

BENEFIT ASSISTANCE COUNSELOR I

DEFINITION

Under supervision, to assist with and perform limited eligibility determinations for public assistance; to learn the procedures and regulations necessary for caseload administration; to learn techniques and methods of interactive interviewing and fact gathering; to learn to identify clients need for health, social and/or employment services; to refer clients to other staff or community resources; and to do related work as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is the entry/trainee level in the Eligibility Worker class series. Incumbents in this class normally work under close supervision in a trainee capacity. They perform the more routine responsibilities according to well established procedures and methodologies. Incumbents in this class are expected to develop skills and gain knowledge of the Department's organization, public assistance programs, and case management techniques. When requisite skills and knowledge have been developed, they are expected to advance to the journey level Eligibility Worker II level.

REPORTS TO

Eligibility Supervisor.

CLASSIFICATIONS DIRECTLY SUPERVISED

None

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EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

- Learns a variety of public assistance and case processing and management techniques.
- Schedules and makes regular contacts with clients.
- Interviews applicants and recipients in person (on or off-site) and by telephone to gather information needed for participation in one or more public assistance grants.
- Explains regulations, rules, court orders, and policies regarding public assistance programs.
- Assists people with clarification and completion of prescribed application and declaration forms used to make eligibility determinations.
- Learns and explains client rights and responsibilities associated with public assistance programs.
- Learns to investigate, clarify and correct discrepancies.
- Verifies and insures accuracy of data.
- Learns to develop required information concerning income, resources, and financial obligations.
- Learns to review applications and declarations for completeness and accuracy; learns to review eligibility factors and authorize releases.
- Learns to hold and re-issue payments, immediate need warrants, food stamps and emergency medical services cards.
- Provides assistance and direction in obtaining further information to resolve discrepancies and problems with initial applications and declarations.
- Learns to apply established guidelines and procedures in making eligibility determinations.
- Interviews people and reviews case records to gather preliminary information and identify need for referral to employment and social services.
- Records information for case records.
- Interprets and applies program regulations and other pertinent material to specific cases.
- May prepare and maintain a variety of records and documents associated with the eligibility process.
- Learns to compute authorized grant levels.
- Provides basic case services.
- Prepares correspondence and reports.

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TYPICAL PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Sit for extended periods; frequently stand and walk; normal manual dexterity and eye-hand coordination; corrected hearing and vision to normal range; verbal communication; use of office equipment including computers, telephones, calculators, copiers, and FAX.

TYPICAL WORKING CONDITIONS

Work is performed in an office; occasionally works outside; continuous contact with staff and the public.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- General goals and objectives of a public social service programs.
- Modern office practices, methods, and procedures.
- Basic record keeping practices and procedures.
- Business mathematics.

Ability to:

- Learn the policies, procedures, and programs of the Plumas County Social Services Department.
- Learn the laws, rules, and regulations necessary for receiving public assistance and case management techniques for all programs.
- Learn the principles of income maintenance and public social services.
- Learn the Department, public, and community resources available to clients.
- Learn the sources of information available to verify and obtain financial and social information.
- Learn in-depth and analytical interviewing and fact finding techniques.
- Read, understand, interpret and apply complicated and detailed correspondence and reports, regulations, and policy directives.
- Identify problems requiring referral to other Department staff.
- Make a variety of mathematical computations accurately and rapidly.
- Prepare, clear, concise and accurate records and reports.
- Work with timelines and interruptions.
- Understand and accept the differences in human behavior resulting from diverse socio-economics and cultural backgrounds and/or various forms of deprivation.
- Maintain confidentiality of the case records.
- Tactfully and effectively represent the Department in public contacts.
- Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships.

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Training and Experience: Any combination of training and experience which would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required knowledge and abilities would be:

Two (2) years of experience performing clerical duties in a social services agency

OR

One (1) year of experience with responsibility for one or more of the following: determining eligibility for loans, financial assistance, unemployment, veterans benefits, or publicly or privately financed health counseling and/or social service programs.

OR

Equivalent to the completion of 60 semester units or 90 quarter units from an accredited college or university.

Special Requirements: Possession of a valid and current California Driver's License issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles.