

DEPARTMENT: SOCIAL SERVICES
CLASSIFICATION: COMPETITIVE
APPROVED: APRIL 29, 2011

SOCIAL SERVICES WORKER

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: This is a technical position in the Department of Social Services. Incumbents in this class participate in the delivery of financial service programs including: Public Assistance, Medical Assistance, Food Stamps and Child Support Enforcement services. The work is performed in accordance with regulations and department policy and involves investigations; in-depth interviewing, frequently under stressful conditions; making appropriate referrals; and the processing and maintenance of a variety of forms and records. In addition, the incumbents may represent the department in court as custodian of record to ascertain the completeness of records. Depending upon unit and/or assignment, work is performed under the direct or general supervision of a higher-level employee with some leeway allowed in the performance of work assignments. Supervision is not normally a function of the class; however, this class may act as a technical resource in a specialized area. Does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

1. Conducts investigations, including in-depth interviews to elicit sufficient information to approve, deny or determine the feasibility of a financial service program, make an appropriate referral or proceed with further investigation;
2. Contacts by mail and telephone a variety of sources to document information on applications;
3. Keeps abreast of changing laws, regulations and policies in order to assure the correct provision of financial services and to perform related duties;
4. Re-determines or re-certifies approval for financial service;
5. Researches applicant status, prior history and payment or grant history utilizing various electronic data storage and retrieval systems;
6. Records information on forms to be entered into electronic data storage and retrieval systems to record and update case records, to compute budgets, etc.;
7. Informs and advises clients/applicants on the services provided by the agency and on related services provided by other agencies;
8. Refers clients/applicants, as indicated, to the services divisions, or assists by referring or, to a limited degree, represents the client/applicant in securing other services such as housing, employment, legal assistance, medical assistance, family planning, etc.;
9. Makes financial arrangements with public utilities, landlords and employers;
10. Conducts investigations to determine location of absent parent, or makes referral to locator services;
11. Compiles information to prepare a variety of court orders pertaining to child support enforcement;
12. May refer cases for further investigation when fraud is suspected;
13. May function as the non-supervisory, technical assistant to a higher-level employee.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Good knowledge of federal, state and local laws, codes and policies concerning the provision of social welfare financial programs; working knowledge of investigation techniques including interviewing procedures and practices; working knowledge of other laws, codes and programs relating to the provision of human services; ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing; ability to relate well with others under stressful conditions; ability to read and understand moderately complex written information; ability to analyze obtained information and determine its pertinence to financial service programs; good powers of observation and perception; initiative; tact; good judgment; patience; emotional maturity; physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

PROMOTIONAL QUALIFICATIONS: Candidates must be permanently employed in the competitive class or a 55-a designated position in the Niagara County Department of Social Services and must have served on a permanent basis for three (3) years as a Clerical I, Clerical II, Clerical III, Clerk, Principal Clerk, Account Clerk, Account Clerical I, Account Clerical II, Account Clerical III or Energy Assistance Worker or any combination of these titles for three (3) years. The three (3) years of service must all have been at the Department of Social Services immediately preceding the date of written examination.

OPEN-COMPETITIVE: Graduation from high school or possession of a high school equivalency diploma:

AND: Completion of sixty (60) credit hours from a regionally accredited college or university or one accredited by the New York State Board of Regents to grant degrees;

OR: Three (3) years of full-time paid experience in the provision of financial social welfare programs or investigations, or substantially similar work.