



UNC
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Eviction Lab
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544

Dear Search Committee Chair,

I am writing to apply for the position of Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Eviction Lab, as advertised in the Chronicle of Higher Education. 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 skillset, research interests, and experience make me an excellent candidate for this position.

Prior to graduate school, I worked in Birmingham, AL with the nonprofit Impact Alabama (now Impact America). During my first year, I provided free vision screenings to rural and urban preschoolers, coached a Birmingham City middle school debate team, and managed a free income tax preparation program in Northwest, AL. In my second year, I oversaw the marketing and outreach for half of our free income tax preparation programs across the state. 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.

As a graduate student, I have developed strong quantitative skills through my coursework and my dissertation research. I am comfortable with managing large datasets, advanced statistical modelling, and computer programming. During my time as a Graduate Research Assistant under Dr. Stephen Sills at the Center for Housing and Community studies, I worked with a multi-generational team of researchers to better understand the eviction crisis facing Greensboro, NC. Additionally, as a co-author, I have learned to work with researchers inside and outside my institution to develop and complete a project.

My current research focuses on the prevalence and prevention of rental housing evictions. As a result, I have a strong knowledge of the literature on housing instability. 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 benefits 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 a causal effect of benefits on filings from the observational data. Despite what intuition may indicate, I find that higher levels of benefits lead to higher levels of filings. 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, especially those that are marginalized.

I am available for virtual interviews on demand. I am including my CV, job market paper, and a list of references. 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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