



ACLS Leading Edge Fellowship 2025

Position Title	Policy Researcher
Organization	The Afiya Center
Location	Dallas, TX
Stipend	\$72,000 in the first year, \$74,000 in the second year
Benefits	Access to employer health insurance. Professional development funds and relocation funds provided by ACLS.
Start Date	September 2025

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

[The Afiya Center](#) (TAC) was founded to transform the lives of Black womxn and girls by addressing the unique challenges they face and mobilizing their communities to advocate for sound social policies. Our mission is to engage with Black womxn, girls, femmes, and transgender/gender non-conforming (TGNC) individuals in ways that honor their traditions while introducing innovative approaches in HIV prevention, public health, and reproductive justice spaces. Our work is rooted in understanding that true racial and gender justice requires directly confronting anti-Black racism, which is the driving force behind generational poverty, political disenfranchisement, over-policing, and poor health outcomes in Black communities. Our approach utilizes the Reproductive Justice (RJ) framework, which allows us to link reproductive oppression to public health and economic disparities that impact womxn and girls at the intersections of race, class, and gender. TAC's programming consists of Policy & Organizing, HIV Programs, Birth Justice Programs and the Birth Center, and a newly established Research Alliance.

Through our work, we aim to ensure that Black pregnancy-capable people in Texas have the right to full bodily autonomy, access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare, and the ability to make decisions about their own reproductive lives free from fear, stigma, or discrimination. Our focus on providing culturally competent care, amplifying community voices, and advocating for systemic change makes TAC uniquely positioned to implement innovative, community-driven approaches to reproductive justice and HIV prevention. We have built a reputation as a trusted partner, leader, and advocate for Black womxn, girls, femmes, and TGNC individuals, and we are committed to continuing this work to foster sustainable, long-term change in the communities we serve.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Afiya Center seeks a Policy Researcher to support its ongoing advocacy efforts and research partnership. The position will also support organizational programming, community engagement, and internal program evaluation as needed. The policy researcher will report to the Director of Policy and Interim Deputy Director. The fellowship term will focus on prioritizing two major advocacy campaigns and assisting in conducting research in the existing Livable Black Futures Research Collective with an emphasis on health science data-driven research projects. The policy researcher is responsible for in-depth research in support of assigned campaigns. This position will support reproductive justice reform and voter advocacy campaign efforts in Dallas and Greater Texas. The researcher will develop and execute a research work plan that reflects campaign objectives working jointly with their direct supervisor, organizing leads, and research leads.

This work will include:

- Exploratory policy research, data gathering, and analysis.
- Disseminating data/research outcomes via reports, publications, presentations, infographics, and talking points tailored to a wide audience.
- Co-creating advocacy campaign materials (including reports), and community education tools and activities.

This position is *only* available through the Leading Edge Fellowship program.
You may *not* contact the host institution to inquire about this position.

- Compiling data on existing city, county, state, and federal priorities around reproductive justice issues.
- Collaborating with the research team to study participants' lived experiences and attitudes regarding issues related to TAC advocacy campaigns.
- Serving as the staff coordinator of the community centered Black Womxn's Think Tank.
- Co-designing and implementing curriculum for the Reproductive Justice Institute, Advocacy Day Initiatives, and Texas Black Womxn's Reproductive Justice Summit.
- Collaborate with TAC staff and research team members to evaluate the impact of policy/organizing and advocacy efforts.
- Attending and assisting with general organizational planning and events as needed.

The fellowship tenure is 24 consecutive months, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

Responsibilities and tasks:

- Maintain positive relationships with TAC staff, affiliates of the research alliance, community partners, and members.
- Serve as a leading author and editor of the State of Black Womxn Report.
- Co-coordinate planning and execution of the 2026 TXBWRJ Summit and 2025 Advocacy Day.
- Under supervisor guidance, oversee community stakeholder/CAB operations via the Black Womxn's Think Tank and RJ Institute.
- Support Livable Black Futures and ongoing research efforts.
- Collaborate with research alliance members to disseminate data findings via publication, presentation, and other communications methods.

Qualifications:

- PhD in any field of the humanities or interpretive social sciences. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Proficiency in applying qualitative research methods (i.e. thematic analysis, literature review, ethnography, focus groups, interview, oral history).
- Strong work ethic, willing to take initiative and complete tasks in a timely manner.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively with limited supervision.
- Adaptable to working in a fast-paced and dynamic environment.
- Excellent organizational, oral and written communication, and interpersonal skills.

Preferred:

- Knowledge and ability to apply reproductive justice, womanist, Africana, social justice and other related cultural theories.
- Thinks critically and conceptualizes research/work with consideration of anti-Blackness and its impacts specific to the experiences of African diasporic individuals.

APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: <https://www.acls.org/Competitions-and-Deadlines/Leading-Edge-Fellowships>
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org)
- Application deadline: 9 PM EDT, March 12, 2025.

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