

## EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR

This is specialized employment service work providing counseling, guidance, and assistance to individuals in need of vocational guidance through programs administered by the Employment Security Commission (ESC) in a local office environment. In addition to helping counsees arrive at a suitable vocational choice, change, or adjustment, counselors provide technical assistance to the staff on career resource center tools as well as evaluative software programs that are available to ESC clients. With the integration of agencies in JobLink Centers and with ESC being a key participant in state and federal programs, the employment counselors take the lead in administering or facilitating job clubs, introducing and using career-related computerized tools, and administering and evaluating diagnostic data. Counselors are familiar with ESC programs and those of other agencies in order to provide counseling services to meet special needs. Work is performed independently in accordance with approved principles of professional guidance under the general supervision of the employment security manager. Functional counseling program supervision is provided by the Employment Counseling Supervisor.

### DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope – Counseling work assignments include individual interviews, skill assessments, appraisal of education, work experience, socio-economic background and review of leisure time activities, a review of personal interest and physical adjustments in order to relate the findings to job requirements, labor market conditions, occupational outlook, and employer practices. Group counseling services are conducted for targeted population groups.

Intricacy – Establishing goals and plans, or other employment decisions for the counseled, are based on analysis of information obtained from an individual interview, results from interest, aptitude, work values, and/or skills assessment tools, and knowledge of programs and services offered by ESC and other agencies.

Subject Matter Complexity – Work requires a thorough understanding of counseling and guidance theories and principles, listening and communication skills, diagnostic techniques, labor market conditions, occupational fields, and synthesizing data into a workable plan. Counseling services require a knowledge of ESC methods and programs, laws governing programs to client situations, and other agencies' programs for referral purposes of training and supportive services.

Guidelines – Counselors follow ESC policies and procedures to assist clients in identifying and overcoming barriers preventing employment. Counselors are responsible for providing guidance services that assist youth and adults in making a suitable occupational choice, making an occupational change, or adjusting to a present employment situation. Counselors complete a counseling folder on each applicant, assist in developing realistic employment goals, and develop a written plan to achieve the goals. Work involves documenting each session with the counselee.

### RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions – A one-week training session is conducted for all new counselors. Statewide counseling conferences are held annually to inform counselors of new programs, give updates on programs, and provide materials of interest. Bulletins from the ESC management team are sent on official policy interpretations, announcements, and requirements.

Nature of Review – The counselors' records are reviewed annually by the State Employment Counseling Supervisor or the local office manager. Reviews include the percentages of individual counseling interviews conducted as well as the total counseling interviews conducted as established by the local office's Program Coordination Plan.

Scope of Decisions – Decisions impact on the applicants' employment opportunities, training choices and legal repercussions regarding claims for unemployment benefits.

Consequences of Decisions – Incorrect decisions can impact on job opportunities, training, job adjustment, financial well being of the client and the family, and the self- esteem level of applicants. Failure to provide good customer service may result in dissatisfaction with the ESC and refusal to use ESC's services.

#### INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts – Contacts are with counsees individually and in groups, employers, other agencies, community organizations, high schools, community colleges, clients who use ESC services, and the general public. Personal contacts are made by telephone or letter to counsees to follow-up on services rendered.

Nature and Purpose – Counselors speak to community organizations to inform them of ESC services, provide counseling assessment services to some high school classes, provide counseling services at some Department of Social Services offices, conduct sessions for special populations on job seeking skills, and informs plant closure employees of ESC services. Counselors often represent ESC management at community organization meetings.

#### OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions – Work is performed in a private office setting, Department of Social Services, community college, or at employer sites. The counselor's workstation includes computer equipment and current resource materials.

Hazards – No hazards generally exist in the office setting. When establishing counseling goals and plans, and when making job referrals in some work environments, the counselor must be knowledgeable of the risks involved in certain occupations and guide the counselee accordingly. Counselors must ensure counseled individuals have an emotionally safe environment for expression of feelings.

#### RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities – Must have in-depth knowledge of principles, techniques, and methods of vocational counseling, planning, guidance, interviewing, and job placement. Knowledge of psychological, counseling, and sociological factors that influence behavior. Ability to administer and interpret assessment tools and apply according to occupational significance. Knowledge of current occupational outlook, job requirements, labor market, training programs, facilities, costs, and employer hiring specifications. Current software programs, such as, Career Search, NC Careers, Winway Resume Program, and NC Navigator.

Ability to apply listening and communication skills to identify factors influencing counselee's problem. Exercise assimilation skills to process data in evaluating strengths, weaknesses, and assisting in establishing goals. Ability to obtain, interpret, and correlate information concerning an individual's past experiences, education, leisure-time activities, physical capacities, work tolerances, socio-economic background, interests, temperaments, aptitudes, and personal factors and relate this information to vocational requirements and opportunities. Effectively administer and interpret aptitude and vocational testing instruments as an aid to clients' appraisal.

Analyze and integrate occupational and labor market data in a geographical area and relate present and potential qualifications of a counselee to labor market requirements in order to arrive at a sound vocational plan. Independently manage a variety of counseling activities including testing, interpreting results, scheduling appointments, conducting job clubs, conducting follow-up contacts on counselees, and maintaining extensive record documentation. Prepare news releases, and make presentations to groups interested in the counseling and employment service programs. Express ideas clearly and concisely in oral and written form. Establish and maintain effective working relationships with counselees, employees, school personnel, rehabilitation and welfare agency personnel, employers, and other agencies.

Minimum Training and Experience Requirements – Master’s Degree in psychology, education, counseling, or vocational guidance including or supplemented by fifteen semester hours in guidance, counseling, or related courses contributing to counselor preparations; or graduation from a four-year college or university including or supplemented by fifteen semester hours in guidance, counseling, or related courses contributing to counselor preparation and two years experience in guidance, vocational counseling, or employment interviewing and placement work; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

Minimum Training and Experience for a Trainee Appointment - Graduation from a four-year college or university including or supplemented by nine semester hours in guidance, counseling, or related courses contributing to counselor preparation.

Special Note: This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to identify essential functions per ADA. Examples of work are primarily essential functions of the majority of positions in this class, but may not be applicable to all positions.