

UCLA Law COVID Behind Bars Data Project seeks Data Scientist to join the team

In the face of the danger posed by COVID to people incarcerated in prisons and jails, the UCLA Prison Law and Policy Program launched the UCLA COVID Behind Bars Data Project in March 2020. Currently a team of eight staff and dozens of volunteers, the Project tracks the spread and impact of COVID in prisons and jails as well as efforts, both in and out of court, to decrease populations and improve conditions to better protect incarcerated people and staff.

The Project seeks a data scientist to join our interdisciplinary team of data scientists and policy researchers to obtain, process, and analyze COVID data from carceral facilities, including state and federal prisons, county and city jails, immigration detention centers, and juvenile detention centers.

We are a small team and work collaboratively, though remotely. The work we produce is intended for both technical and broader public audiences. Examples include the following:

- Op-eds and collaborations with journalists (e.g., in [Atlantic](#), [USA Today](#), [Miami Herald](#), [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), [Chicago Tribune](#), [New York Times](#))
- Published research in public health journals (e.g., in [JAMA](#), [AJPM](#), [MMWR](#))
- [Blog posts](#) and [white papers](#) on data trends and policies related to the pandemic behind bars
- [Social media posts](#) drawing attention to outbreaks and other urgent issues
- State and federal congressional testimony on prison officials' management of the pandemic
- Support for litigators advocating for decarceration and health protections for incarcerated people
- Data to power the [CDC's Correctional Facility COVID Data Tracker](#)

Responsibilities include the following:

- Maintaining data pipelines to scrape and compile data from a range of sources using R
- Developing and documenting reproducible code to integrate and standardize disparate datasets
- Creating impactful data visualizations for social media and reports
- Analyzing and communicating findings from data and statistical analyses to various audiences (e.g., the public, journalists, legislators, litigators, advocates)

Required qualifications include the following:

- Proficiency using R to manipulate data and draw insights from large, complex datasets
- Experience working with diverse collaborators with varying levels of data literacy
- Familiarity with git/GitHub or another version control system
- Familiarity or interest in working with public health and/or criminal justice data
- Outstanding initiative, judgement, attention to detail, and the ability to work independently and solve problems creatively

Preferred qualifications include the following:

- Experience with Python or another programming language
- Prior experience building or maintaining productionized ETL pipelines in R or Python
- Experience with web-scraping or using OCR to convert data from unstructured sources to a machine-readable format
- Experience drafting and organizing public records requests to gather data from agencies
- A relevant graduate or undergraduate degree
- Lived experience with and/or knowledge of the criminal legal system

This position will begin immediately and is funded for an initial term of six months of full-time work, with a possible extension depending on need and funding. The work will be remote; applicants need not reside in California. They will be supervised by Professor Sharon Dolovich, Director of the Prison Law and Policy Program, and Aaron Littman, Binder Clinical Teaching Fellow, both of the UCLA School of Law. The salary will be \$70,000 per annum with limited benefits including health insurance. To apply, please send a cover letter explaining your interest in and qualifications for the position, resume, and list of references to Trinh Bui at bui@law.ucla.edu, with the following subject line: "Data Scientist – COVID Behind Bars Data Project – [Your Last Name]". Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis beginning immediately.

UCLA is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or protected Veteran status.