

# **Assistant Director and Senior Specialist, SL-0101**

**Position Number:** 171801

**Introductory Statement:** This position serves as an Assistant Director of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) for a major research program area(s), reporting directly to the Director of CRS. In this capacity, the Assistant Director leads, plans, directs, and evaluates the research and analyses of a division of the Congressional Research Service and ensures that the research and analysis produced by the division is of the highest quality and consistently meets the Service's standards of objectivity, nonpartisanship, balance, timeliness, legislative relevance, authoritativeness, and accessibility. The incumbent oversees implementation of the Service's research agenda for issues within the division's areas of responsibility, including approaches, frameworks, and methodologies for addressing policy and legislative issues. This includes demonstrating personal intellectual leadership in monitoring congressional needs in the policy areas for which the Assistant Director has direct research management responsibility, and assuring access to the intellectual capacity needed to meet the current and changing needs of the United States Congress at a sustained level of excellence. This also includes exercising overall responsibility and delegated authority for the oversight and administration of the division's human, financial, material, and information research assets. In performing these activities, the Assistant Director is responsible for ensuring that the research and analytical activities of the division are fully aligned with the legislative needs of Congress and with the priorities, goals, and policies of CRS for meeting those needs. The Assistant Director also serves as a chief advisor to the Director, counseling the Director on all aspects of the research management and operations of CRS, and recommending specific policies and procedures for improving the Service's overall quality, efficiency and effectiveness. The Assistant Director serves as a member of the Director's senior management team and serves as a principal CRS representative to Members, committees and officers of the United States Congress.

## **Advises on Formulation of and Implements Agency Policies 40%**

Counsels the Director and Deputy Director on all aspects of the management and operations of the Congressional Research Service. Is responsible for the formulation and administration of policies affecting the Service beginning, at the highest level, with advice and counsel to the Director and Deputy Director in successfully meeting the CRS mission and in successfully implementing the Service's performance goals. The incumbent advises the CRS Director and Deputy Director on matters relating to the research activities, operations, and mission of the Service. Communicates effectively in conducting the work of CRS by personal example and by achieving and sustaining an environment throughout CRS that is conducive to two-way communication. Creates and sustains an environment that stimulates discussion to fully explore questions, concerns, Service goals, program requirements, etc. Develops innovative and creative ideas to advance the quality of the research and the success of the Service. Provides advice and guidance that explores consequences of actions, anticipates problems and reactions to a course of action, and offers alternative solutions.

Exercising the highest level of judgment and discretion, the incumbent demonstrates awareness of the likely consequences or implications of his/her actions, responds appropriately to situations that require discretion and confidentiality and consistently advances CRS values.

Monitors immediate and longer term needs of the Congress for research support in its policy making activities. Monitors management and operations of the Service in relation to its capacity for and actual experience in meeting needs of the Congress as set forth in the Service's performance goals and statements of its mission. Assesses strengths and weaknesses of the Service as a whole and the effectiveness and efficiency of its operational functions in carrying out its mission. Identifies best practices and areas requiring improvement across management and operational functions and activities. Recommends specific policies and procedures for improving efficiency and effectiveness of research management and operations of the Service and assesses their implications. Systematically reviews and evaluates budget plans and periodic reports on budget execution. Recommends and evaluates options for allocating staff and resources in the context of current and prospective budgets. Advances policies and procedures of the Service to meet its goals and carry out its mission with maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

Assures that the formulation and administration of policies are based on full consideration of the needs of the Congress and efforts to meet those needs in the policy areas for which incumbent has direct research management responsibility. Maintains effective communications with managers and staff the incumbent manages, as well as with his/her colleagues. Elicits views, concerns and suggestions from managers and staff to help inform the formulation and management of Service policies. Explains Service plans, policies, goals and mission to managers and staff in both generalized settings and in the context of relevant applications, activities, and initiatives. Collaborates with other senior managers to assure full and fair consideration of the needs of the Service as a whole in the formulation of Service policies and the management of its research. Keeps the Director informed on a timely basis about new or unforeseen developments with implications for the successful conduct of CRS functions and activities and its service to the Congress.

### **Leads and Directs a Major Research Program 40%**

Leads, plans, directs, and evaluates the research and analytical activities of a division of the Congressional Research Service. In collaboration with other senior managers leads, plans, directs, and evaluates the research and analyses of the Service in policy areas for which the incumbent has direct research management responsibility and ensures that such activities are fully aligned with the legislative needs of the United States Congress and with the priorities, goals, and policies of CRS for meeting those needs. In direct support of current and anticipated policy making activities of the Congress, develops and actively maintains a research agenda based on significant public policy problems and legislative issues in the policy areas for which the incumbent has direct research management responsibility.

Oversees implementation of the research agenda, including approaches, frameworks, or methodologies for addressing policy and legislative issues within the division's areas of responsibility. Sets research priorities for managers and staff, and ensures full participation of all

research and analytic staff in identifying current legislative issues for inclusion in the research agenda. Leads the legislative planning in his/her division, in collaboration with the Director, Deputy Director, Associate Director for Research, and fellow Assistant Directors. Aligns resources allocated to the division as necessary to ensure quality research coverage. Monitors, updates, and adjusts the research agenda to meet the changing needs of Congress, and communicates adjustments to managers and staff. Continually assesses the division's overall performance in meeting the research and legislative needs of the Congress and the priorities, goals, and policies of CRS for meeting those needs. Ensures that all aspects of the division are operating efficiently and effectively. Holds self and others accountable for achieving research goals and standards of the Service. Ensures that managers and staff maintain a strong client orientation in all interactions with Members, committees, and staff.

The incumbent exercises overall responsibility, as well as delegated authority, for the oversight and administration of policy and legislative research in designated major research areas. Demonstrates personal intellectual leadership in monitoring congressional needs in the policy areas for which the incumbent has direct research management responsibility, in formulating and maintaining a research agenda to meet those needs, in guiding and directing relevant research of individuals and groups, and in reviewing and evaluating the work of researchers and their managers. Leads people and their work effectively and personally supports and inspires in others performance that furthers the mission of the Service. This includes promoting new ideas with enthusiasm, conviction, and confidence; soliciting and considering others' opinions; gaining support from others; motivating and inspiring others; and actively supporting and leading change that is critical to attain the Service's vision. Routinely elicits ideas and opinions and appropriately utilizes these in making plans and decisions. Effectively mobilizes interest and/or gains commitment from others. Addresses concerns about the Service's goals and efforts to achieve them, especially concerns of key stakeholders and opinion leaders. Promotes the effective performance of the Section Research Managers within his/her division and leads efforts to ensure their success. Supports all staff in collaborative efforts.

Assures the accessibility and availability of the intellectual capacity needed to meet the current and changing needs of Congress at a sustained level of excellence. Assesses staffing requirements in relation to current and anticipated needs of the Congress; develops staffing plans, justifications, and requests. Makes policy area assignments for staff. Assigns work. Realigns staff assignments as necessary to meet needs of the Congress. Recruits and interviews candidates for positions allocated to the division. Ensures that new staff are oriented and assimilated effectively into the division and the Service. Identifies professional development needs of staff and managers and meets those needs by providing appropriate training, mentoring, on-the-job experiences, details, the development and execution of Individual Development Plans, and other professional development opportunities. Communicates the workforce's expected performance levels. Identifies and ensures that appropriate professional development and training opportunities are afforded to division staff. Makes final recommendations for appointment, promotion, or reassignment of division employees. Takes appropriate action to address staff performance problems. Recommends awards and commendations to staff for exceptional performance. Fosters overall morale and "esprit de corps" within the division.

Communicates research standards and expectations to division managers and staff and holds managers and staff accountable to those standards. In exercising overall responsibility, as well as delegated authority, for the oversight and administration of research efforts, the incumbent ensures that all research and analysis produced by the division is of the highest quality and meets CRS's standards of objectivity, non-partisanship, balance, timeliness, legislative relevance, authoritativeness, and accessibility. Assesses and reviews research products to ensure that they meet professional standards, adhere to CRS policy guidelines, and are responsive to the needs of Members and committees of Congress. Manages research for projects that pose critical organizational or policy area challenges for the Service. Coordinates research and analysis for the Congress that span multiple sections or divisions; and understands and communicates the nature and scope of the research needs of Members of Congress or staff.

Ensures that managers and staff conduct research and analytical activities in a collaborative manner that incorporates expertise from multiple disciplines available from both inside and outside the division. Plans and coordinates research activities with managers in other divisions to promote research and analysis across the Service. Leads, plans, organizes and coordinates research working groups, and assures staff participation in Service-wide efforts. Plans and implements activities that promote the sense and reality of a CRS research community. Partners with other managers to identify and remove barriers and resolve conflicts that are detrimental to the work of CRS. Supports the Section Research Managers in their efforts to build an integrated CRS research community. Working with fellow managers, ensures that all staff are supported in their collaborative interactions.

Oversees and manages financial, material, and information assets allocated to the division. Identifies the resource needs for work performed in the division, analyzes these needs, and presents these analyses to the Director. Oversees the use of resource allocations made to the division and approves and monitors commitments to division members for research and professional development support, such as travel, training, awards, contracts, supplies, and subscriptions. Oversees the allocation of workspace, equipment, and furnishings, including the allocation of computer hardware and software. Identifies appropriate needs within the division to be supported through contracts and directs the acquisition and management of such contracts.

#### **Serves as a Representative/Liaison 10%**

Serves as a principal CRS representative to committees and officers of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, other legislative agencies and the Library of Congress, executive branch departments and agencies, professional organizations, universities, and other research organizations on the broadest matters related to CRS research, policy and organization. Through these interactions, establishes and maintains effective working relationships with various high-level individuals, including Members of Congress and their staff and senior managers and staff of other legislative and executive agencies. Represents the division on Service-wide task forces, committees, etc.

#### **Exercises Supervisory and/or Managerial Authorities 10%**

Oversees and ensures compliance by subordinate managers and supervisors with human resource management functions and requirements for division staff. Establishes performance expectations for staff members, which are clearly communicated. Provides informal feedback and regularly evaluates staff on performance. Resolves informal complaints and grievances. Takes personnel actions as necessary. Provides advice and counsel to staff members and subordinate managers related to work and policy matters. Effects disciplinary measures. Reviews and approves or disapproves leave requests. Assures that organization staff at all levels is trained and fully comply with the provisions of the safety regulations.

The incumbent is responsible for furthering the goals of equal employment opportunity (EEO) by taking positive steps to ensure the accomplishment of affirmative action objectives and by adhering to nondiscriminatory employment practices in regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap. Specifically, incumbent initiates nondiscriminatory practices and affirmative action for the area under his/her direction in the following: (1) merit promotion of employees and recruitment and hiring of applicants; (2) fair treatment of all employees; (3) encouragement and recognition of employee achievements; (4) career development of employees, including the development and execution of Individual Development Plans for division staff; and (5) full utilization of their skills.

#### **OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS:**

Performs other duties as assigned.

#### **Program Scope and Effect**

Directs a major research program that supports directly the Congressional Research Service's mission of providing the United States Congress with comprehensive and reliable research, analytic, and information services that are timely, objective, nonpartisan, and confidential. By virtue of CRS's relationship to the Congress, the impact of the program managed directly involves the national interest and the agency's national mission; is subject to continual congressional scrutiny; and has a pervasive impact on the United States Congress and, by extension, the general public.

#### **Organizational Setting**

The position is accountable to a position that is at the senior level (SL) level.

#### **Supervisory/Managerial Authority Exercised**

Exercises delegated authority to oversee the overall planning, direction, and timely execution of a program, several program segments (each of which is managed through separate subordinate organizational units), or comparable staff functions, including development, assignment, higher level clearance of goals and objectives for supervisors or managers of subordinate organizational units or lower organizational levels, and alignment and coordination of program activities to support the Agency's mission, goals and plans. Approves multi-year and longer range research work plans developed by the supervisors or managers of subordinate organizational units and

subsequently manages the overall work to enhance achievement of the goals and objectives. Oversees the revision of long range plans, goals, and objectives for the work directed. Manages organizational changes to the organization directed, or major changes to the structure and content of the program or program segments directed. Exercises discretionary authority to distribute resources allocated to the organization.

### **Nature of Contacts**

Contacts may take place in meetings, conferences, briefings, speeches, presentations, or congressional hearings and may require extemporaneous response to unexpected or hostile questioning. Preparation for these meetings typically includes using briefing packages or similar presentation materials that requires extensive analytical input by the employee and subordinates, and/or involves the assistance of a support staff.

Frequent contacts are maintained with any of the following:- Members, committees and officers of Congress, key congressional staff, and other officers of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate;- Elected or appointed representatives of State and local governments;- Regional or national officers or comparable representatives of trade associations, public action groups, or professional organizations of national stature;- Influential individuals or organized groups from outside the employing agency, such as top- and mid-level corporate executives or national officers of employee organizations; and/or- Senior Level (SL), or Executive Level heads of bureaus and higher level organizations in other Federal agencies.

### **Purpose of Contacts**

The purpose is to assure the provision of timely, nonpartisan, authoritative, objective research and information supporting the legislative work of the Congress and to influence, motivate, or persuade persons or groups to accept points of view or take actions related to advancing the fundamental goals and objectives of the program or segments directed. Contacts may involve the commitment or distribution of major resources, competing objectives, resource limitations or reductions, or comparable issues. Persons contacted come from a variety of backgrounds and have different perspectives. The exchange of information will require highly developed analytic and communication skills, negotiation, conflict resolution, leadership, and similar skills in order to obtain the desired results.

### **Difficulty of Typical Work Directed**

The highest graded non-supervisory work directed, which requires at least 25% of this position's duty time, is GS-15.

### **Other Conditions**

Supervision and oversight involve exceptional coordination and integration of a number of very important and complex program segments or programs of professional, scientific, technical, managerial, or administrative work comparable in difficulty to GS-13 or higher level. Supervision and resource management involve major decisions and actions that have a direct and

substantial effect on the organizations and programs managed and on achieving the missions, goals and plans of the Agency.