

November 15, 2020

Abt Associates
10 Fawcett Street, Suite 5
Cambridge, MA 02138-1168

Dear Search Committee Chair,

I am writing to apply for the position of Senior Analyst in the Department of Social and Economic Policy at Abt Associates, as advertised on JOE. I expect to graduate in May 2021 with my PhD in Economics from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. My area of specialization is Applied Microeconomics, with an emphasis on Public Economics, Urban Economics, and Innovation Economics. My experience, skillset, and research interests make me an excellent candidate for this position at Abt.

Prior to graduate school, I worked in Birmingham, AL with the nonprofit Impact Alabama (now Impact America). Over the course of two years, I gained valuable experience in speaking with community members and officials, working with tight deadlines, and managing others. More importantly, I lived and worked with vulnerable populations, which gave me direct insight into the challenges facing marginalized communities. As a result of these experiences, I bring a unique perspective to my research that sets me apart from many of my economist peers.

During graduate school, I have developed strong quantitative skills. I am comfortable with managing large datasets, advanced statistical modelling, and computer programming. As a Graduate Research Assistant under Dr. Stephen Sills as the Center for Housing and Community Studies, I gained experience in qualitative analysis, data collection, and reporting. I have been fortunate to present my research in both academic and practitioner settings, which has given me experience discussing my work with research, practice, policy, and government audiences. As a co-author, I have learned to work well on teams, including those with members at other institutions, to develop and complete a research project.

My current research focuses on the prevalence and prevention of rental housing evictions. As a result, I bring expertise in housing related to children, youth, and families. In my job market paper, I study the effect of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits on rental housing evictions. I construct a large dataset using state-level UI benefit information from the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, as well as county-level eviction filing rates from the Eviction Lab. Using data from nearly all US counties from 2002-2016, I exploit the variation in UI benefits across states to estimate the effect of benefits on filings. Despite what intuition may indicate, I find that higher UI benefits lead to higher eviction filing rates. My current research signals my broader interest in analyzing real world problems. I am interested in continuing to use rigorous analysis techniques to provide insight into programs and policies that can improve communities, particularly those that are marginalized.

I am available for virtual interviews on demand. I am including my CV. Letters of recommendation have been requested and will follow. Please visit my website: www.kelsighobbs.com for my complete profile and do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kelsi G. Hobbs

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