



## Health Science Specialist (GS-9)

**Salary range: \$53,738 to \$69,860**  
**1.0 FTE**



To apply, please submit CV/resume, cover letter, and list of 3 references to [nicole.floyd@va.gov](mailto:nicole.floyd@va.gov) by September 4, 2018 for first consideration.

### Background

This position is housed in Research and Development Service located at the VA Portland Health Care System in Portland, Oregon. The incumbent will serve as a Health Science Specialist (Research Associate) for the Coordinating Center (ESPCC) of the [Evidence-based Synthesis Program \(ESP\)](#).

Established in 2007, the ESP makes high quality evidence synthesis available to clinicians, managers and policymakers as they work to improve the health and healthcare of Veterans. As part of the Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) program, ESP is helping VA fulfill its vision of functioning as a continuously "learning healthcare system" to improve veteran health and health care. ESP achieves this by providing timely, targeted, thorough, unbiased and innovative syntheses of the medical literature for Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to translate into evidence-based clinical practice and policy, quality improvement and implementation, and future research initiatives at the national level.

Our program consists of four ESP Centers, each with an active University affiliation, and a Coordinating Center. Center directors are recognized leaders in the systematic review field with close ties to the AHRQ Evidence-based Practice Centers and Cochrane Collaboration and are practicing clinicians in the VA. This unique expertise enables ESP to produce comprehensive reports that answer a wide range of research questions in a variety of clinical and health system settings with a special emphasis on the Veteran population and geared towards helping VA leadership with policy and clinical decision making.

The ESPCC is charged with oversight of national ESP program operations, program development and evaluation, and dissemination efforts. The ESPCC establishes standard operating procedures for the production of evidence synthesis reports; facilitates a national topic nomination, prioritization, and selection process; manages the research portfolio of each Center; facilitates editorial review processes; ensures methodological consistency and quality of products; produces Rapid Response Evidence Briefs at the request of VHA senior leadership; collaborates with HSR&D Center for Information Dissemination and Education Resources (CIDER) to develop a national dissemination strategy for all ESP products; and interfaces with stakeholders to effectively engage the program.

### Major Duties

The Health Science Specialist's primary focus will be to produce a variety of [Rapid Response Evidence Products](#) and initial Scoping Briefs of systematic review topics for assignment to ESP Centers. Review topics often focus on health services delivery and policy and process of care and

address the broader social issues among Veterans. Because of the emphasis on collaboration between VA operations and the evidence review team, ESP work products can have a strong impact on national policy.

Best-qualified candidates will have knowledge of the principles, practices, procedures, and techniques for conducting systematic reviews of scientific literature, including the ability to read and assess the internal validity and strength of evidence of scientific research studies; skill in data collection, management, and analysis in a health services research setting; ability to write concise summaries of findings and synthesis of data; ability to effectively communicate report findings via publication and/or presentation; and proficiency using scientific literature search engines.

Preference will be given to those with a master’s degree in public health, epidemiology, health policy/services, medical anthropology, or behavioral sciences, and at least 3 years of experience working in a research setting.

<b>KSAO'S or JOB ELEMENT</b>	<b>DUTIES</b>
1. Knowledge of the principles, practices, procedures, and techniques for conducting systematic reviews of scientific literature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assists PI in developing and refining Key Questions and inclusion/exclusion criteria for evidence synthesis reports.</li> <li>• Reviews abstracts and full texts of scientific research studies for inclusion/exclusion; extracting relevant data.</li> <li>• Assesses the internal validity of studies using pre-established quality/risk of bias criteria; assesses the strength of the evidence using a structured tool.</li> <li>• Drafts components of evidence synthesis reports including: background, methods, results, data synthesis, discussion, and executive summary for PI review.</li> <li>• Adjudicates peer review comments; makes appropriate revisions to draft, and finalizes evidence synthesis report.</li> </ul>
2. Skill in data collection, management, and analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designs, builds and implements project specific databases (e.g., bibliographic) and/or spreadsheets.</li> <li>• Designs data gathering tools and trains multidisciplinary team on the use of those tools to ensure data validity and reliability.</li> <li>• Develops evidence tables, figures and other supportive documents.</li> <li>• Performs basic statistical analysis.</li> </ul>
3. Ability to report research results via publication and/or presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manages editing and final preparation of evidence synthesis report as specified by program style guidelines.</li> <li>• Prepares manuscripts for publication in scientific journals.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops PowerPoint presentation of report findings for VHA leadership briefings, cyberseminars, or other dissemination venues.</li> <li>• Presents report findings in person or by conference call to a variety of audiences.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Ability to coordinate the work of a research team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates the production time line and assignment of tasks for evidence synthesis report teams, assures submission deadlines are met.</li> <li>• Mentors evidence synthesis report teams, comprised of clinicians, health services investigators, technicians, and students on study protocols.</li> <li>• Meets with research team to review study protocols and train them on systematic review techniques to ensure validity and reliability of data collected.</li> <li>• Designs and implements study specific trainings for study team personnel as needed.</li> </ul>