

WSIPP Job Recruitment—Senior Research Associate

Opened: March 6, 2017

Closes: April 3, 2017

Salary Range: \$7,519-9,775 per-month of full-time work (DOQ)

Special Note

This is a full-time overtime-exempt, “at-will” appointment, exempt from Washington State Civil Service rules and the Fair Labor Standards Act overtime requirements.

Washington State Institute for Public Policy Profile

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) is a nonpartisan public research group located in Olympia, the hub of Washington State government. WSIPP is a team of multidisciplinary researchers who conduct applied policy research for the state legislature in a creative and collaborative environment.

WSIPP is strongly committed to the core values of nonpartisanship, quality, and impartiality. Created in 1983, WSIPP has become nationally and internationally recognized for the design, depth, and quality of its research reports and benefit-cost analyses.

Position Purpose

Senior Research Associates conduct quantitative research, including benefit-cost analysis, on public policy topics. The work includes problem formulation, outcome evaluation design, benefit-cost modeling, literature reviews and meta-analysis, data and fiscal analysis, report writing, and presentations. Senior Research Associates typically lead major projects. The position involves close consultation with state legislative members and staff.

Nature and Scope

WSIPP is seeking an analytical and technically skilled economist to join our team as a Senior Research Associate. WSIPP conducts research at the direction of the state legislature or its Board of Directors. Previous research topics have included criminal justice, education, child welfare, mental health, substance abuse, and health care. WSIPP’s work generally falls into three categories: outcome evaluations of programs and policies, meta-analysis, and benefit-cost analysis.

The Senior Research Associate will primarily support the further development, improvement, and maintenance of WSIPP’s benefit-cost analysis across a wide variety of policy areas. The Associate will also play a leadership or consulting role on a variety of outcome evaluations, and conduct meta-analysis and literature reviews as necessary. Some current projects include:

- An evaluation of the effect of the integration of the involuntary treatment systems for substance use disorders and mental health;
- A series of evaluations examining the impact of Washington State Initiative 502, legalizing adult recreational use of marijuana on public health, public safety, substance abuse, the economy, the criminal justice system, and state and local revenues; and
- A longitudinal analysis of the relationship between the Early Achievers quality ratings and outcomes for children participating in subsidized early care and education programs.

The Associate will contribute to multiple long-term projects at once, and should be able to manage their time flexibly to meet associated project deadlines.

The ideal candidate will have a broad interest in evidence-based public policy; be a self-starter who is comfortable with ambiguity; possess strong quantitative, communication, and leadership skills; and have an eagerness to learn.

Essential Functions

- Provide technical expertise in support of the development and maintenance of the WSIPP benefit-cost model.
- Design and implement outcome evaluations as needed.
- Provide advice and guidance to staff to ensure application of sound economic principles and the use of effective econometric and quantitative methods when conducting outcome evaluations and benefit-cost analysis. The incumbent will utilize techniques that may include models for analyzing time series and panel data, fixed effect models, hazard and other transition probability models, linear and nonlinear estimations, models accounting for sample selection bias, instrumental variables models, and models appropriate for limited dependent variables such as probit, logit, and tobit. Where appropriate, devise new techniques where none exist that are adequate for particular research problems.
- Assess possibilities for using existing survey and administrative data for analytical purposes, such as by developing longitudinal microdata files or matching information across surveys and administrative data sources.
- Consult with the legislature, state agencies, local governments, national experts, and stakeholders.
- Conduct literature reviews, meta-analyses, and benefit-cost analysis.

Additional Duties

- Complete other projects upon request. The Associate's work portfolio will vary depending on legislative assignments.
- Write reports and present findings to the legislature and other audiences as needed.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Ability to work diplomatically, professionally, and in a nonpartisan manner on controversial issues.
- Ability to design and conduct rigorous outcome evaluations, including the ability to re-scope and complete studies based on unanticipated changes.
- Knowledge of and ability to perform advanced statistical analyses.
- Technical expertise in econometrics and experience conducting benefit-cost analysis.
- Strong presentation, public speaking, and writing skills for both technical and lay audiences.
- Ability to coordinate and plan multiple multi-faceted, long-term projects.
- Ability to work across multiple disciplines.

Minimum Qualifications

- Master's (or equivalent) in relevant discipline (economics, public policy, or related field).
- Significant experience and/or coursework in benefit-cost analysis and/or quantitative methods such as multiple regression or outcome evaluation design.
- Experience analyzing complex survey and/or administrative datasets and summarizing results in writing and orally.

Desired Qualifications

- Ph.D. in economics or related field is highly preferable.
- Five or more years of paid work experience as a researcher.
- Recent work experience or graduate-level training in benefit-cost analysis and econometrics.

- Work experience or formal training in public policy, economics, public health, criminal justice, or a related social or behavioral science.
- Work experience in a government setting.

Work Environment

The Senior Research Associate works in an office environment with occasional meetings in a group setting. Flex scheduling is allowed, and a partial telecommuting schedule may be approved by the Director.

Conditions of Employment

Must provide proof of identity and employment eligibility within three days of beginning work.

To Apply

Please visit <https://evergreen.peopleadmin.com/postings/1424> to apply.