

## STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

**Class Title: Social Services Program Specialist I**

**Class Code: 11433**

**Pay Grade: GJ**

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### **A. Purpose:**

Reviews, analyzes, and interprets state and federal laws, program(s) methods, department rules and regulations, and program(s) budgets; provides technical assistance in grant preparation and administration; and provides technical assistance to program staff and other agencies to ensure the program(s) operate within set standards and laws and program services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

### **B. Distinguishing Feature:**

Social Services Program Specialist I's work within the limits of methods and principles of the profession or program(s); management's program objectives; laws and regulations; and general systems and guidelines. The impact of work done by this class is external and may affect a statewide program or have a fiscal impact. Problems are typically solved using programmatic knowledge received through the position and/or federal or state direction or directives. Social Services Program Specialist II's work requires independence to achieve operating objectives. Management gives direction as to expected results and these positions determine how and when the results will be achieved, which requires a high level of problem solving and decision-making. The impact of work done by this class is external and primarily affects people where results of inadequate processes, uninformed, or wrong decisions, and incomplete systems can damage lives. Problems encountered are unique and unprecedented and require identifying resources, compiling facts, analyzing the information to determine impact, and making a final decision.

### **C. Functions:**

*(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)*

1. Interprets program methods to ensure the program(s) operate in compliance with department goals and objectives and all pertinent laws, rules, and regulations.
  - a. Interprets federal and state laws, rules, and regulations and prepares implementation guidelines for the program(s).
  - b. Maintains logs, files, and other records of activities occurring within assigned programs.
  - c. Provides statistical reports and analysis of data for assigned program(s).
  - d. Conducts research and analysis planning to determine a program's condition and needs.
  - e. Evaluates program effectiveness and recommends improvements.
  - f. Provides random case surveys to ensure planned services are being provided.
  - g. Performs on-site visits and reviews facility and program activities, files, reports, and other pertinent information.
2. Reviews the program(s) fiscal activities to ensure funds are used most effectively and within limitations.
  - a. Develops and applies grant/program evaluation/selection criteria.
  - b. Selects or participates in the selection and awarding of sub-grants.
  - c. Negotiates and establishes conditions of the grant with grantees.

- d. Monitors grant, contract, or program objectives, including expenditures within an approved grant and objective progress.
  - e. Reviews and evaluates grantees' final reports and results upon completion of the sub-grant.
3. Develops and provides training for program staff and other agencies to ensure efficient delivery of program services.
    - a. Creates and revises training manuals and materials.
    - b. Provides training to staff.
    - c. Provides public and education related information to the program areas/services.
  4. Provides technical assistance to program staff and users to ensure program services are effectively provided.
    - a. Answers technical questions from program staff, other agencies, and the public regarding policies, laws, rules, and regulations.
    - b. Analyzes and interprets department, state, and federal policies, laws, rules, and regulations.
  5. Performs other work as assigned.

**D. Reporting Relationships:**

Typically does not supervise, but does provide technical advice to staff working in an assigned program.

**E. Challenges and Problems:**

Challenges include monitoring all activities as they pertain to state and federal policy and law, which is difficult due to the complexity and diversity of social services programs.

Problems facing the incumbent include incorporating federal law and regulation changes into state law and procedures and training staff to comply with new standards.

**F. Decision-making Authority:**

Decisions are made at the policy level and within limits set by professional standards, the agency's available technology and resources, program objectives and regulations established by a higher management level. Choices involve determining the process, including designing the set of operations. Decisions involve a general pattern, program, or system but must be individualized. This individualization requires analysis of complicated data. Analysis is accomplished by breaking the program or case into parts, examining the parts, and reaching conclusions that result in work processes. This examination requires the application of known and established methods, principles, professional standards, and precedents in order to determine their relationship to the problem. New processes or objectives require approval of higher management or the agency with authority and accountability for the program or system.

**G. Contact with Others:**

Frequent contact with program staff to interpret and ensure compliance with rules, regulations, and methods and to provide technical assistance; legal staff to ask and answer questions

pertaining to assigned programs; other departments and agencies to discuss grants; and with the public and recipients of program services to answer questions and handle complaints.

#### **H. Working Conditions:**

Typical office environment.

#### **I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- federal and state laws, regulations, and policies governing the assigned program area;
- program mission, objectives, and delivery methods and procedures;
- the methods, principles, and techniques of the assigned program area;
- the philosophy and purposes of public assistance programs;
- economic, emotional, educational, and social characteristics and problems of welfare clients;
- public funds and budgeting methods.

Ability to:

- correctly interpret, analyze, and apply federal and state laws, regulations, and policies to provide technical advice, guidance, consultation, and policy interpretation in the assigned program area to other social services' personnel, clients, public officials, and private citizens;
- evaluate and monitor program operations and standards, identify problem areas, measure accomplishments against objectives, and develop and implement corrective action;
- exercise good judgment in evaluating program performance, making decisions, and proposing corrective action;
- develop methods and procedures and define standard actions for specific situations;
- communicate information clearly and concisely;
- conduct effective individual and group training and conferences;
- compile, analyze, and prepare clear and concise reports;
- effectively plan and organize work activities and prioritize task completion to meet schedules and deadlines;
- establish and maintain effective working relationships with clients, their families, and other social service personnel, public officials, and private citizens.