Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

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Research Scientist

Jennifer Whittaker (she/her) is a research scientist at PolicyLab and the senior manager of qualitative methods training and program development with the Qualitative Research Core at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

Dr. Whittaker has over a decade of experience conducting qualitative and mixed-method research, with a particular focus on community-engaged research. As a member of the Qualitative Research Core, she develops and leads training in qualitative research methods and provides research design and conceptual support to research teams across CHOP. At PolicyLab, Dr. Whittaker is a member of the maternal health research team where her work focuses on the role of place and public systems in supporting maternal and child health. She serves as the staff lead for the Family and Community Health Portfolio and is an advisory board member for the Community Partnerships in Research program. She is also a member of CHOP's Qualitative Methods Research Affinity Group, a fellow at University at Pennsylvania's Center for Public Health Initiatives and a board member for the Pennsylvania Rural Health Association.

An alumnus of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Health Policy Research Scholars Leadership Development Program, Dr. Whittaker is trained in interdisciplinary, applied and policy-oriented scholarship. She completed her PhD in city planning at the University of Pennsylvania Weitzman School of Design, where her research led to Our Rural Pennsylvania, an atlas created by mothers and caregivers to record the everyday places that influence their health. She completed her master's degree in urban and regional planning at the University at Buffalo and her bachelor's degree in geography at the State University of New York at Geneseo. Prior to coming to Philadelphia, Dr. Whittaker was a research associate at the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab where she conducted research on the role of local government policy and planning in facilitating healthy communities.



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