

Program Assistant, Health Care Coverage and Access and Tracking Health System Performance

The Organization

The Commonwealth Fund — among the first private foundations started by a woman philanthropist, Anna M. Harkness — was established in 1918 with the broad charge to enhance the common good. Today, the mission of The Commonwealth Fund is to promote a high-performing health care system that achieves better access, improved quality, and greater efficiency, particularly for society's most vulnerable, including low-income people, the uninsured, and people of color. The Fund carries out this mandate by supporting independent research on health care issues and making grants to improve health care practice and policy.

Our Values and Commitment to Equity

The Commonwealth Fund envisions a health care system that values and benefits all people equally — one that combats racism and pursues equity, in treatment and outcomes as well as in leadership and decision-making. We believe this requires an alliance of people and institutions across society working together to recognize and value the lived experience of all individuals; ensure the delivery of compassionate, affordable, quality health care; and strive for equitable outcomes for all.

We aspire to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion in how we work. We place great value on the varied backgrounds and experiences our staff bring to our organization and encourage employees to bring their full selves to the workplace. We look for talented, nimble, empathetic, and supportive team players who are ready to roll up their sleeves, create impactful change, and celebrate accomplishments.

Program Summary

The U.S. health system is characterized by considerable geographic variation on insurance coverage, access to care, health status, quality of care, and the cost of care. It also lags other economically advanced countries by varying degrees in most of these areas. This means that some regions of the U.S. not only lag behind other regions on health performance indicators, they lag even further behind other economically advanced countries than national averages suggest.

In the area of insurance coverage, the Affordable Care Act improved overall U.S. performance relative to other countries and narrowed differences between some states. It also narrowed historical race and income inequities in coverage and reduced state differences in people's access to care and consumer financial problems stemming from uncovered health care encounters. In addition, there is consistent evidence that the coverage expansions led to improved reported health status in some states, a key indicator of mortality. The law's provisions in the area of health care quality and cost were less sweeping than those in coverage but resulted in important improvements.

Despite these ACA-related gains, the U.S. still lags significantly behind other countries on health care indicators and large differences remain between states. More than 25 million people remain uninsured, nearly a quarter of working age adults have insurance plans that are leaving them underinsured, the country has a growing consumer medical debt crisis, and health care costs are growing faster than median income in most states. In addition, over the last decade, the U.S has experienced an unprecedented decline in life expectancy driven in large part by the COVID-19 pandemic and the opioid use epidemic. With the end of the federal protections implemented during the pandemic, millions of people are expected to lose insurance coverage with a large number projected to become uninsured.

In order to help meet these challenges, the Health Care Coverage and Access Program & Tracking Health System Performance research initiative conduct extramural and intramural research on the extent and quality of insurance, health care access and financial problems stemming from inadequate coverage and health system performance at the national and state, including examining and developing policy options aimed at improving performance.

The program and research initiative seek to educate and inform policy makers, the media, health system leaders and practitioners, community leaders, and the public. We accomplish this by tracking and assessing health system performance in the areas of coverage and access, costs, quality of care, health outcomes, and equity at the national, state, and local levels. This includes developing and monitoring policies aimed at improving performance. The team also collaborates with other Fund programs on publications and products that support the Funds priorities.

General Position Description

Reporting to the Senior Scholar and Vice President (Sara Collins) and working closely with the Research Associate, Researcher, and Senior Scientist, the Program Assistant is the staff member responsible for providing daily support for the Health Care Coverage and Access Program and the Tracking Health System Performance Initiative. The Program Assistant will be expected to perform a variety of duties ranging from daily administrative and grants management tasks to research assistance, creating charts in Power Point and tables in Excel, and contributing to Fund publications.

Specific Responsibilities

Grants Management (40%)

- Provide support and development assistance for the program's portfolio of 20+ grants, including conducting background research on proposed projects; working with potential grantees to refine proposals and ensure completion of all required documents; assisting in internal reviews of proposals; taking detailed notes and preparing summaries of review meetings for proposed grants. Draft correspondence to current and prospective grantees; assemble and provide materials on Fund programs, projects, and other activities.
- Provide support for the program, including drafting summaries of proposed grants, payment and reporting schedules, and letters of agreement; monitoring timelines and tracking grantee products, including papers and conferences; scheduling grant payments accordingly; writing summaries of results of internal review of grantee products, including papers and reports;

planning meetings, forums or conferences related to grantee work; and preparing memos analyzing completed projects.

- Act as a liaison with Communications to ensure the dissemination of all grant products, including: coordinating the review of draft grantee publications by Fund staff and the promotion of grantee-published articles; tracking products as they progress in the publication process; fact checking language for the Fund website that publicizes grantee work; reviewing and providing program updates to the Fund website as needed; coordinating with grantees and Communications staff to produce webinars, podcasts, and other multimedia to promote grantee work and publicize the program.

General Administrative Responsibilities (35%)

- Provide administrative support to the Senior Scholar and Vice President: including the calendar, phone, travel, meetings, expense reports, correspondence, and distribution of program work.
- Prepare documents for internal meetings, including the annual program plan, budget meeting, and proposal review meetings. This includes closely monitoring grantee work status and impact throughout the year, internet and library research and assembling materials and detailed information about projects.
- Prepare materials and PowerPoint slides and Excel tables, for public and internal presentations including as congressional testimonies, government department briefings, research conferences, and university guest lectures.

Research (25%)

- Provide research support for Fund reports, fact sheets, and issue briefs based on Fund commissioned surveys, Fund state data center, and congressional legislation. This work may include literature reviews, statistical analyses (using computer statistical software), and tables and chart preparation. The Program Assistant co-authors and assists in the analysis of Fund survey and other data, such as the Biennial Health Insurance Survey and the Health Care Affordability Survey. This includes statistical analysis using STATA or other software as appropriate. Draft tables and charts as well as summaries of grantee reports.
- Under direction, track, evaluate and summarize federal legislation, regulations, and guidance issued on health reform law as it regards health insurance coverage and related issues, as well as state implementation of health reform, such as tracking Medicaid and Marketplaces numbers during the open enrollment period, and actions taken by states to expand their Medicaid programs.
- Conduct background research, including literature reviews, internet searches and track journals, working papers, legislative developments and public coverage of health policy issues such as reforms to reduce medical debt, and other topics related to health reform and the Health Care Coverage and Access program area.
- Maintain up-to-date internal databases of literature and federal survey releases on the Program's areas of interest and current health reform and issues, authored by other researchers or research organizations as well as government reports including the Census Bureau, CDC, Congressional Budget Office, Department of Health and Human Services, Urban Institute, RAND Corporation, Kaiser Family Foundation, and others.

- Take on research responsibility in other program areas if the need arises, such as conducting data quality checks for the Medicare program and the International Health Policy program's issue briefs before publication.
- Occasionally, the Assistant will travel to relevant meetings and conferences to represent and support the work of the program and its grantees.

Core Competencies & Qualifications

- A college bachelor's degree with a major in economics, public policy, or public health is preferred
- One to two years of work experience, preferably in health policy or policy research
- Strong technical skills, including proficient use of databases (Salesforce is a plus) and Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, and PowerPoint). Familiarity with STATA, SAS, or similar statistical software is a plus.
- Experience in analyzing and interpreting data
- Meeting management experience
- Ability to multi-task, prioritize, and follow through to effectively manage work and meet multiple tight deadlines
- Exceptional attention to detail and organizational skills
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Good judgment and the ability to act independently within standard guidelines
- Flexibility and skill in working as a team member

The Fund has a relatively small staff, and judgment, integrity, and the ability to listen with sensitivity to others are traits that are particularly important in an organization of the Fund's size, where teamwork is essential to effectiveness. The ability to work collegially with a variety of Fund staff and interest in and strong commitment to the Fund's mission and grants programs are key qualifications.

Location

Position is based in our NYC location.

Salary and how to Apply

Salary Range: \$52,132.00 - \$65,165.00

Please apply using this link: [Program Assistant, HCCA](#)

Employment at The Commonwealth Fund is based upon personal capabilities and qualifications without discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual preference, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, medical condition, disability, or any other protected characteristic as established by law.