

INCOME MAINTENANCE INVESTIGATOR I

Employees in this class are responsible for investigating fraud or alleged fraud cases in the income maintenance programs in a County Department of Social Services. Work at this level requires the review of income maintenance case files referred to them by income maintenance caseworkers and supervisors or where fraud allegations are made by individuals within the community to determine whether errors exist and, if so, the cause of errors. Where the cause of error indicates a potential of client fraud, the worker is responsible for investigating the case and making recommendations to their supervisor or agency director concerning the appropriate action to take in resolving the case. Employees may assist their supervisors and/or agency director in presenting the case to the Social Services Hoard and may provide assistance to the legal representative of the agency or County in the prosecution of the client in court. Employees normally report to an Income Maintenance Supervisor, Income Maintenance Investigator Supervisor or Agency Director.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Complexity - Work involves the reconstruction of case files and the analysis of those files against current income maintenance regulations, rules, and procedures as well as those that were in effect at the time of the alleged error or fraud. Where no valid error is detected or where the discrepancy was caused by an agency error, the case is returned to the work unit for appropriate action. Where the cause of the error indicates a potential for client fraud, employees are responsible for investigating the case to include interviewing the client, clients' employers, income maintenance caseworker referring the case, and any other related sources of information. Work may include assisting the supervisor and/or agency director in presenting the case to the Social Services Hoard. Employees have limited independent involvement with the administrative hearing or judicial system other than to assist in case document preparation or to appear as a witness for the prosecution.

Guidelines - Employees refer to the current and previous Food Stamps, AFDC, Medicaid, and County Special Assistance Manuals in performing-all functions required to complete the investigative process. Guidelines are subject to periodic and frequent changes. Employees must have limited familiarity with legal precedents and statutory regulations governing the administration of justice in income maintenance fraud cases. Work includes the utilization of agency procedural guides in accomplishing the work. Correspondence and memoranda from State regulatory agencies are also used in interpreting policy directives.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Accountability - Work involves direct contact with the client and direct or indirect contact t the clients' families or representatives and collateral witnesses in order to gather and verify any information necessary to determine if an agency error or a fraudulent act has occurred. Employees' recommendations regarding the disposition of a given fraud case are closely evaluated by higher level supervisors prior to any official agency action being taken.

Consequence of Action - Employees' evaluation and subsequent recommendations on a course o action in pursuing clients accused of fraudulent activities can result in recoupment of lost funds for the agency or in punitive sanction being taken against the client. However, the impact of employees' decisions is diminished by the close review of investigative findings by higher level supervisors, the agency director or the Social Services Hoard.

Review - Work is reviewed on a case-by-case basis by a County agency attorney, Income Maintenance Investigator Supervisor, Income Maintenance Supervisor, Agency Director and/or Social Services Hoard to ensure that the procedures and processes used to reach the recommended course of action are in accord with agency policies and precedents used in resolving fraud cases.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Subject Matter - Employees provide information to suspected clients, agency management, and judicial representatives based upon information obtained during the course of the investigative process. This information includes pertinent income maintenance policies and regulations, agency policies regarding recoupment of lost funds, any collateral information obtained from witnesses during the investigative process. Sensitive information generated as a result of the work of income maintenance investigations has the potential for subjecting the employees to controversial situations.

Purpose - Work with clients and witnesses includes gathering information through the interview process for the purpose of determining if a fraudulent act has occurred. Work with income maintenance staff is for the purpose of establishing the validity of the alleged fraud and for clarification of any supporting documentation. Employees also have contact with the judicial system, serve as witnesses and provide any additional information requested.

IV. WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Nature of Working Conditions - Employees are periodically subject to working with agitated clients and heavy workloads.

Nature and Potential of Personal Hazards - Clients may at times be verbally abusive due to their extreme situations or their emotional problem, but generally physical harm is unlikely on an ongoing basis.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Considerable knowledge of manuals, rules, and procedures used in determining eligibility. Considerable knowledge of investigative procedures and techniques. General knowledge of agency's organizational rules, policies, and procedures. General knowledge of the judicial system. Good mathematical reasoning and computational skills. Ability to recognize, collect, and evaluate evidence to support actions. Ability to communicate effectively with applicants, community agencies, law enforcement agencies, and judiciary personnel to obtain or present pertinent data. Ability to maintain effective working relationships with other employees and the general public. Ability to present information orally or in written form.

Minimum Training and Experience Requirements - An Associate Degree in Human Services Technology, Social Services Associate, Paralegal Technology, Criminal Justice, Business Administration, Secretarial Science, or closely related curriculum and one year of experience as an Income Maintenance Caseworker; or graduation from high school and two years of experience as an Income Maintenance Caseworker; or graduation from high school and two years of investigative experience in credit, legal, or law enforcement work plus six months experience as an Income Maintenance Caseworker; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.