

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist

Class Code: 051375
Pay Grade: GJ

A. Purpose:

Organizes, develops, and executes orientation and mobility (O&M) services for people who are blind and visually impaired to provide instruction on the necessary skills needed to travel independently in their environment.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Certified O&M Specialists (COMS) provide concept development, which includes body image, spatial, temporal, positional, directional, and environmental concepts to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. In addition, instruction includes motor development, including motor skills needed for balance, posture, and gait, as well as the use of adaptive devices and techniques to assist those with multiple disabilities. COMS provide sequential training based on assessments that determine each individual's skill level. Training plans are developed with estimates of length and frequency of service necessary to meet each client's needs. Training is done both in and outdoors in all types of terrain and weather conditions.

Rehabilitation Teachers provide academic, social, independent living and vocational training to clients with mental, physical, and emotional disabilities.

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 that may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Determines O&M training needs to develop a unique, effective, and practical training strategy.
 - a. Assesses the client's present level of functioning in each of the following areas as related to O&M: vision, senses, O&M skills, social/emotional issues, concepts/cognition, medical and physical limitations, and personal goals.
 - b. Based on the O&M assessment determines the client's O&M needs and/or makes recommendations for services, mobility devices and/or systems, and additional assessments.
 - c. Identifies and describes factors to be considered to minimize the psychosocial impact of vision loss upon clients with congenital or adventitious visual impairments and their families.
 - d. Identifies strategies to assist clients during the process of adjustment to vision loss including providing resources, informational counseling, referrals to appropriate service providers and supports, etc.
2. Analyzes clients' environments and needs to determine the safest route of travel.
 - a. Studies neighborhoods, terrain, and street conditions.
 - b. Assesses traffic trends.
 - c. Researches modes of transportation such as the city bus system.
3. Re-evaluates skills frequently by assessing a clients' ability to maneuver safely, effectively, and gracefully in real situations to help determine if clients require additional O&M training or if a case may be closed.

4. Determines the progression of training by applying the three O&M principles of sequencing, distancing, and acceptable risk to encourage learning and ensure safety.
 - a. Teaches or supervises the teaching of O&M techniques to prepare individuals who are blind, visually impaired, and experiencing multiple disabilities for independent travel.
 - b. Instructs and evaluates clients' decision-making processes and skills to determine their ability to identify and handle safety and potentially dangerous situations.
 - c. Provides statewide O&M training by conducting on-site visits or directing field rehabilitation teachers in O&M techniques to meet the mobility needs of clients throughout the state.
 - d. Conducts training in many different situations to ensure clients have practice in dealing with various obstacles such as rain, snow, ice, curbs, gutters, gravel, and cars, etc.
 - e. Coordinates services to meet clients' overall independent living goals.
 - f. Determines levels of safe travel to communicate to client's safety needs, restrictions, and negotiations.
 - g. Explain principles of vision development as they apply to visual efficiency training.
 - h. Learns to operate mobility, the tools for adaptive skills of blindness, and assistive technology to teach or to familiarize clients with the use of such devices.
 - i. Orders and maintains training supplies for O&M training.
5. Documents all training plans to enable the incumbent to detect clients' strengths and weaknesses to aid in the re-evaluation process and to help determine when cases may be closed.
 - a. Completes written evaluations and progress reports and attends all client progress meetings to document and inform others on client O&M progress and needs.
 - b. Documents specific techniques taught and how and where the teaching was administered.
6. Provides consultation on teaching techniques and options to address situational barriers and reviews the work of field rehabilitation teachers' provision of O&M training to maintain quality statewide O&M services.
 - a. Collaborates on teaching strategies.
 - b. Evaluates client progress.
7. Applies rehabilitation techniques such as kinesiology, concept development, and sensory awareness by heightening clients' awareness of spatial relationships, object-to-object relationships, directions, numbering systems, landmarks, and information gathering clues to increase client development and rehabilitation.
8. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

This position does not typically supervise.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenged to accurately analyze travel environments to identify and overcome potential barriers to clients' access in home, school, work, or community environments; and manage time for service provision at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and on a statewide basis due to the limited number of O&M specialists.

Typical problems include determining when clients are ready for additional training and when and where they are skilled enough to travel safely and independently.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions made include determining clients' needs and potential for participating in training; developing appropriate training plans; identifying effectiveness of training techniques; assessing abilities of clients to maneuver safely in their environment; making recommendations to department leadership, supervisors, and co-workers concerning the field of O&M; and training and evaluating the competency of field rehabilitation teachers and rehabilitation counselors in O&M procedures.

Decisions referred include those that require exceptions to written policies and procedures.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with rehabilitation staff members to participate during client evaluations and with blind and visually impaired individuals to conduct O&M training; weekly contact with field rehabilitation teachers and rehabilitation counselors to plan programs and to evaluate the progress of clients; and monthly contact with other public and private entities to promote awareness.

H. Working Conditions:

May encounter extensive environmental factors to complete the performance of his or her duties. Because clients must be exposed to all factors of the environment, the incumbent must teach O&M techniques during all weather conditions. Good physical stamina is needed due to extensive walking required during training sessions.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- O&M practices and techniques;
- associated standards, rules, policies, and procedures that apply to the teaching of O&M;
- methods used to accommodate the challenges of individuals dealing with blindness.

Ability to:

- work effectively on a one-on-one and group basis with individuals who are blind and visually impaired;
- assess clients' functioning levels;
- determine appropriate training techniques for each client;
- teach O&M concepts to clients as well as to others involved in the O&M field;
- communicate information clearly and concisely;
- operate and teach operation of mobility devices;
- participate in training and education to maintain certification.

J. Licenses and Certification:

Must have certification by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals in orientation and mobility.