



How I Got Here:

Erin Fordyce

Erin Fordyce, MS, MEd is a Senior Research Methodologist with NORC. She has over 10 years of social science research experience. Erin has been working with NORC since May 2013 and is currently finishing PhD coursework at Loyola Chicago in the Research Methodology program.

Her work primarily focuses on survey design and testing and multi-mode data collection approaches. Erin has been attending AAPOR since 2015 and currently serves as co-chair of the AAPOR Welcoming Committee. She lives in Chicago with her wife and 17-month-old son, Constantine.

When you were a student what was your original plan?

For my undergraduate degree, I studied criminal justice and legal studies. My plan was to work for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on human trafficking cases. After interning with a local police department my senior year, I realized that field might not be the best fit for me. While I was passionate about the work, I knew it would be stressful and require an extreme level of mental toughness.

How did you end up in your current position?

I presented my senior thesis at the National Conference for Undergraduate Research. My professors encouraged me to continue my studies in graduate school where I focused on criminal justice research. After completing my program, I worked at the Indianapolis Department of Code Enforcement for about 6 months before I received a job offer from NORC. I was hired as a survey specialist in their Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Criminal Justice Department (now the Economics and Justice Department). After working for several years with a few survey methodology experts, I transferred to NORC's Statistics and Methodology Department (now separately known as the Statistics and Data Science (SDS) and Methodology and Quantitative Social Sciences Departments (MQSS)).

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

As a research methodologist, I play an important role in applying best practices to the design of survey research studies to gather accurate and reliable data.

I work on projects across different subjects including public health, health care evaluation, and criminal justice. No day looks the same. I also get to do impactful work with hard-to-reach populations and often interact with these populations through qualitative interviews. This approach allows us to better understand their unique perspectives and experiences, ultimately contributing to improved survey instruments and recruitment materials.



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