

CLIENT ASSISTANCE SPECIALIST

DEFINITION OF CLASS:

Incumbents in this class perform journey level work linking clients seeking healthcare/social-human services with various resources and provide information, assistance, emotional support and advocacy. They work in a variety of social-human services domains including, but not limited to, STD-HIV support services, housing services, aging and disability services, domestic violence services, and victim-witness services. They directly provide services and general or specialized assistance to clients, or help them access resources, consistent with the program-unit-team of assignment.

MAJOR DUTIES:

Responsible for providing or facilitating (through coordination/referral) access, service and assistance to clients such as help obtaining a peace or protective order or crime victim compensation or other help from programs/units within and outside County government. Provides initial information to, and interviews, people; asks questions, requires documentation and conducts research to understand key circumstances, needs and wants of the people seeking assistance. Determines eligibility and assesses and prioritizes needs. Refers people to an intake worker or conducts the intake. Helps clients assess their situation, define their problems, and identify acceptable courses of action by availing themselves of recommended services. Provides information, guidance and assistance to clients by enrolling them in, directly linking them to, or referring them to, programs/services/benefits provided by the Federal government, the State, the County or non-governmental organizations. Provides emotional support to clients and encouragement; serves as an advocate for clients. Promotes awareness of the programs, services and benefits available through various types of outreach.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES: (Illustrative Only)

- Identifies and responds to service wants and needs of the client by establishing facts and conditions and their interaction and taking or recommending appropriate actions to obtain, speed or otherwise improve appropriate service(s). Advises on and, as practicable, helps clients define and assess their own problems and service needs and identify effective courses of action.
- Provides specialized information and referrals pertinent to program(s) of assignment and/or area(s) of specialization, such as cycles of domestic violence and safety, and criminal justice system practices from police investigation through prosecution.
- Determines, or facilitates determination of, eligibility and need for assistance based on information secured through interviews with clients, their relatives, other agencies, and persons in the community.
- Keeps abreast of changes to and the issuance of new rules, regulations, policies and procedures pertaining to program eligibility and service delivery as well as concerns and conditions addressed by programs, such as aging-disability and victim-witness safety.
- Participates in meetings for, and develops, individual service plans for clients.
- Serves as intermediary between clients and governmental or non-governmental agencies, as well as private parties; supports and advocates for clients. Follows through to ensure relief or services have been provided.

- Provides case management, monitoring care and services.
- Coordinates and communicates with business contacts concerning sensitive client- and case-specific information to obtain/verify facts, discuss courses of action and exchange other routine and non-routine information. May organize and lead case coordination meetings. Keeps supervisor and stakeholders informed.
- Reviews program (such as program rules and forms) and personal documents (such as marriage certificates, birth certificates, death certificates, military discharge papers, peace and protective orders, police reports, tax forms, bank statements, insurance policies and leases), creates and maintains case notes and records, drafts brief memos and letters, etc.
- May help recruit, screen, train, and/or provide operational supervision to volunteers, sometimes on a rotating basis.
- May make presentations to staff of other units/agencies, members of clubs/churches/associations, service groups (such as seniors), etc., concerning issues, programs, and services. Similarly, may help develop outreach and information brochures and other literature intended for one or more groups on one or more topics.
- Uses a computer and various electronic devices/systems to plan, schedule, communicate, research (the Internet), create, exchange, record and use information, make/check calculations, etc.
- May drive to/from various work sites.
- Performs related duties as required.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS:

Performs client assistance work independently. Plans and performs the successive steps involved in assignments (social service needs assessments, social program/service eligibility, social service/assistance delivery and referral, case management, etc.), and handles problems and deviations in the work in accordance with guidelines. As a full performance level worker, is expected to perform competently across a full range of standard, recurring assignments.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED: Positions in this class are non-supervisory.

GUIDELINES:

Guidelines include the basic principles, methods, techniques and generally-accepted practices of social-human services work, the regulations, policies, systems, procedures and practicalities of applicable governmental and non-governmental assistance programs, and the County and non-County resources that serve persons in need and help to encourage and support them. Examples include confidentiality-privacy requirements, electronic databases and systems and user guides, procedural manuals and SOPs, and criminal justice procedures. Incumbent uses programmatic expertise and full performance level social-human services provider judgment in selecting and applying/adapting techniques to develop and maintain rapport, identify needs and good alternatives for addressing them, and encourage, support and advocate for clients.

COMPLEXITY:

Complexity is characterized by frontline social-human services tasks (assessment of needs, determination of eligibility, provision of direct assistance or referrals and coordination, management of cases, etc.) for clients within context of co-occurring service/assistance needs (such as a traumatized victim with serious childcare or financial problems), cultural-educational-language barriers and other complicating factors. Fully developed social-human services provider knowledge and skills and

experienced judgment are required in the reasoning used to solve client- and case-specific problems each day.

SCOPE AND EFFECT:

Provides or facilitates a range of social-human services and assistance for clientele; assistance includes emotional support and advocacy. The impact of the properly performed work is individually- or family-specific to a client, and it results in enhanced well-being of the client (or the entire family of the client).

CONTACTS:

Contacts include mental health professionals, social work professionals, registered nurses, medical doctors, law enforcement personnel, attorneys, educators, community resource providers, vendors-contractors, and employees in Federal or State government and other jurisdictions/public agencies in the area. Contacts involve information exchange, coordination, advisement/consultation, referral or service provision. They include discussing sensitive personal information about clientele and cases, coordinating with program/service/operations personnel within and outside County government to obtain/verify information, provide information/service or make referrals, and, at times, to obtain a reduced fee or favorable payment terms for a client. These interactions concern significant matters and require highly-developed communication skills.

PUBLIC SERVICE /ASSISTANCE:

The work revolves around interviewing clients (in many cases, thoroughly and usually involving sensitive personal information) and providing them public assistance or care directly (through person-to-person information and ‘hands on’ assistance) or indirectly (through referrals). It regularly requires well-considered questioning and ‘active’ listening to identify the full situation and the full range of assistance/service required. Tact and empathy are typically imperative.

HAZARDS:

Work includes some potential for interpersonal conflicts with applicants/clients or their family members; there is potential for mood swings and emotional ‘eruptions’ by clients or family members. In addition, home visits include some potential hazards from clients (and others present in the home) and, typically, there is no accompaniment by law enforcement personnel at such times. Hazards of these types, which require situational awareness, are present less than 50 percent of the time.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Education: Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor’s Degree.

Experience: One (1) year of experience in human services that involved substantive client contact and service delivery through direct assistance or referral. This experience must have included ability to communicate effectively across a wide range of cultures and overcome potential barriers to service. For select positions, this experience must have required knowledge of the dynamics of trauma and victimization.

Substitutions: An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted.

Licenses, Registrations, Certifications, or Special Requirements: None

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Thorough Knowledge of:

- The basic principles, methods, techniques, generally-accepted practices and skills used in the delivery of client-focused social-human services including, but not limited to, methods of

identifying and assessing facts and conditions of, and providing or facilitating responses to, people experiencing trauma or victimization due to physical assault, domestic violence, robbery, another crime, abuse, neglect, endangerment, STD/HIV or another major life problem commonly addressed by social services.

- Multiple factors and how they come together to affect individuals, families and other groups at a level sufficient to help clients and their families obtain the human services they need. Factors include but are not limited to: human behavior; cultural mores; physical, mental and emotional health; applicable community or institutional problems as they affect attitudes and behavior; and the socioeconomic, health, safety and other conditions (such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, aging and disability) specifically addressed by the program(s) of assignment.
- Key aspects of laws and regulations pertinent to, and details of policies, procedures and forms used in, applicable governmental and non-governmental assistance programs to carry out programmatic functions, and knowledge of the services available through County, non-County governmental agencies and community organizations that serve persons in need of social services altogether to inform, enroll or refer, and otherwise help and encourage/support clients. This includes knowledge of volunteer functions, recruitment, selection, placement, training and support to help ensure effective use of, and interaction with, volunteer staff assigned to the program(s). Knowledge of some guidelines must or may be acquired on the job.

Skill in:

- Problem solving to assess information about the client, such as family, socioeconomic, legal, health and safety status, make or facilitate eligibility determinations based on established criteria, refer clientele to professional counseling, emergency food-shelter-medical-financial or other support services and assistance, and perform related functions. This includes skill in planning, scheduling and managing one's own workload, and skill in making and checking data entries and straightforward calculations.
- Written communication to understand written information (including instructions, descriptions and ideas) and to express such information in writing so that others will understand, agree or comply. Examples include reading case information and client documents, completing forms and entering information into databases.
- Verbal communication to understand verbal information (including instructions, descriptions and ideas) and to express such information verbally so that others will understand, agree or comply and, at times, be convinced or persuaded. This includes the ability to listen 'actively' and encourage effective oral communication by clients.
- Interacting effectively with business contacts in a businesslike, customer service-oriented manner, cross-cultural communication skills to help overcome barriers to public service-assistance, and human relations ability to develop and maintain effective, empathetic relationships with clientele.
- Using a computer, modern office suite software (such as MS Office), enterprise systems/software, and specialty systems/software.

Ability to:

- Perform work at locations outside an office such as courts, senior centers, schools, business establishments, hospitals and private homes.

Work Environment:

Work is performed in offices, meeting rooms and other places that are adequately heated, lighted and ventilated. There are also visits to homes, hospitals, schools, senior centers, shelters and other places.

Workplaces are devoid of abnormal environmental conditions requiring special mitigating measures, except on an incidental basis.

Physical Demands:

Work is mainly sedentary. It requires precise use of hands or fingers in keyboarding, taking notes and performing similar work. Ordinary physical effort is required.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD:

Individuals appointed to a position in this class will be required to serve a probationary period of six (6) months. Performance will be carefully evaluated during the probationary period. Continuation in this class will be contingent upon successful completion of the probationary period.

BARGAINING STATUS: Positions assigned to this class are normally in the Office, Professional, and Technical (OPT) bargaining unit.

MEDICAL PROTOCOL: Limited Core Exam with a Drug/Alcohol Screen.

CLASS SPECIFICATION HISTORY:

Class Established: October, 1964

Revised: October, 1974

May, 1986

November, 1994 (M)

February, 2001 (M)

June, 2006

August, 2013

Class Study: June 2018

Formerly Titled: “Social Worker Assistant I” and “Client Assistance Worker”