

Andrew Chelius

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Postdoctoral Candidate | Social Science Researcher | Harm Reduction Scholar

Social Science Researcher and multilingual community advocate with experience translating research into policy-oriented goals. ABD Ph.D. with a focus in medical sociology, harm reduction, drug policy, and social determinants of health. Expertise in analyzing large qualitative and quantitative datasets that are rooted in local and national policy issues. Motivated by questions of racial and gender equity, expertise, and lived experience, my work seeks realistic policy-oriented solutions to address the disparate harms facing people who use drugs. Fluent in Spanish, high-intermediate in Portuguese.

Skills and Technical Insights

- Qualitative and Quantitative Research
- Translation of Research to Inform Policy
- Multilingual Community Advocate
- IRB Protocol Development
- Collaborative Relationship Building
- Data Analysis (R, Atlas Ti, Qualtrics, Archival, Excel, ArcGIS)
- Connecting Research Between Academic and Community Engagement
- Project Management and Stakeholder Engagement

Education

Temple University, Philadelphia PA - PhD in Sociology
Temple University, Philadelphia PA – Master's in Sociology (2022)
Temple University, Philadelphia PA – BA in Sociology (2018)

Experience

Postdoctoral Candidate

Johns Hopkins University

MD

July 2026 (expected)

- Work on an interdisciplinary team of public health scholars, epidemiologists, biostatisticians, and public health experts on an NIH funded project about the impacts of polysubstance use among people who use drugs in Baltimore, Maryland.
- Assist principal investigators on a multi-year NIH funded grant with tasks such as grant writing, data analysis, and academic writing on policy relevant, timely research to improve people's lives.
- Serve as a social scientific researcher on NIH projects, offering a lens that prioritizes factors such as the social determinants of health, the social components of public space, and the socio-political and cultural elements of harm reduction and drug use.
- Develop dissertation into academic articles and a book proposal about the socio-political landscape surrounding drugs and harm reduction in Kensington, Philadelphia.

Planner at the Overdose Response Center

Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

DE

August 2026-Present

- Analyze multiple complex overdose risk incident data streams to inform intervention strategies for three community engaged outreach teams operating across the state of Delaware.
- Draft products such as street drug reports and public information bulletins to a mailing list of over 350 internal and external partners.
- Remain informed and up to date about the social and political landscape surrounding drugs and harm reduction in Delaware, tailoring outreach strategies and publications to the unique and changing demands of our times.

Mixed-Methods Researcher

Temple University

PA

August 2020-Present

- Designed, implemented, analyzed, and communicated results of an independent bi-lingual interview and ethnographic study including 140 physicians, social workers, peer workers, police officers, community members, business owners, and people who use drugs. Evaluated the healthcare and social service acquisition process and developed best practices for interventions aimed at addressing systemic harms and organizational barriers.
- Engaged stakeholders remotely over zoom, at workplaces, in their homes, classrooms, neighborhoods, and public spaces. Utilized Atlas Ti and Qualtrics to analyze and synthesize thousands of pages of qualitative data. Identified opportunities to improve services and intervention strategies. Drew from national datasets, analyzing data with R studio to identify national trends related to drug criminalization harms. Communicated results through Microsoft Excel and R Studio.
- Translated research findings into clear, actionable, policy-oriented goals to community and advocacy groups, suggesting realistic goals to improve harm reduction services and care acquisition.
- Co-organized and presented research findings at academic conferences, and community trainings, locally, and internationally including the American Sociological Association, the Eastern Sociological Association, the National Harm Reduction Coalition, and Prevention Point Philadelphia.
- Formulated two IRB protocols in English and Spanish for ethnographic and interview-based studies. Altered five separate protocol drafts for ethnographic project, ultimately presenting the final draft to a multidisciplinary IRB review team of 18 human research ethics professionals.
- Obtained over \$50,000 of university funding from the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of Sociology at Temple University.
- Trained and evaluated over 150 students and junior researchers on independent research projects in fields such as health sciences, architecture, design, sociology, and psychology.
- Communicated and presented research concepts and findings to 150+ undergraduate students as a teaching assistant for the Philadelphia Experience and Drugs in Society, and as an instructor of record for Race and Ethnicity in the United States, Introduction to Sociology, and Global Issues.

Public Policy Lab Research Fellow

Temple University

PA

August 2023-May 2024

- Worked with faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students to tailor multidisciplinary social scientific research projects to work toward realistic, policy-oriented goals.
- Provided and received cross-disciplinary feedback from colleagues on research study gaps, design, and analytic strategy. Received feedback on independent research on harm reduction policy goals and strategies.
- Helped facilitate meetings and question and answer sessions among colleagues with diverse research interests in topics such as climate change, immigration, the criminal justice system, structural violence, and the war on drugs.

Bilingual Mobile Clinic Lead and Case Manager

Prevention Point Philadelphia

PA

May 2018-May 2021

- Worked with people who use drugs to co-create healthcare and social service-oriented plans that meet peoples' dynamic and changing needs as they fought for greater stability. Developed relationships with stakeholders working across organizations to advocate for people who use drugs. Studied the social history facing certain populations of people who use drugs face, such as the Air-Bridge initiatives between Philadelphia and Puerto Rico.
- Provided counseling for people with Hepatitis C, HIV, people who use drugs, and people with mental health and housing concerns, serving as an advocate to help people navigate a mucky healthcare and social service care landscape.
- Strived to be honest, direct, and open about my lived experience as a former drug user, but also sensitive to people's needs, with the awareness that many people experience multiple life, and systemic traumas and routinely navigate a social landscape shaped by inconceivable and nearly insurmountable barriers.
- Developed expertise in Medicaid-funded healthcare, understanding the complexities of coverage for preventative, palliative, mental health, and social service care.
- Facilitated meetings between healthcare and social service professionals, and people who use drugs, to troubleshoot diverse sets of community needs and concerns.

Research Assistant

Temple University

PA

March 2021-February 2024

- Assisted in the design, research, analysis, and execution of an interview study with Spanish speaking restaurant workers in Philadelphia focused on issues involving worker stress and strain during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Conducted interviews in Spanish over zoom, and in restaurants, hospitals. Wrote extensively about patterns and themes involving sensitive issues such as immigration status, border crossing stories, family stress, workplace inequalities, and individual and structural level traumas.
- Managed data and interview field-notes in a safe, secure location, understanding the particular sensitivity of working with data connected to people who may be undocumented. Utilized pseudonyms and changed identifiable information about research participants. Thoroughly explained and co-navigated the consent process.
- Worked collaboratively with the principal investigator and co-investigator to communicate about research project planning and evolving analytic strategies.

Case Worker and Community Organizer

New Sanctuary Movement and Voces de la Frontera

WI

August 2015-August 2016 (one year internship)

- Worked with people, families, and loved ones facing deportation, often serving as the first point of contact when people learned that someone in their community was facing deportation. Connected people to community members, legal aid, and mental health support.
- Facilitated bilingual, weekly organizing meetings, church vigils, mobilizing the experiences and struggles of our community members toward collective action.
- Continuously investigated the political, and social climate surrounding local, state, and national immigration laws and debates.
- Organized religious leaders and community members to broaden our organization's network and generate turnout for protests and community events.

Honors/Awards

Graduate School Research Grant Award (2024)

Public Policy Lab Fellowship (2023-2024)

Summer Research Initiative Grant Award (2022, 2023 and 2024)

Professional and Volunteer Experience

Professional

Advisory Board Member, NIH-funded project (Award # K01DA061053-01)
Faculty adviser, Vietnamese Student Association, Thomas Jefferson University
Co-founder, Graduate student writing group, Temple University
Chair, Student paper award selection process for the Drugs and Society Section of ASA
Student-faculty liaison, Graduate Student Association, Temple University
Organizer, Temple University Graduate Student Association (AFT 6290), Temple University
Member Social Sciences, Humanities, and Health Working Group, Temple University
Resident Assistant, Temple Towers, Temple University

Volunteer

Peer Support Worker, Peer Support Groups, Volunteer Organizations, Syringe Exchange Programs, Street Outreach
Musician, Philadelphia Area Community-based Projects
Community Interpreter, Philly Language Justice, Philadelphia, PA
Canvasser, Reclaim Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
Group facilitator, Dialogues on Race and Identity, Temple University
Childcare Worker, Caras Alegres, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala
Camp Counselor, Peace Camp at Friends Center, Langhorne, PA

Professional Presentations

“Weaponizing uncertainty: how responders utilize discretion when responding to potential overdose incidents” American Sociological Association Conference. New York City (2026, expected)

“Harm reduction and expertise: toggling between belief and action” American Sociological Association Conference. Montreal Canada (2024)

“Care work among people who use drugs: how informal knowledge and practice dominates across an addiction service landscape” Eastern Sociological Society Conference. Washington D.C. (2024)

“The harm reduction continuum: how workers navigate care strategies in a culture of constraint” Philadelphia Graduate Student Sociology Mini-Conference. University of Penn, Philadelphia, PA (2024)

“I’ve been there: bringing lived experience to work and its consequences for socialization and connection” Eastern Sociological Society Conference. Boston, MA (2023)

“Brokering addictions: how service providers negotiate meanings to help people who use drugs” American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. Los Angeles, CA (2022)

“Discursive strategies of people with lived experience from addiction and drug use: advocacy and identity formation” Eastern Sociological Society Conference. Boston, MA (2022)

“Mobile MAT Practices of a Community Clinic in Kensington, Philadelphia” Pennsylvania Harm Reduction Coalition Conference. Harrisburg, PA (2019)

Working Academic Papers

“Weaponizing uncertainty: how responders utilize discretion when responding to potential overdose incidents.” *2026*

“Between a rock and a hard place: how people who use drugs practically navigate the contradictions of the disease model of addiction.” *2025*

“Toggling expertise: how service providers draw from their professional training and lived experience to practice harm reduction” *2025*

“The social and historical production of whiteness: how Kensington residents engage in racially engrained narratives of whiteness and its impacts on inequality.” *2023*

“The politicization of drug use and shifting neighborhood borders:” how Kensington operates as a crossroads for harm reduction-oriented care and policy” *2023*

“Geographic location and race: perceived exposure to prescription medication among teenagers and its influence on addiction rates” *2022*