

# PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

## **Employment Opportunity: Policy Fellow (title negotiable)**

### **The Prison Policy Initiative**

The non-profit, non-partisan Prison Policy Initiative ([www.prisonpolicy.org](http://www.prisonpolicy.org)) produces cutting edge research to expose the broader harm of mass incarceration, and sparks advocacy campaigns to create a more just society.

While we are best known for leading innovative and successful campaigns — such as our projects to end prison gerrymandering and to protect families from the predatory prison and jail telephone industry — a growing part of our work and impact is focused on directly fueling the national movement for criminal justice reform. We've gained national recognition for compiling and presenting up-to-date information about the criminal justice system that empowers policymakers, journalists, advocates, and the general public to participate in the justice reform movement.

### **The position**

The Policy Fellow will be a key part of our team of dedicated staff members who, along with our network of volunteers, develop and produce groundbreaking publications from our office in Western Massachusetts.

One of the main impediments to criminal justice reform is basic gaps in criminal justice data, which prevent advocates from 1) making critical big picture connections, and 2) grounding reform discussions in specific policy options. We are seeking a Policy Fellow that can fill these data and messaging gaps, thereby guiding the growing interest in decarceration into a more effective movement for criminal justice reform.

We are looking for someone with proven research and writing skills who can intuitively know the impact of potential projects and the complexity of accomplishing them. We want that rare researcher and writer who understands that the purpose of research is not to spew out data, but to use specific and targeted information to spur social change.

We would teach the Policy Fellow our model, and the Fellow would take the lead on a series of projects similar in scope to those in our National Incarceration Briefing Series available at <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/national/>. The Fellow would get to work collaboratively with our team that has successfully filled critical gaps in

data, from publishing racial disparities in incarceration — which the Bureau of Justice Statistics stopped publishing in 2006 — to updating decades-old figures for the pre-incarceration incomes of people in prison. We are looking for candidates eager to tell accessible and compelling stories that will build a larger and stronger movement for criminal justice reform.

We currently have dedicated funding for one year and are actively seeking other investors to possibly extend this position for a second year of work.

We are an equal opportunity employer. People from communities that are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, or people with direct experience with the criminal justice system are especially encouraged to apply.

**Qualified applicants will have many of these qualities and skills:**

- A demonstrated passion for criminal justice reform and an understanding that social change requires empowering the public to participate in setting policy.
- At least two years of criminal justice experience in a professional, academic, volunteer or personal capacity. (Helpful: a graduate degree in a relevant field and/or hands-on experience with criminal justice issues in multiple states.)
- A demonstrated ability to write clearly and concisely in an engaging manner. (Helpful: previous journalism experience.)
- A history of creative thinking and problem solving.
- Experience using data to tell social justice stories. (Helpful: formal training in, or an aptitude for, statistical research or effective display of quantitative data in print or online.)
- A natural inclination to compare the benefits of a given strategy to the effort it would require and to shift strategy accordingly.
- Basic office software literacy including a familiarity with Excel or equivalent.
- Enthusiasm about, or have some experience with, learning to use technology more efficiently.
- Ability to start as soon as possible in our Easthampton, Massachusetts office. (Required: You can start by the end of June 2016.) (Requests to work in a potential satellite Hartford, Connecticut office will be considered, but the collaborative structure of our work will not allow us to consider requests to work remotely from other parts of the country.)

**Salary & Benefits**

The expected salary for this position is \$40,000/year plus health insurance, all Massachusetts state holidays, paid vacation, paid sick time, and an IRA match.

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**To apply**

Please send the following in one email to [jobs@prisonpolicy.org](mailto:jobs@prisonpolicy.org):

- A cover letter
- Your resume or c.v.
- At least three writing samples: one should reflect your experience on a criminal justice issue, another should illustrate your ability to explain complex issues to a popular audience, and the last one can be on any topic.
- Our Policy Fellow skills assessment form at [http://www.prisonpolicy.org/PolicyFellow\\_skills.doc](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/PolicyFellow_skills.doc)

**Hiring process**

We will be reviewing applications and scheduling interviews on a weekly basis. We anticipate doing a phone screen with the Executive Director, an interview by Skype with other staff members and then an in-person interview.

Please allow us to keep our daily focus on improving the criminal justice system by refraining from writing or calling the office to check on the status of your application. We'll keep the job page at <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/jobs.html> up to date with the status of our candidate search.