

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND  
CLASS SPECIFICATION**

**Code No. 002808  
Grade 21  
FLSA: E**

**SOCIAL WORKER I**

**DEFINITION OF CLASS:**

This is professional social work at the entry-developmental level. A Social Worker I works with people experiencing endangerment, abuse, neglect, homelessness and/or emotional-behavioral-mental health problems including those resulting from physical abuse or psychic trauma. A Social Worker I is generally given assignments that require application of commonly used social work methods and techniques to help build one's knowledge and skills in the profession. A Social Worker I elicits critical client-specific information about health-aging-disability, family dynamics, employment-income-housing, physical-psychic trauma, mental illness or substance abuse, makes an evaluation, recommends a treatment plan or programmatic response, and/or provides effective referrals or direct counselling. Business contacts are with clients, their family members, social work, mental health and human service professionals, support staff, law enforcement and court personnel, for-profit and not-for-profit service providers, and other parties within and outside of County Government to provide, coordinate or report on professional advice and service and perform related functions. A Social Worker I provides direct professional assistance or care to clients. There are intensive interactions with clients concerning their wants, needs, concerns and problems; professional counseling is provided.

A Social Worker I provides social work counselling and provides, or facilitates, other social work services requiring knowledge of, and skill in applying, the concepts, theories, principles, methods, techniques and generally-accepted practices of professional social work. A Social Worker I may serve on an interdisciplinary team of caseworkers, and may coordinate social service support, to mitigate problems and facilitate better functioning of clients. In a clinic or local health program, a Social Worker I plans and provides social work treatment-services including individual, family and group intervention, short-range social work counseling or other support services to assist clients and to help them attain better social, economic, emotional or physical adjustment. Typically, a Social Worker I receives a controlled range of assignments; professional development and growth resulting in progressively more independent application of knowledge/skills are key aspects of this class of work. There is immediate access to the supervisor or a higher level professional for guidance and assistance. Regularly scheduled, and as-needed, progress reviews are the norm; the work is expected to be professionally effective. Work is subject to review for quality, quantity, timeliness, teamwork, customer service and other factors. Guidelines include, but are not limited to, the concepts, theories, principles, methods, techniques and generally-accepted practices of professional social work and counselling; professional ethics and standards-of-practice of the profession; specific systems, rules, procedures, practices and programmatic elements, services and other specifics of the unit and program(s) of assignment including protocols and procedures of State departments-agencies; contextual matters directly related to the services provided and the clientele served; and confidentiality-privacy requirements. A Social Worker I selects and applies professional methods-techniques, uses professional references and adheres to professional ethics, standards-of-practice and programmatic requirements to elicit critical client-specific information, make an evaluation, recommend a treatment plan/programmatic response and/or directly provide an effective counselling response. As an intended result of selection and application of guides to individual cases in

this class, one's professional judgment matures. Complexity of the work is characterized by a workload of conventional, skill-building assignments that involve standard matters covered by established criteria, which require solution by selection and application of varying methods and techniques. A Social Worker I handles an array of client problems that often manifest within context of physical disabilities, physical maladies, diminished intellectual capacity, extreme indebtedness, poverty, unemployment, child care problems, language barriers, diverse cultural norms/taboo, legal problems and a host of other factors; co-occurrence itself is a complicating factor because a Social Worker I must interview-assess-recommend-decide-act within context to be effective. The array of variables that may attend the client's need for physical-psychic safety (from endangerment, neglect or abuse), housing or family stability (including homelessness, foster care or adoption) or recovery include 'acting out', emotional distress or mental illness; these variables provide requisite context for, and complicate, identification of core problems/needs, development of treatment plans, determination of placements, delivery of counselling and performance of such other services as referral to community providers. The work involves treating a variety of standard professional social work problems and situations, including crises, in accordance with established criteria. The impact of the work is individual- and often family-specific, and it results in prevention, stabilization, recovery or enhanced functioning or well-being, or full self-sufficiency, of clientele. Work is primarily sedentary. The work of the class is mainly performed in human-social service centers, health clinics, schools and other indoor places; there are incidental or occasional hospital-home-nursing home visits by Social Workers I in some positions and regularly recurring hospital-home-nursing home visits by Social Workers I in a few positions. Work involves occasional exposure to some risk of aggressive or unpredictable behavior by clients. Work may involve evening-weekend-holiday duty or rotating shifts.

#### **EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:**

- Obtains pertinent data from clients, family members and other sources to assess socioeconomic, emotional, health and other problems, and recommends or determines eligibility for programmatic assistance consistent with guidelines. Informs applicants and clients of parameters of, or eligibility for, various programs suited to their situations.
- Identifies and recommends appropriate resources to control, reduce or alleviate problems and develops, with the client (or guardian), a plan of action for services and follow-up.
- Counsels clients and family members to aid them in achieving better social functioning. Helps them develop or enhance their coping and problem solving skills.
- Provides crisis intervention.
- Provides or coordinates preventive, protective and supportive services to individuals or groups threatened by conditions or circumstances detrimental to their well-being or that of the community. May testify in court.
- Advocates for clients regarding eligibility, services, etc.
- Prepares/maintains case records, uses automated recordkeeping systems and prepares reports to supervisors and, as pertinent to assignments, including reports for the courts.
- Attends case consultation staff meetings; makes recommendations regarding treatment plans.
- Participates in cross-functional, cross-unit service integration meetings and conferences concerning needs of, and treatment plans, for individuals.
- Participates in staff discussions of unit/team, departmental and programmatic policies and procedures.
- Coordinates with various governmental and non-governmental social/human services, mental health, health, education and other organizations to meet the needs of clients. Makes referrals and provides

appropriate linkage for clients to community services; works closely with representatives of other agencies (private and public) involved in cases to ensure coordination of services and continuity of care among various treatment/provider agencies.

- As assigned, provides training.
- Uses a computer and modern office suite software (such as MS Office), enterprise software and specialized software for planning, scheduling, recordkeeping, communicating (email), word processing, manipulating data, preparing presentations, reporting time and attendance, researching (the Internet), and performing other functions.
- As assigned, operates a motor vehicle to get to/from meetings/events, client sites, etc.
- Performs related duties, as required.

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

- Knowledge of, and graduate professional level skill in, using, the concepts, theories, principles, methods, techniques and generally-accepted practices of professional social work to assess, refer, counsel, manage cases of and provide related professional services to persons experiencing problems of endangerment/abuse/neglect, aging/disability, family conflict, homelessness or other socioeconomic matters as well as emotional, behavioral and related types of problems/disorders altogether in a supervisory controlled setting. This body of information includes professional ethics and standards-of-practice, fundamentals of human growth and development, socioeconomic/cultural factors and interpersonal dynamics, and skill in using professional resources such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of Mental Health Disorders. The specific professional knowledge-skill set required varies by professional area-of-practice, unit/program of assignment and other factors.
- Knowledge of co-occurring medical/psychiatric issues and the effects of the pharmacological resources used in treatment thereof altogether at a level sufficient to make fundamental social welfare and psychosocial assessments/interventions/referrals/etc.
- Knowledge of (or ability to rapidly acquire and apply knowledge of) regulations, policies, procedures and systems governing funding/delivery of the services provided and related recordkeeping, including privacy-confidentiality, to ensure adherence to applicable Federal, State, County, departmental, programmatic, fiscal and other guidelines. This body of information includes knowledge of the organization and operations of juvenile justice, criminal justice, child welfare/protective services and other matters related to the services provided and the clientele served in sufficient detail to operate within the context of the program/unit of assignment.
- Knowledge of (or ability to rapidly acquire knowledge of) State/County/community resources, such as medical, mental health, legal and social services, to make referrals/placements and help ensure completeness of responses to needs.
- Knowledge of, and skill in using, client intake, case management and reporting systems to document and use personal, diagnostic, case management, administrative, financial and other types of information. This includes skill in ensuring adequacy and accuracy of data/transactions and, as assigned, skill in generating reports.
- Skill in problem solving to select, organize, and logically process relevant information (verbal, numerical, or abstract) to solve a problem. This includes ability to recognize subtle aspects of problems, identify relevant information, and make balanced recommendations and decisions.
- Skill in written communication to understand written information, draw inferences, form hypotheses and develop logical arguments, and to express such information in writing so that others will understand.
- Skill in oral communication to understand verbal information, draw inferences, form hypotheses and

develop logical arguments, 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 others, such as clients, concerning endangerment/abuse/neglect, stability or social, behavioral and emotional problems.

- Skill in interpersonal interactions to interact with business contacts in a businesslike, customer service-oriented manner (this includes ability to establish and maintain effective professional working relationships and work as a member of an interdisciplinary team), and human relations ability to develop and maintain effective, empathetic Social Worker-client relationships.
- Skill in using a computer, modern office suite software (such as MS Office), enterprise systems/software, specialty systems/software for client referral, case tracking/reporting, etc.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Education:** Possession of a Master’s Degree in Social Work (MSW) from an accredited college or university that meets the criteria of a graduate social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

**Experience:** None

**Equivalency:** See requirements of the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners and the Code of Maryland (COMAR); see especially 10.42-01 (Regulations Governing Licensure) and 10.42.06 (Continuing Education). The Montgomery County Office of Human Resources must follow COMAR in providing qualifications credit and accepting substitutions or equivalents.

**LICENSE:**

- Must be licensed as a Licensed Master Social Worker - LMSW, or higher, by the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners prior to appointment. **Note:** There will be no substitutions for this requirement.
- Possession and maintenance at all times of a valid Class C (or equivalent) driver’s license from the applicant’s state of residence when required for job-related duties.

**PROBATIONARY PERIOD:**

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

**MEDICAL EXAM PROTOCOL:** Limited Core Exam with a pre-placement Drug/Alcohol Screen.

**Date Adopted:** December 2, 1962

**Date Revised:** June 31, 1965

**Corrected:** February, 1984

**Date Adopted by Montgomery County:** December, 1988

**Date Revised:** June, 1995 (M)

August, 2013

October, 2014

October, 2017 (M)

(License) January 2020