity for Impact:

Our Housing + Cities team works to create housing abundance as a solution to multiple pressing challenges: affordability, climate change, racial equity, and sprawl. We develop and drive pro-housing policy at the local, state, and federal level, with a core goal to lift exclusionary zoning rules that limit affordable home choices, to promote policies that increase the supply of housing at all levels, and to bring down the cost of living in opportunity-dense cities and towns. We work to loosen restrictions on homebuilding that segregate neighborhoods, push lower-income people out—forcing burdensome, polluting commutes—and prevent Cascadian cities from welcoming new residents. In recent years we have:



- *Played a key role in Washington's big zoning reform wins on middle housing and ADUs along with bills improving codes and permitting, in the 2023 session that became known as the "year of housing"*
- *Shaped and helped defend Oregon's best-in-nation statewide parking reforms*
- *Spearheaded two Washington bills introduced for the first time in 2024 that legalized co-living homes and set statewide standards for parking configurations*
- *Played a key role in both policy development and coalition building that led to the legalization of fourplexes in Portland*
- *Helped pass statewide legalization of duplexes in Oregon, the first law of its kind in the US*
- *Spearheaded legislation to end roommate bans in Washington and Oregon*
- *Influenced 2024 Montana bills that legalized duplexes, ADUs, and housing in commercial zones*
- *Helped pass in Anchorage legislation to reform ADU rules, eliminate parking mandates, and improve building codes*
- *Influenced 2023 Boise zoning reforms for ADUs, middle housing, and apartment buildings*
- *Drove the regional conversation on housing abundance policy and messaging through published research, focus groups, social media, speaking engagements, press interviews, and explainer videos*

About the position



The Researcher will staff our work as a thought leader, policy researcher, analyst, writer, communicator, and advocate. They will develop and deploy expertise on policies to create housing abundance, primarily zoning reform, but also other types of reforms that Sightline has identified as promising. They will implement strategies for using information and communications to help win passage of these reforms, often in coordination with cross-partisan coalitions.

The Researcher will focus on opportunities for state legislation in Washington but will also engage on efforts in Alaska and Montana and on initiatives in local jurisdictions if strategic opportunities arise. The thrust of these efforts will be to further the Housing + Cities team's current priorities to (1) legalize larger apartment buildings in more places, especially near transit;

(2) end costly parking mandates everywhere; and (3) hold local governments accountable for producing enough housing. The researcher will research, conduct detailed analyses, and develop arguments in support of these reforms; write articles, policy memos, and talking points; and create graphics, give presentations, serve as a resource to the media, and lobby public officials. They will cultivate relationships with leaders and partners across many types of diversity, including racial, ethnic, economic, geographic, and political.

The researcher will report to the Senior Director of the Housing + Cities team and collaborate with the rest of that seven-member team, including staff members in Alaska, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. They will benefit from being part of a high-functioning cadre of other researchers, communicators, and advocates, supported by a well-run administrative and fundraising operation based in Seattle.

Ideal Candidate, Skills, and Experience

Sightline is a think tank, not a pressure group, so our influence depends on the depth and breadth of our researchers' expertise and their persuasiveness in presenting analysis and arguments. We aim to draw attention to and build support for data-backed solutions to specific public problems through close engagement in policy debates. And we seek strategic deployment of our skills in the multilayered complexities of political processes, often as part of cross-partisan coalitions. The successful candidate will have a record of affecting influence in at least some of these ways. The ideal candidate will have a number of the following skills:

- *A record of influencing policy progress through careful research and analysis, excellent writing, persuasive presentations and advocacy, and strategic engagement in complicated coalitions*
- *At least five years of relevant professional experience using ideas and information to advance the public good—preferably in the field of this position but at least in similar or related ones*
- *Advanced analytical skills, such as GIS, real estate development economics, or demographics number crunching*
- *Experience crafting or administering zoning and land use regulations*

In addition, all candidates will have:

- *A pragmatic and long-term approach to policy reforms and political change*
- *The ability to be self-directed and motivated and to work independently*
- *Experience weighing diversity, equity, and inclusion in research, advocacy, and communication*
- *Commitment to Sightline's mission and values*

Positional Flexibility

We most likely will hire a candidate who is at Sightline's "researcher" level of skill and experience, as just described. We are, however, flexible and will consider exceptional candidates who are less experienced and skilled. Duties, expectations, and compensation would ramp down, commensurately. We look for the overall promise of the candidate to contribute to our mission over the long term. Therefore, if you are somewhat underqualified for the position as described but still feel you could be a good fit for Sightline and the role, please apply.

Location

Because the work of this position focuses on Washington state, we would prefer to have someone who lives in or is willing to relocate to the state. Candidates who live outside Washington are welcome to apply if they have a deep understanding of housing policy in other places that could inform and improve our work in Washington and are willing to travel regularly to the state.

Sightline is a virtual-first organization. In October 2024, we will vacate our small, remaining physical office in Seattle and will no longer lease any traditional office space. Our staff, contractors, and fellows are in Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington and beyond Cascadia as well.

Compensation and Benefits

The salary range (for the researcher level) is \$70,000 to \$85,000 (plus 10 percent retirement, as noted below). Candidates at the next lower level (senior associate) would be eligible for a salary band below this range. Sightline is committed to supporting team members along their career pathways by encouraging learning and providing mentoring and training. Employees can earn annual merit raises and periodic promotions.

We offer a robust package of benefits including a 401(k) plan with employer contribution of 10 percent of salary (added to, not subtracted from, pay, so for example, a \$70,000 salary at Sightline is equivalent to a \$77,000 salary at an organization that makes no employer contribution to retirement). Benefits also include full medical, dental, and vision insurance for the employee and partial coverage for dependents; a monthly remote work stipend; regular staff gatherings for in-person connection; four weeks of paid vacation, ten 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.

To Apply

Please send a resume and cover letter detailing your interest in the role and how your skills translate to the position, and succinctly summarize your experience advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Please include at least one writing sample of which you are sole author and that is similar to Sightline's published works in its style and form of argument. For models of comparable work, you can review articles published by Sightline's Housing and Cities team here. Also welcome are other supporting materials, such as publications and videos of speeches or media appearances.

We prefer that you assemble all application materials in a single PDF, labeled with your name. Send everything to jobs@sightline.org. Please put Sightline Researcher, Housing and Cities as the subject line of the email. Please also tell us where you learned about this position; this information helps us streamline our recruiting process. Applications that do not include at least a cover letter, resume, and writing sample will not be considered.

THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 4, 2024, and applications received by that date will be given priority. We will accept applications until the position is filled. Interviews will take place in early June. We will likely invite finalists to complete a work assignment that is designed to test their skills in the specific functions required for the position. We anticipate extending an offer in late June or early July.

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.

