

JOB DESCRIPTION

Senior Director, Programs & Science

Us: AcademyHealth is the professional home and leading national organization for health services researchers (HSR), policymakers, and health care practitioners and stakeholders. We – together with our members and partners – increase the understanding of methods and data used in the field, enhance the professional skills of a vibrant and diverse community of researchers and research users, support evidence-based policy and practice, and advocate for the use of evidence to improve health and health care for all. Our core priorities include supporting the people (through training and resources), strengthening the systems (through capacity building and advocacy), and ensuring evidence gets used (through policy and practice implementation). We are committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable working environment.

You: A senior professional with experience in providing leadership, direction, and planning for new and existing programs that are consistent with our mission and strategic priorities. You are self-motivated, collaborative, innovative, with the ability to cultivate and maintain relationships within the organization and with a diverse set of external partners and stakeholders, anticipate opportunities and challenges, and approach solutions strategically and creatively.

How you'll contribute:

In this role, you will report to and work closely with the Chief Programs and Science Officer to enhance operational efficiency, ensure strategic alignment, and maintain the quality of extramural programs and initiatives, aligning them with the organization's mission and strategic priorities.

As a key member of the leadership team, you will help shape organizational strategy and lead both new and existing mission-aligned, cross-functional programs. Your role will also include providing strategic leadership to advance the organization's strategy related to HSR data and systems capacity. This extramural strategy involves cultivating partnerships with both public and private sectors, expanding our influence within the HSR research ecosystem, identifying emerging trends to enhance our relevance and impact, and developing and implementing strategies for data-related initiatives, programs, and products.

As the Senior Director, Programs & Science, you will serve as the primary strategic partner to the Chief Programs & Science Officer, driving the operational excellence and scientific integrity of our extramural portfolio. You will not just manage programs; you will shape the organization's future by leading high-stakes HSR data initiatives, cultivating million-dollar partnerships, and serving as a key representative of leadership across the HSR ecosystem.

Strategic & Organizational Leadership:

- Partner with the Chief Programs and Science Officer (CPSO) to execute the vision for extramural programs, ensuring all initiatives, timelines, and resource allocations are strictly aligned with organizational priorities.
- Serve as the CPSO's primary delegate in staff, partner, and stakeholder meetings, empowered to make real-time decisions regarding project priorities, resource deployment, timelines, and partner coordination; high-level budgetary shifts or fundamental strategy changes remain under the purview of the CPSO.
- Shape organizational priorities and contribute to the organization's strategic planning, performance metrics, and decision-making.
- Act as the lead liaison across program and project teams to ensure efficient workflows, transparent communication, and the elimination of departmental silos.
- Establish and monitor clear performance metrics to ensure accountability, scientific excellence, and measurable outcomes across all portfolios.
- Lead, mentor, and scale high-performing teams, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and continuous professional growth.

Science & Data Strategy:

- Direct the organization's HSR data and systems capacity strategy, positioning AcademyHealth as a leading driver of data-driven health services research.
- Provide strategic leadership for multiple programs and initiatives, ensuring they meet the organization's mission-critical goals and operational standards.
- Co-lead program planning for our annual Health Datapalooza (HDP) and other data-related initiatives, ensuring these flagship events drive organizational goals and industry relevance.
- Serve as a primary voice for the organization by contributing expertise through high-impact publications, presentations, and national convenings.
- Direct the development of high-quality technical content—including reports, issue briefs, and commentaries—that strengthen the organization's reputation as a trusted authority.
- Advise senior executives and peers on emerging scientific trends, technological shifts, and strategic risks within the HSR and policy landscape.

Business Development & Partnerships:

- Drive organizational sustainability by securing \$2M–\$3M in annual revenue (combined renewals and net-new funding) through a diverse mix of public and private sources.
- Build and sustain high-level relationships with public and private sector leaders to expand the organization's influence and collaborative reach.
- Partner with senior leadership to ensure that new business opportunities and programmatic growth remain strictly aligned with long-term organizational sustainability and mission.
- Promote the organization's value proposition across research, policy, and practice communities to secure multi-year strategic partnerships.

Desired Qualifications:

- Master's degree in health policy, public policy, public health, or a related field or equivalent experience; Ph.D., DrPH, or Sc.D. preferred.
- Minimum of ten (10) years of substantive, professional post-education experience in health services research, health policy, or a related field.
- Strong knowledge of and/or specific work experience relevant to HSR landscape and the intersection of data/technology and health and healthcare.
- At least six (6) years of substantial management and leadership responsibility, leading and developing high-performing teams, fostering collaboration, and managing change effectively.
- Demonstrated success leading multiple programs or portfolios, shaping organizational strategies, and achieving measurable results.
- Proven experience in business development, including securing and managing multi-year grants, contracts, or strategic partnerships from public and private funders.
- Recognized expertise in health services research and policy, with a strong understanding of current issues in the healthcare landscape.
- Demonstrated ability to navigate complex, gray-area challenges where data may be incomplete or priorities are shifting, while maintaining a steady course for the team.
- Proven track record of building structure out of ambiguity, including the ability to design new programs from the ground up and pivot strategies based on emerging HSR landscape shifts.
- Exceptional command presence with the ability to influence, negotiate, and present with credibility to high-level officials and C-suite executives.
- A sophisticated communicator who can deliver difficult messages, manage conflicting stakeholder interests, and model organizational values under pressure.
- Commitment to AcademyHealth's mission and to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

What you should know:

- We are a hybrid work environment with options for remote and in-office work.
- Applicants outside of the metropolitan DC area are encouraged to apply.
- Hiring process is conducted virtually, with interviews via phone or video; selected candidates will receive required instructions for interviews.
- A limited amount of travel to meetings is expected.

The salary range is \$160,000 to \$170,000. Salary is commensurate with experience.

Applications:

Qualified applicants should submit a resume and analytic writing sample to Human Resources via email: jobs@academyhealth.org. For more information, please go to www.academyhealth.org.

AcademyHealth is an Equal Opportunity Employer: AcademyHealth will provide all applicants for employment and all employees with an equal opportunity regardless of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, disability, matriculation, political affiliation, source of income, or place of business or residence.