

SOCIAL SERVICES ASSISTANT

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: This is paraprofessional work of a moderately complex nature involving responsibility for providing support in the delivery of services to clients within a variety of Social Services programs (e.g., Adult Protective Services, Medicaid, Children & Family Services, SNAP). The work is performed under the general supervision of a higher-level administrator, and in accordance with New York State Laws and regulations. Work guidance (e.g., lead work) may be provided to others. Does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

- Provide assistance to professional and technical staff by gathering appropriate information and documents, verifying data, and entering information into case records utilizing New York State software and programs (e.g., Welfare Management System (WMS), Central Index System (CI)) and provides preliminary determinations regarding eligibility;
- Respond to inquiries from clients with respect to eligibility status and program guidelines;
- Provide assistance to clients completing applications by explaining program requirements and procedures;
- Staff call center to respond to client inquiries and resolve concerns including providing replacement SNAP cards, advising of case status, and scheduling appointments;
- Ensure the placement of required documentation in New York State case records to advance determination;
- Liaison between clients, community organizations and providers to facilitate client services and make referrals, as needed;
- Prepare observation reports for evidence in court to be utilized for determining custody or visitation, and may be called to testify as to the information recorded;
- Research available services under the guidance of casework staff;
- Transport clients to visitation, health care and other service provider appointments, school, court, etc. and assume direct responsibility for the physical and mental well-being of children and vulnerable adults in their care;
- Perform direct observation drug test collection to ensure specimen integrity, complete required documentation and secures urine specimen to maintain chain of custody;
- Perform routine and moderately complex clerical functions including data entry and the development and maintenance of electronic files within appropriate New York State software and programs;
- Participate in staff conferences and ongoing in-service training and make recommendations to casework staff regarding possible service plan modifications and/or budget calculations;
- Prepare a variety of routine statistical and written reports;
- May assess the basic safety of vulnerable adults and provide direct client support (e.g., may take client grocery shopping after determining inadequate food is available);
- May supervise court ordered visitation between biological parents and children in foster care to ensure each child's safety;
- May assess the appropriateness of parents to participate in visitation;
- May conduct home visits to explain available services and gather necessary documents and information from home bound clients;
- May arrange for the transfer and conduct the transfer of children between biological parents and foster parents;
- May assist in assessing the safety of children and report findings;
- May act for and in place of foster parent under certain circumstances (i.e., medical visits).

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FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Good knowledge of office procedures and equipment; good knowledge of the principles and practices of effective customer service; good knowledge of New York State laws and regulations as they relate to eligibility requirements for social services programs*; good knowledge of community resources and organizations*; ability to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with clients, agency staff, and the general public; ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; ability to understand and carry out basic instructions; ability to prepare written reports; ability to use computer software as it relates to New York State Social Services programs*.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Graduation from high school or possession of an equivalency diploma and four (4) years of paid work experience which must have substantially involved performing direct customer service activities (e.g., explaining services, providing information, resolving complaints), one (1) year of which must have involved the provision of services in a social assistance setting (i.e., health, mental health, social services, education, etc.).

NOTES:

1. An Associate's degree or equivalent college credits (minimum of sixty (60) credit hours) may be substituted for two (2) years of the required work experience involving direct customer service activities.
2. A Bachelor's degree or higher shall be deemed fully qualifying.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. Possession of a valid driver's license is required at the time of appointment and must be maintained throughout the course of employment in this title.
2. Applicants for designated positions with the Department of Social Services that may have regular or substantial unsupervised or unrestricted contact with children shall be subject to background checks according to the New York State Justice Center's Staff Exclusion List (SEL) and New York State Office of Children and Family Services Sitewide Central Register of Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR). Inquiries on current employees shall be made annually and prior to promotion but no more often than once in any six-month period (N.Y. Social Services Law 424-A). Candidates/applicants with conditional offers of employment may be required to submit the necessary fee(s) for background screening and inquiries shall be completed prior to employment hiring/start date. Refusal to sign the necessary clearance forms, submit the required associated fees and/or participate in the review process shall be cause for an automatic non-selection. In addition, inquiry responses are subject to evaluation and may result in disqualification pursuant to Section 50 of New York State Civil Service Law.

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For positions within the Child Support Enforcement Unit at the Rockland County Department of Social Services:

3. Per Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Security Guidelines for Federal, State and Local Agencies (IRS Publication 1075, Section 5.1.1), employees with access to Federal Tax Information (FTI) must complete a background check which is favorably adjudicated. The background check will include FBI fingerprinting; a check of local law enforcement agencies where the employee has lived, worked and/or attended school within the last 5 years, and if applicable, of the appropriate agency for any identified results and verification of citizenship/residency. You will be required to pay for a processing fee for the fingerprinting. NOTES: (1) A criminal record does not necessarily disqualify you from employment or access to FTI. An individualized determination will be made as to how any conviction would impact suitability to handle FTI. (2) Federal guidelines require that a reinvestigation will be conducted within ten years of the date of the previous background investigation for each employee requiring access to FTI. NY law does not currently permit reinvestigation but may be changed at any time to permit reinvestigation pursuant to the federal guidelines.

*To be demonstrated during the probationary period.