



SOCIAL WORKER III

DEFINITION

Under general direction, carries a complex and difficult caseload involving the determination of need for social services for individuals and families, including both children and adults; performs assessments and eligibility determinations involving individualized case plans and application of casework methods; may serve as a lead worker over subordinate professional staff supporting an assigned program or function; provides comprehensive casework services of a tangible nature; and performs related duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general direction from assigned supervisory or management personnel. Exercises no direct supervision over staff. May exercise technical and functional direction over and provide training to lower-level staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is the advanced/lead-level classification in the Social Worker class series. Incumbents are typically assigned a caseload of more complex situations and, when needed, are given supervisory consultation in development of care plans. They may also be assigned to a specialized function requiring a high degree of perception such as a specialized caseload, or a specific geographic or functional area such as Child Protective Services (Court Investigations, Family Maintenance/Reunification, Emergency Response, or Foster Care) or Adult Protective Services. A Social Worker III may act as a lead worker to other social service workers. Incumbents are expected to work independently.

This class is distinguished from the Social Worker II in that the former receives the more difficult assignments requiring greater skill and depth of job knowledge in assessing problem situations and formulating plans for services. Incumbents normally work with a high degree of independence of action in administering services and in making use of agency or community resources.

This class is further distinguished from the class of Social Worker IV in that the latter is the most experienced worker and requires advanced education and license eligibility.

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

- Carries a caseload of more complex types of social services cases.
- Receives and responds to reports of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation; obtains information from reporters; personally investigates and assesses situations to protect vulnerable adults and children, and recommends alternate placement (if applicable); may provide information to law enforcement or district attorneys; may be required to work on-call; may testify in court.
- Performs case studies and evaluates individual and family case information to assess the safety of children and adults; determines appropriate types and methods of treatment.
- Develops and carries out case plans for an assigned caseload; ensures all services are delivered in a respectful, culturally sensitive, and appropriate manner and in conformance with agency, state, and federal requirements; assists clients and family members to develop strategies to accomplish case plan goals.
- Counsels or supports clients with complex or specialized needs; provides crisis intervention.

- Refers clients to other staff members or to community resources for direct and intensive services and specialized counseling; advocates on clients behalf for most appropriate services including enabling services.
- Makes a diagnosis of client problems and follows through with the social treatment plans with a high degree of independence.
- Interprets policies, rules, and regulations to client, applicants, and others.
- May act as a lead worker to a small group of social service workers or service employees.
- Assists applicants and recipients in utilizing available resources for individual needs.
- Makes home visits in connection with casework assignments.
- Develops and prepares court reports, case plans, case narratives, and safety plans in automated computer systems.
- Enters and retrieves data and narratives from automated computer systems.
- Prepares and maintains case records and databases; communicates decisions, timelines, recommendations, and case plans to clients, families, and service providers.
- Participates in in-service training and other staff development activities to increase knowledge of the social work processes and achieve technical competence.
- Receives casework consultation from professionally trained staff members.
- Works with community organizations and makes referrals to outside resources.
- Provides self-help information, education, and services; works with clients and caregivers to develop and improve caregiving and independent living skills.
- Obtains and evaluates police, medical, and psychological reports.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Advanced socioeconomic conditions and trends.
- Advanced principles of individual and group behavior.
- Applicable laws, rules, and regulations governing the operation of the public welfare agency and the role and responsibilities of a social worker.
- Principles of providing functional direction and training.
- Principles and practices of note taking and report writing.
- Principles of analysis and problem-solving methodology.
- Principles and techniques of interviewing and recording of social casework.
- Community organization and the social problems calling for the use of public and private community resources.
- Current problems and methodology in the field of public social services.
- Principles and practices of organization, workload management, and time management.
- Medical, legal, economic, and social management needs of individuals and families.
- Strategies and protocols surrounding crisis intervention techniques.
- Psychopathology, the different types of mental illness diagnoses, how mental illness affects human behavior, and mental health services and treatments utilized by clients.
- Signs, stages, and dynamics of abuse, and the effects of abuse on child/adult development and behavior.
- Signs and symptoms of alcohol and drug use/abuse in adults and children and the effects on families.
- Standards for maintaining clients safely in home; options for placement; effects of removing clients from unsafe situations.
- Principles and techniques for working with groups and fostering effective team interaction to ensure teamwork is conducted smoothly.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and County staff.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.

- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination.
- Computers and software programs (e.g., Microsoft software packages) to conduct, compile, and/or generate documentation.

Ability to:

- Plan, organize, and coordinate the work of technical and administrative support staff.
- Effectively provide staff leadership and work direction.
- Analyze data, interpret directions, procedures, and regulations, and develop appropriate responses or actions.
- Perform job duties under stressful conditions and respond appropriately to situations.
- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with legal standards and/or county regulations.
- Apply existing laws, rules, and regulations to welfare department operations.
- Interpret, understand, and apply the agency program, policy, and procedures.
- Obtain facts and recognize the relevance and significance.
- Organize and maintain work detail.
- Apply the principles of psychology and family relationships to engage individuals and families in social services.
- Performs all duties in conformance with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics.
- Recognize signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation for children, and/or older and dependent adults; assess risk factors and potential dangers to clients.
- Interpret and explain to applicants, recipients, or others public social service programs, policies, rules, and regulations.
- Work within a community setting and effectively use appropriate resources and services.
- Act appropriately in emergency and stressful situations.
- Interact professionally and respectfully with clients including difficult, hostile, or distressed clients.
- Work with difficult or complex cases/clients including clients with dual diagnoses, potentially dangerous clients, or legally complex cases.
- Effectively represent the department and the County in meetings with governmental agencies; community groups; various business, professional, and regulatory organizations; and in meetings with individuals.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

One (1) year of full-time experience performing journey-level social work case management equivalent to the County's class of Social Worker II;

OR

Two (2) years of full-time journey-level social work case management experience in a public or private agency*; and

Thirty (30) semester units or forty-five (45) quarter units from an accredited college or university, including fifteen (15) semester units or twenty-two and one half (22.5) quarter units in social welfare, social/human services, sociology, or other social or behavioral science.**

*Qualifying social work case management includes direct case work management, such as: assessment, evaluation; conducting investigations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; preparing court reports; responsibility for a long term caseload, monitoring compliance through home visits and other personal contact; collaboration with other agencies and linking clients to resources and programs; development of a case plan, modification of case plans as needed/required; and authority to impose sanctions or implement actions that impact services.

** Examples of acceptable social or behavioral science courses include: anthropology, criminal justice, ethnic studies, human development, human services, psychology, social welfare, and sociology.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of, or ability to obtain and maintain, a valid California or Nevada Driver's License and a satisfactory driving record.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer, and to operate a motor vehicle to visit various County and meeting sites; vision to read printed material and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone. Standing in and walking between work areas is frequently required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification frequently bend, stoop, kneel, and reach to perform assigned duties, as well as push and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 25 pounds with the use of proper equipment. Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals on a case-by-case basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Employees work partially in an office environment with moderate noise levels and controlled temperature conditions and partially in the field when conducting home visits. As such, employees may have occasional exposure to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, and direct exposure to hazardous physical conditions. Employees may be subject to clients or members of the public afflicted with behavioral disorders or who are under emotionally stressful conditions. Employees may interact with upset individuals connected with the client, staff, and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

WORKING CONDITIONS

May be required to work evenings, weekends, holidays, and on-call. Performs job duties under stressful conditions and emergency situations.