Position Summary:
The Cooperative Institute for Research in the Atmosphere (CIRA) at Colorado State University (CSU) seeks to hire a full-time User Experience (UX) Designer to collaborate in research and development with the Weather Information and Applications Division (WIAD) of the National Weather Service (NWS) Meteorological Development Laboratory (MDL) in Silver Spring, MD. The individual in this position will work on WIAD’s Impact-based Decision Support Services (IDSS) Management System (IMS) project, which will create for the NWS a set of nationally consistent and operationally supported tools for IDSS.

This position is located in a federal facility in Silver Spring, MD and requires the ability to pass a National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI) Tier 1 federal background check for building access. The office will be located in Silver Spring; however, the option exists to work remotely from a home/office. Periodic, in-person coordination meetings in Silver Spring and other locations are required, and occasional travel to conduct portions of the research may be required and will be paid by the project. The individual in this position will report to a CIRA Senior Software Engineer / Project Manager who also works on the project.

This position requires prior experience in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, or user experience design. The individual in this position will collaborate with the IMS project team, assess the user experience of IMS, and both research and design solutions that meet users’ needs. This will include planning and conducting user interviews and usability studies, and, to help inform design decisions, learning from users (e.g., weather forecasters and emergency managers) how weather information is used in the decision support and risk assessment/communication process. Solution research and design can be expected to include the comparative evaluation of existing NWS tools; incorporating feedback from field studies, testbed activities, focus groups, or similar methods; incorporating best practices for efficient data visualization and communication; modeling IMS’s web application interfaces and process workflows; and interfacing with IMS’s software engineers so that they can realize solutions in an agile development environment. The work will be iterative, leveraging usability testing and feedback to arrive at validated design solutions, resulting in user interfaces and process workflows that meet user needs, are consistent, and adhere to design best practices. The individual in this position will collaborate with other teams and designers to ensure consistency across a suite of related applications and will also participate in twice-weekly project meetings.

This position will be classified Research Associate III or IV according to the credentials of the finalist selected for hire as follows:

- For position title Research Associate III: Bachelor’s Degree in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.) PLUS 5+ years’ relevant work experience –OR– Master’s Degree in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.) PLUS 2+ years’ relevant work experience –OR– Ph.D. in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.)

- For position title Research Associate IV: Bachelor’s Degree in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.) PLUS 10+ years’ relevant work experience –OR– Master’s Degree in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.)
Decision Making:
Decision making will depend upon the scale of each assignment and issues involved; the chosen course of action may need to be selected from many solutions, dependent upon the end user and technological requirements, and may require coordination with other members of the project team to reach a final decision. Decisions will include the assessment of unusual circumstances, variations in approach, and handling of incomplete or conflicting data. The individual in this position will make many decisions concerning such things as interpreting considerable amounts of data, planning the work, or refining methods and techniques. This independent position will involve working in coordination with the IMS Project Manager to go over progress and next steps. The individual in this position will set priorities that correspond to the importance and/or urgency of work activities.

Essential Job Duties:
UX Design—90%
- Review and critique IMS UIs and process workflows.
- Plan and conduct UX research into IMS’s UIs and process workflows (to include travel as required).
- Analyze and evaluate research results in order to design and model improvements to IMS’s UIs and process workflows.
- Collaborate with IMS team members and users to identify and implement improvements to IMS’s UIs and process workflows.
- As required, coordinate with other design and development teams to ensure design and functionality standardization.
- Advocate for UX design best practices within the organization.
- Participate in weekly project meetings and periodic in-person coordination meetings.

Documentation and Reporting—10%
- Document the research performed.
- Document design decisions and visual artifacts.
- As needed or requested, give or assist with presentations related to IMS.
- As needed or requested, provide status reports to CIRA and/or the project sponsor.
Required Qualifications:
In your cover letter, please specifically address EACH required qualification as it relates to your experience. A cover letter that fails to address the required qualifications for this position may not be considered further after review by the search committee.

- For Research Associate III: Bachelor’s Degree in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.) PLUS 5+ years’ relevant work experience
  OR
  Master’s Degree in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.) PLUS 2+ years’ relevant work experience
  OR
  Ph.D. in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.);
- For Research Associate IV: Bachelor’s Degree in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.) PLUS 10+ years’ relevant work experience
  OR
  Master’s Degree in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.) PLUS 5+ years’ relevant work experience
  OR
  Ph.D. in human-centered design, human-computer interaction, user experience design, usability engineering, or a related field (e.g., communications, computer science, psychology, visual design, etc.) PLUS 2+ year’s relevant work experience

- Ability to pass a National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI) Tier 1 federal background check because the position is located inside a federal facility.
- A portfolio of research and design work—executed by yourself or a team to which you contributed—that showcases your UX research and design skills.
- Willingness to occasionally travel as travel may be required for user experience investigations, e.g., to conduct in-person usability tests at one or more user sites. Travel will be paid by the project.
- Must be legally authorized to work in the United States by the start date. CIRA will not sponsor a visa for this position now or in the future.

Preferred Qualifications:
In your cover letter, please specifically address the applicable preferred qualifications for this position. A cover letter that fails to address the preferred qualifications for this position may not be considered further after review by the search committee.

- Relevant work experience that demonstrates knowledge and use of UX research methods, including but not limited to foundational, formative, evaluative, strategic, and tactical approaches.
- Relevant work experience that demonstrates knowledge of UX design and use of UX design tools, from sketching to high-fidelity prototyping both at the feature and the overall product level.
- Relevant work experience that demonstrates an ability to work with users to understand their needs and translate those needs into improved UIs and workflow experiences.
- Relevant work experience that demonstrates an ability to work with software developers to guide the realization of improved UIs and workflow experiences.
- Relevant work experience with UIs and workflows that support decision making and/or risk assessment.
• Experience with designing SaaS products.
• Experience with Figma.
• Experience with data visualization or data-heavy UI implementations.
• Experience with digital accessibility standards.
• Experience working as a member of a 5 to 10-person team.
• Experience in an Agile software development environment.
• Experience with project management.
• Experience working in governmental or large-scale organizations.
• Experience with NOAA, NASA, or DoD meteorological data systems.
• The desire to contribute to the NWS mission of saving lives and property.

Annual Salary Range:
Commensurate with experience and qualifications as follows:
  • Research Associate III: $110,000 - $125,000
  • Research Associate IV: $125,000 - $140,000

Background Check:
Colorado State University strives to provide a safe study, work, and living environment for its faculty, staff, volunteers and students. To support this environment and comply with applicable laws and regulations, CSU conducts background checks. The type of background check conducted varies by position and can include, but is not limited to, criminal history, sex offender registry, motor vehicle history, financial history, and/or education verification. Background checks will also be conducted when required by law or contract and when, in the discretion of the University, it is reasonable and prudent to do so.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion:
Reflecting departmental and institutional values, candidates are expected to have the ability to advance the Department's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Application Deadline:
Applications will be accepted until the position is filled; however, to ensure full consideration applications should be submitted by 11:59 PM MT on July 23, 2023. For full position announcement and to apply, please click “Apply to this Job” at the following website: https://jobs.colostate.edu/postings/129177. NOTE: In your cover letter, please specifically address the required and preferred qualifications of this position. A cover letter that fails to address the qualifications of this position may not be further considered after review by the search committee.