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The German Marshall Fund of the United States  
1744 R Street NW

Washington D.C 20009

To Whom It May Concern,

As someone who has studied economics and worked on policy issues at the local level, I have always been interested in the ways that rigorous data analysis can provide insights to complicated policy issues. I was drawn to the American Institutes for Research because AIR works to provide this type of insight with the ultimate goal of improving people’s lives. I am applying to the Education Research Assistant position because I want to apply my economics background and prior experience to a field that uses rigorous analysis to analyze important policy questions.

In my economics coursework, I was often tasked with conducting data analysis on STATA as part of a research project. For instance, as part of a group project in one of economics classes, I was tasked with looking at the impact of obesity on healthcare expenses among senior citizens. Using survey data, we found that higher levels of obesity were associated with higher healthcare costs. Based on the model we constructed, we were able to estimate that a reduction in obesity could lead to large decrease in health care expenditures in the US. I believe that I could apply the strong quantitative skills that I developed through my economics coursework towards the research conducted at AIR.

As a Policy Intern at Think Virginia, I was required to research an individual policy issue each week and come up with some possible solutions to these problems based on the case studies available from other studies. This particular required me to analyze many possible ways to solve a problem and summarize the best possible ideas available. For instance, when looking at ways to reach full employment in Virginia, I analyzed several economic solutions and concluded that increased investment in vocational training would create more jobs. I believe that I could apply lessons from this role to the RA position at AIR because this role helped me learn how to synthesize lots of available information into a couple useful bullet points that are easy to understand.

I want to continue to improve upon and apply the analytical skills that I have developed in school and through my experiences towards making a difference. Please consider placing me on your interview schedule. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Zachary Spahr