



# How I Got Here: Anna Wiencrot

I am a senior research director at NORC at the University of Chicago with nearly 15 years of survey research experience. My current work involves overseeing the design and management of large, complex field data collection projects, but I have been involved in many aspects of survey research, including sample design, questionnaire development and testing, interviewer training, data collection management, and data delivery. I am actively involved in the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), most recently serving on the Executive Council as the Secretary Treasurer. I hold an MPH in Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology.

## **When you were a student, what was your original plan?**

Many students studying Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology go on to work as MCH epidemiologists at the local, state, or national level, so this is definitely the direction I saw myself going.

## **How did you end up in your current position?**

I did my MCH Epi practicum at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, which was great exposure to a career as an MCH epidemiologist. However, though that work and some of my course work, I grew more and more interested in where the data I was using were coming from. It was one thing to run analyses on the National Survey of Children's Health data, but what really interested me was learning more about how that data set came to be. I was fortunate to have incredible mentors in graduate school and at my practicum who helped gain a greater understanding of career opportunities that would allow me to learn more about data collection. Susan Manning, my practicum preceptor, encouraged me to look into not-for-profit data collection organizations. Arden Handler and Deb Rosenberg, directors of the MCH Epidemiology program, recommended I look at NORC, as I wanted to stay in Chicago and continue in MCH-related work; NORC at the time had a large role in a particularly important MCH study, the National Children's Study. I started at NORC in 2009 and have been here ever since.

## **In short, what do you do and why does it matter?**

In short, I lead complex field data collection projects. It matters because these studies produce valuable data to improve people's health from childhood to old age. I am fortunate to work on two particularly important and interesting projects right now. One is the Maternal and Child Health Jurisdictional Survey, a survey to collect key maternal and child health indicators in the eight U.S. jurisdictions (American Samoa, Palau, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, Marshall Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Federated States of Micronesia). The other is the National Social Life, Health and Aging Project (NSHAP) a longitudinal study that integrates survey and biomeasure data collection to examine the health and social relationships of older adults.



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