Economist, TS-0110-12

Position Number:

Introductory Statement: The Federal Housing Finance Agency's (FHFA) mission is to promote a stable and liquid mortgage market, affordable housing, and community investment through safety and soundness and mission oversight of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the 12 Federal Home Loan Banks.

Division of FHLBank Regulation (DBR) is responsible for the supervision and regulation of the FHLBanks and the Office of Finance. DBR’s supervisory program focuses on the examination and assessment of the FHLBanks to ensure their safe and sound operation, and to monitor their effectiveness in carrying out their housing finance mission, including affordable housing and community investment programs. DBR monitors and assesses the financial condition and performance of the FHLBanks and the Office of Finance and their compliance with regulations through annual on-site examinations, periodic visitations, and off-site monitoring and analysis activities. DBR’s mission is to ensure that the FHLBanks adhere to safe and sound practices, comply with regulations, and serve as a reliable source of liquidity to enable its members to serve the nation's housing finance and community investment needs.

Risk Analysis and Research conducts analysis and research to support the development of policies and regulations governing the FHLBanks. This office also administers a number of monitoring programs to assess FHLBank governance, Affordable Housing Program and credit and operational risks. The monitoring programs provide “early warning indicators” of potential emerging problems and issues that may warrant closer supervisory attention. The office advises the senior executives of DBR on economic, financial, and regulatory issues.

Plans and Conducts Economic Studies and Analyses 100%

Assists in providing analytical support for the Risk Analysis and Research monitoring programs. The monitoring programs are designed to analyze FHLBank practices in specific subject areas, such as corporate governance, operational and credit risk. The incumbent will support the development and operation of the monitoring programs by assisting in the development of information requests, and in the analyses of FHLBank data and programs. Drafts monitoring reports supporting conclusions with analysis based on FHLBank data and other sources in a manner that ensures the work can be replicated and supported.

Supports the preparation and presentation of results from economic, financial and monitoring reports to senior agency officials. This requires the ability to organize and prepare briefings and to draft appropriate supporting documentation.

Assists in conducting research on topics including but not limited to: performance of the FHLBanks; risk measurement and management at the FHLBanks; role of the FHLBanks in housing finance, and implications stemming from the FHLBanks’ cooperative ownership structure.

Assists in the research and identification of emerging risks in the FHLBank System such as market, interest rate, operational and credit risk. This responsibility requires maintaining
familiarity with best practices and trends.

Assists with economic and financial studies, special projects, and/or monitoring results which contribute to the supervision of individual FHLBanks and to the development of supervisory policy tools and techniques, and develops objective criteria to evaluate risks at the individual FHLBanks and the FHLBank System.

Assists in providing economic and financial analysis of ongoing and proposed FHLBank product programs, FHFA regulations, and legislation affecting the FHLBanks and/or the FHFA. Assists in the development of economic and financial analysis of DBR advisory bulletins and examiner guidance bulletins. Assists in assembling and analyzing financial, housing and mortgage, and census databases.

Participates with Risk Analysis and Research and DBR staff in the development and analysis of new regulations, orders, policies, or advisory bulletins that should be undertaken to respond to potential threats to the safety and soundness of the FHLBank System and to ensure that the FHLBanks continue to achieve their housing finance mission.

Assists in responding to internal inquiries from staff for technical and analytical support, analysis of existing policies and regulations, as well as regulatory drafting and analysis.

Assists in the preparation of responses to inquiries from members or committees of Congress, media organizations, interest groups, and the general public.

**Factor 1-10 Knowledge Required by the Position**

The position requires professional knowledge of economic theory, principles, methods, and procedures applicable to a wide range of duties in one or more program and/or functional areas, and a high level of skill in applying this knowledge in solving complex problems involving diverse aspects of economic programs/projects (e.g., conducting economic studies, or performing program oversight activities of greater than average difficulty, as in a new program or a program that is being redefined, where procedures require frequent modification and change in order to incorporate revised theories and techniques).

Ability to identify and clarify issues, identify and present opposing views without bias, and evaluate options and analyze the consequences of implementing them.

Knowledge of statistical computation methods, data collection, and economic systems to analyze and research economic factors.

Knowledge of and skill in using regression analysis and other statistical and econometric techniques.
Experience with computer analysis of data sets or experience and skill with standard statistical packages.

Experience conducting a variety of research leading to formal written products.

Skill in communicating effectively, both orally and in writing, with both technical and non-technical audiences.

Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues.

**Factor 2- 10 Supervisory Controls**

Under the supervision of the Associate Director, Risk Analysis and Research, the incumbent exercises judgment in carrying out his/her duties. Is expected to operate with minimum supervisory guidance in the interpretation, application, and extension of statistical and analytical tools in a wide variety of circumstances. The incumbent is responsible for studying and researching economic, financial and regulatory issues and programs affecting the FHLBanks. Exercises independent judgment in the research development, and financial and economic reporting functions. Receives guidance on more difficult data development and analytical tasks. Completed work products are reviewed only from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other work, accuracy, responsiveness, appropriate organization of material, and conformance with FHFA policy.

**Factor 3- 10 Guidelines**

Applies general policies and practices of the FHFA contained in applicable guidance documents, examination manuals, and operating guidelines, when available. In consultation with Risk Analysis and Research staff and the Associate Director, the incumbent is required to use judgment and resourcefulness to interpret data and findings that deviate from traditional methods. The guidelines are consistent with past practice, but are stated in general terms, e.g., in terms of goals to be accomplished rather than the approach to be taken to achieve desired goals. The economist develops new methods and techniques for acquiring information, analyzing data, developing solutions, and presenting findings.

**Factor 4- 10 Complexity**

The work requires understanding and knowledge of credit, finance, and economics, and reliable judgment with respect to identifying problem areas, and developing recommendations for corrective actions. The employee applies analytical and interpretive skills to identify the risks faced by FHLBanks and the Office of Finance. Established practices and techniques are used but there is some interpretation required of the employee to fit the specific situations encountered.

The FHLBank System has combined assets in excess of $1.2 trillion. As large financial institutions, the 12 FHLBanks and the Office of Finance that comprise the System face a variety of complex risks. The incumbent works with activities that are extremely diverse and that cover a broad range of institutional functions, applying analytical and interpretive skills to a variety of complex situations. DBR supervises the FHLBanks and the Office of Finance to ensure that the
FHLBanks operate in a safe and sound manner, achieve their housing finance mission, and maintain their access to the capital markets.

**Factor 5-10 Scope and Effect**

The purpose of the work is to develop economic approaches to investigate or analyze a variety of unusual economic conditions, problems, or questions. Economic approaches vary widely because of the unpredictability of economic conditions and factors. Assists senior economists in the development, documentation, and review of statistical, econometric, and financial models. The employee’s work serves as a basis for senior officials within DBR to institute new practices, policies and systems, and for making significant changes to the operation of the FHLBanks and the Office of Finance.

The employee develops information on economic conditions, related factors, statistical/backup data, and provides an analysis of economic issues. The work affects major economic programs throughout the agency.

**Factor 6-10 Personal Contacts**

Personal contacts are with numerous analysts, specialists, and professional staff from within and outside the agency in a moderately unstructured setting, i.e., the contacts are not established on a routine basis, and the role and authority of each party is identified and developed during the course of the contact.

Personal contacts are primarily with FHLBank, Office of Finance, and FHFA's staff including DBR's bank examiners. Specific contacts may include, but are not limited to other agency employees, professionals in universities, trade associations and/or public interest groups.

**Factor 7-10 Purpose of Contacts**

The purpose of contacts is to influence, motivate, or persuade persons or groups who are typically skeptical, resistant, or uncooperative, and who must be approached skillfully to obtain the desired effect. Requires skill in persuasion, negotiation, motivation, or establishment of rapport.

Summarizes, communicates, and relates information or obtains information that may not be readily available; provides advice and guidance on project activities; gives advice on optimum approaches, fact-finding, and report writing requirements; and resolves problems encountered during project activities.

**Factor 8-10 Physical Demands**

The work is primarily sedentary, but the incumbent may be required to travel outside the Washington D.C. metropolitan area to attend meetings or to assist with on-site supervision of the FHLBanks.

**Factor 9-10 Work Environment**

Work is usually performed in agency headquarters and, on occasion, at FHLBanks across the country. The work environment involves everyday risks or discomforts that require normal safety precautions typical of such places as offices, and meeting and training rooms. The work area is adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated.