

ADVOCACY SPECIALIST I

Positions in this class provide advocacy services on a statewide basis to children and youth and/or the developmentally disabled or mentally ill citizens. Employees serve in a staff capacity to an Advocacy Council. Employees provide investigative and consultative services, and ensure that program services are provided by State and local government or private agencies in keeping with the laws and individuals' rights to service.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope- Work included providing direct case investigation and advocacy on individual case problems, class advocacy action; consultation and liaison with numerous agencies (state and local); and research of agencies' policies and laws and identification of needed changes.

Intricacy- Employee works with children and/or adults with a wide variety of developmental disabilities (cerebral palsy, retardation, epilepsy, autism, learning disabilities), mental illness or physical/medical problems. Investigation of individual or class advocacy requires analysis of situation, determining agencies and level of officials to contact, analysis of agency policies or laws and interpretation whether these need revision, and facilitating that change.

Subject Matter Complexity- Work requires considerable understanding of the broad range of programs in state and local governments and private resources, and the law on patients' rights affecting the different handicapped groups.

Guidelines- Guides range from statutory laws on patients' rights and programs (94-142 Rehab. Act) to policies and procedures on programs under DHR, Public Instruction, Correction, etc., Federal statutes and new reference materials on this field.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions- Employee is assigned several areas of responsibility in types of cases and/or specialized educational or local council devilmnt that are carried out independently on a daily basis. Consultation from the Director of the Council is requested on difficult cases to get additional support in negotiating between agencies.

Nature of Review- Work is generally reviewed through periodic staff meetings, presentations, and feedback from the Council on success of actions taken on individual and class actions.

Scope of Decisions- Decisions and resultant changes can impact on program policies and/or laws that can affect on all citizens in one or more disability groups in a number of agencies-- DHR, Health, Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Youth Services, Social Services, Public Schools, Courts, or Correction.

Consequences of Decisions- Actions can impact on ensuring the delivery of services to one individual or a total handicapped population and better coordination between service delivery systems.

II. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contact- Work requires determining which programs are involved in an individual or class action, the gaps and/ violation of rights, and which officials in the agency to negotiate with to effect change; and liaison with various State and local associations, councils, consumer groups, and task forces working with respective handicapped groups to gain support.

Nature and Purpose- Employees employ, negotiate, and motivate officials to work cooperatively to develop or alter policies and laws to meet the individuals' service need rather than the programs' needs.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Hazards- Generally work does not present any major hazards to the individual employee.

Work Conditions- Employee works primarily in normal office conditions, but does require some travel to work with community agencies and officials.

V. JOB REQUIREMENTS:

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities- Considerable knowledge of basic patient rights laws (Federal and State) relating to the disability group; of the State agency programs and service delivery systems for the disability group (children and youth, and/or developmentally disabled; mentally ill); of the developmental stages (child and/or adult); skill in communicating effectively with wide variety of disciplines and the public in oral and written form; and ability to investigate, analyze data gathered, and interpret findings.

Minimum Education and Experience- graduation from a four-year college or university with a major in a human services field and three years of experience in providing diagnostic and treatment or advocacy services to the developmentally disabled, mentally ill, or children and youth handicapped population, as required for the particular job; a master's degree in a human services field and two years of the above experience; or an equivalent of education and experience.

Minimum Education and Experience for Trainee Appointment- Graduation from a four-year college or university with a major in a human services field.

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.