

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Social Services Program Specialist II

Class Code: 11434
Pay Grade: GK

A. Purpose:

Social Services Program Specialist II:

Develops, implements, administers, and interprets changes for programs; prepares budgets and grant proposals and approves proposals made by others; develops rules and regulations for legislative promulgation; and provides technical expertise to program staff, other agencies, and clients receiving program services to ensure programs operate within set standards and services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

Field Program Specialist:

Functions as the field expert in the areas of quality assurance and control, economic assistance, child protection services, or adult services and aging to develop implementation plans and procedures to address technical issues, draft policies, and oversee implementation of policies in an assigned geographical area.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

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. Positions in this classification may also function as a Field Program Specialist who serves as a liaison between the field staff and state office administrative staff by participating in the development of policies, procedures, and functions as the field expert in a given area. The Field Program Specialist provides technical assistance to program staff and/or providers may direct the daily work of coworkers, provides training, and monitors programs' effectiveness.

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.

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.)

Social Services Program Specialist II:

1. Develops and implements program policies and procedures to ensure programs operate in compliance with department goals and objectives and all pertinent laws, rules, and regulations.
 - a. Provides on-site evaluations of programs and facilities to determine compliance.
 - b. Develops and revises policy and operations manuals.

- c. Monitors federal regulation changes to determine when program rules and regulations need to be revised.
 - d. Develops assessment and correction plans to ensure effective quality control.
 - e. Provides random case surveys to ensure planned services are being provided.
2. Determines overall program(s) needs and expands program(s) initiatives based on knowledge and conjecture.
 - a. Researches professional information to develop or theorize regarding program improvements and expansion.
 - b. Conducts research as to program improvement costs and benefits.
 - c. Creates an implementation plan to include all aspects of the new initiative.
 3. Provides budget and grant research and proposals and monitors expenditures within approved grants to ensure funds are used effectively within limitations.
 - a. Reviews reports and files.
 - b. Prioritizes cases being handled by program staff and approves actions to be taken for each.
 - c. Maintains logs, files, and other records of activities occurring within assigned programs.
 - d. Makes budget projections.
 - e. Determines the automated data systems support by directing the development and design of the entire data system.
 - f. Approves grant applications and grant proposals prepared by others.
 4. Develops training for program staff and other agencies to ensure efficient delivery of program services.
 - a. Writes and revises training manuals and materials.
 - b. Provides training to staff.
 5. Develops and prepares rules and regulations for legislation and attends legislative hearings to ensure promulgation is in compliance with department plans and goals.
 6. 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.
 7. Performs other work as assigned.

Field Program Specialist:

1. Acts as liaison between state office program administrators and district supervisors to ensure the goals of the department are met.
 - a. Compiles monthly status reports and notifies program administrator and district supervisor of staff performance, caseload distributions, accomplishments, problems, goals, and future plans.
 - b. Researches and advises state office regarding special projects for the department.
 - c. Monitors and advises state office concerning agreements and contracts with providers of brokered services.
 - d. Responds to complaints, concerns, and needs of the community regarding program policies and procedures.

- e. Represents the department by attending and participating in a variety of community organizations, programs, and task forces.
 - f. Represents the department at fair hearings to offer expertise regarding eligibility rules and regulations.
2. Develops plans for implementation of program activities to ensure compliance with federal, state, and departmental rules and regulations.
 - a. Advises and assists program administrators, district supervisors, and field supervisors in the formulation, direction, and implementation of program policies.
 - b. Recommends new policies and policy changes or amendments.
 - c. Interprets and recommends revisions to policy and operations manual, reviews drafts, and offers advice on new policies and procedures.
 - d. Develops concepts to enhance the delivery of services and reduce costs.
 3. Evaluates and monitors program plans to ensure that clients are served in the best possible manner and according to regulations and procedures.
 - a. Collects and analyzes data on program statistics and practices and develops reports to identify deficiencies in service delivery or program operation.
 - b. Reviews and evaluates the impact of federal regulations on the department and recommends options and alternatives.
 - c. Develops, implements, and evaluates corrective action plans for assigned offices within the program(s).
 - d. Provides on-site evaluations of programs, facilities, and contracts to determine compliance with pertinent policies, procedures, and regulations.
 - e. Monitors how policies are implemented and identifies areas of misinterpretation as well as recommending corrective action.
 - f. Develops, monitors, and assesses local development and coordination of resources for program service needs.
 4. Implements program policies in the field offices to ensure delivery of services.
 - a. Interprets program policies, provides technical assistance, and directs the execution of program policies and procedures.
 - b. Resolves issues between supervisors and Program Administrators.
 - c. Meets regularly with local department staff and other agencies to determine how policies are affecting services delivery.
 - d. Recommends staffing changes to maximize resources.
 - e. Recommends disciplinary actions and provides performance evaluation information to the District Supervisor related to supervisory work performance.
 - f. Resolves conflicts between programs, other agencies, and the public.
 - g. Provides training, training materials, and work direction to department staff and community organizations.
 5. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Typically no subordinates report to this position.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Social Services Program Specialist II:

Challenges include becoming an expert, theorist, and effective administrator in programs dealing with unique, complex, and non-restrictive situations and 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 inventing new initiatives to maintain successful programs, incorporating federal law and regulation changes into state law and procedures as they pertain to unique and complex situations, training staff to comply with new standards, and answering complaints from the public and people receiving services from assigned programs.

Field Program Specialist:

Challenges include interpreting and communicating the regulations and procedures of the program(s) because policies at the federal level are constantly changing and applying knowledge of the law and human behavior to case situations when there may be a need for protection and intervention by the department as necessary. Also challenging is opposing opinions of social policy by various entities, which creates great demands for public relations and education.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Social Services Program Specialist II:

Decisions made are at the interpretive level and within limits of the strategic plan and allocated human and fiscal resources; choices involve determining tactical plans to achieve the objectives established by management. This involves establishing what processes will be performed and developing the budget. This level includes theoretical evaluation by inventing and changing systems and guidelines that will be applied statewide with a large fiscal impact. For example, these positions design the strategy, system, process, guidelines, rules, and standards that are used. While these positions may not supervise they are directly involved in the formulation of budget as part of the design of a system. By nature, these positions are not bound by processes and operations in their own programs as a framework for decision-making and there are novel or unique situations, which cause uncertainties that must be addressed by the incumbents. Through deliberate analysis and experience with these unique situations, these incumbents determine the systems, guidelines, and programs for the future. Guidelines do not typically exist for most situations that these incumbents are involved in; therefore, they must use judgment and resourcefulness to interpret circumstances in a variety of situations and establish guidelines that direct how the agency program will be implemented.

Field Program Specialist:

Decisions made by the incumbent include program delivery methods; which community resources to be used and which are to be developed; discretionary interpretations on the meaning and implementation of policies and procedures as they relate to actual client situations; proposals of changes or alterations of program policies to program administrators; and development of corrective action plans.

Decisions referred include changes in established policies and procedures and formulating new policies.

G. Contact with Others:

Social Services Program Specialist II:

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

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

Field Program Specialist:

Daily contact with district supervisors, program administrators, program specialists, assistant program administrators, and supervisors to disseminate/assimilate information and resolve conflicts. Weekly contact with law enforcement; court system; hospitals and hospital administration; mental health centers; community health nurses; senior centers; community organizations; churches; and tribal, county, and local government to clarify policies, provide information, and coordinate services.

H. Working Conditions:

Typical office environment. Frequent travel is required.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- the principles and theories of social services program planning, organization, direction, interpretation, and management information technology support requirements;
- the principles and practices of social services program management, administration, and the budgetary requirements for cost effective program operations that meet program goals and objectives;
- the functions, programs, management information technologies and the resources of federal, state, local, and private agencies and organizations, and vendor service providers as they relate to social services programs;
- federal and state legislation, policies, and regulations governing the assigned social services program area(s);
- the principles and methods of staff orientation, development, training, and work direction and/or supervision;
- current social, economic, and health problems and available resources as they relate to social services programs.

Ability to:

- analyze and evaluate program plans, and make recommendations for program operation improvement and cost effectiveness of the social services programs;
- plan, organize, direct, and manage the work of program staff;
- provide leadership, guidance, and direction and establish and maintain effective working relationships with federal, state, local, and other departmental officials, and public and private agencies;
- plan, direct, and develop initiatives and recommendations for program and budgetary modifications and/or pertaining to the departmental support/nonsupport for new federal and/or state initiatives and/or program revisions and proposals;
- direct the research and preparation of advanced planning documents to capture federal financial participation in the program development, implementation, modification, and evaluation;
- communicate information clearly and concisely.