

## REHABILITATION COUNSELOR I

Work in this class involves the design and implementation of a comprehensive plan of vocational rehabilitation or independent living rehabilitation services for mentally and physically disabled persons served by the Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind. Employees evaluate diagnostic data to determine eligibility and functional capability, assess clients' service needs, develop a written plan of service in conjunction with the client, provide supportive counseling and monitor the client's progress.

In the general vocational rehabilitation program, depending on the setting, employees may report to a Rehabilitation Counselor-In-Charge or Rehabilitation Administrative Counselor and are responsible for managing a caseload in one of several disability categories such as mental health, mental retardation, hospital general/physical disabilities, hearing or visually impaired, adult or juvenile corrections, or public school settings.

In Vocational Rehabilitation's independent living program, employees report to a Rehabilitation Administrative Counselor I and manage a caseload of persons with severe disabilities to enable the client to function more independently in the home or community.

In the Division of Services for the Blind, employees are supervised by an Area Rehabilitation Supervisor. Employees develop and manage "mini-centers" which are training units staffed by contractual teachers to assist clients in developing skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for independent living.

### I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope – Employees gather intake data to assess clients' vocational, educational, social, economic, and medical status to determine eligibility and plan rehabilitative services. Based upon data gathered, employees evaluate clients' functional and/or vocational capacities; develop individualized written rehabilitation plans; and recommend services to eliminate barriers. Services recommended in the plan may include physical and/or mental restorations, vocational evaluation and training, adaptive equipment, housing assistance or home modifications, transportation, job development or placement, and attendant care. Employees provide extensive supportive counseling on the acceptance of the disability or handicap and management of attendant care services. Employees in DSB's IL Program establish mini-centers in the community which include negotiations with community agencies for facility space; planning curricula, recruiting, training and evaluating contractual teachers.

Intricacy – Employees integrate a range of diagnostic data in the formulation of a rehabilitation plan developed in concert with the client. Determinations of eligibility and recommendations for services require in-depth understanding and analysis of psychosocial data which includes disease etiologies; various mental/physical disabling conditions; availability of restorative services and available community resources. Employees exercise considerable discretion in recommending expenditure of funds for services and in judging the extent and nature of emotional support necessary for clients to acknowledge and accept the existence of a disability or to accept needed services.

Subject Matter Complexity – Work requires knowledge of medical and psychological diagnostic techniques and treatment modalities as well as theories and principles of vocation rehabilitation, client-centered counseling, communication skills, family/crisis intervention and social adjustment. Work also requires a knowledge of synthesizing data into a comprehensive plan of services for persons with disabilities, current labor market conditions, various occupational fields, curriculum planning, and numerous community and local housing resources. Employees who manage mini-centers must have knowledge of supervision, training and program coordination.

Guidelines – Employees apply federal standards and state policies, which relate to vocational rehabilitation or independent living. They adhere to agency procedural policies which may vary depending upon the caseload setting or uniqueness of the case. Employees follow guidelines contained in a multi-volume reference manual, which governs each sequential set in the rehabilitative or independent living process.

### II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions – Employees receive written or verbal instructions on a periodic basis on issues related to eligibility determination, case documentation, service authorization and changes in policy/procedure. The work is principally determined by the agency's broad policies, which define the scope and nature of services to be provided.

Nature of Review – Work is subject to approval by a higher level supervisor. Employees must secure written approval prior to authorization of services, case closures, eligibility denials, modifications of home/work sites, and implementation of the

client's written rehabilitation plan. Technical and administrative aspects of the work are subject to formal review by a quality development specialist on a periodic basis.

Scope of Decisions – Work directly affects individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation or independent living services, family members and community agencies which directly or indirectly participate in providing services.

Consequence of Decisions – Errors in assessments of clients' impairments and subsequent authorization of services may result in unwarranted denial of services or provision of inadequate services.

### III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts – Employees relate to a variety of medical and human services agencies/sources in gathering assessment data. Employees have contact with diverse public and private agencies, insurance companies, prospective employers, community personnel, and civic organizations.

Nature and Purpose – Employees work directly with clients in assessing diagnostic data, arranging services and providing supportive counseling in order to encourage understanding and acceptance of their disability. Work requires contacts with professionals in medical and psychological services to gather and discuss assessment data, community resources to solicit additional funding to supplement program funding, or teach in the mini-centers.

### IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Hazards – Employees in some settings may work with clients who occasionally exhibit dangerous or erratic behaviors due to a behavioral disorder or to serious antisocial behaviors.

Work Conditions – Employees in the general vocational rehabilitation program may be assigned to correctional, hospital or mental health facilities. Employees in the independent living program may be located in regional field office sites.

### V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities – In-depth knowledge of casework methodology and techniques of rehabilitation counseling. Considerable knowledge of federal and state laws governing the delivery of rehabilitation or independent living services. Thorough knowledge of psychosocial implications related to behaviors and attitudes of physically and mentally disabled individuals, adaptive equipment and aids. Ability to interpret medical and psychological data in planning and developing rehabilitative services. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with clients, family members, and various professionals and specialty services involved in the rehabilitation or independent living process.

Minimum Training and Experience – Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, or a closely related human services field; or current certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

Minimum Training and Experience for a Trainee Appointment – Graduation from a four-year college or university with a four-year degree in a related human service field as defined above.

All degrees must be received from an appropriately accredited institution.

**Note on Trainee Progression** – An individual with directly related experience may enter the trainee progression above the entry rate. An employee in the trainee progression is eligible to be placed in the full class of Rehabilitation Counselor upon completion of a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The three-year progression may be extended as needed for an employee who is making satisfactory progress toward the attainment of the master's degree; however, the salary should not be at or above the minimum of the full class.

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.