

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Employment Specialist

Class Code: 10927

Pay Grade: GH

A. Purpose:

Provides assessments, job development, placement, work direction, support services, and counseling for individuals in need of specialized placement services and/or individuals seeking and/or receiving assistance from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), Re-employment Intensive Services (RIS), Senior Community Service Program (SCSEP), Disability Navigators, and Employer Relations programs to promote work and self sufficiency.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Employment Specialists implement job development and placement for participants to include individuals with disabilities or participants with barriers to employment by providing them with case management, establishing and determining plan compliance, initiating action to aid individuals or families to become self sufficient, and counseling program participants. Employment Representatives deal directly with individuals seeking employment assistance, special program benefits, and access to training programs; and provide assistance to employers in listing job openings and in obtaining applicants for various jobs.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Assesses the needs of a specified category of applicants seeking employment because of a disability or receiving financial assistance from programs and determines necessary action to get participants employed.
 - a. Interviews applicants, identifies specific family needs, and determines if an applicant is eligible for program services, payments, or referral to other programs.
 - b. Requests medical information for participant files and the impact of medications on the participant.
 - c. Processes all necessary forms and maintains detailed case records and files.
 - d. Identifies community resources to assist with identified family needs and makes referrals to other agencies/programs for services.
 - e. Prepares for, provides testimony, and attends administrative hearings related to work and compliance issues.
 - f. Determines and initiates diversion services and recommends supportive services payments in lieu of formal applications for TANF program benefits.
 - g. Provides participant information to the Department of Social Services (DSS) for maintenance of common cases.
2. Manages cases to enable participants to maintain or improve their standard of living and become self sufficient.
 - a. Completes an assessment which identifies individual job skills, strengths, and resources as well as limiting factors preventing employment.
 - b. Develops and negotiates a specified time limited Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP) or a Personal Plan (PP) with recipients of benefits.

- c. Formulates employment plans so applicants set goals and objectives to reach permanent employment.
 - d. Liaisons with mental health counselors about mutual participant's needs.
 - e. Initiates direct services to support participants in employment, vocational education, and training activities.
 - f. Assists in removing barriers such as child care, transportation, and housing.
 - g. Monitors compliance with their PRP/PP through regular contacts with the participant, updates the PRP/PP as circumstances change, and initiates sanctions when participants fail to comply.
 - h. Documents all case management activities (TANF in FICA).
 - i. Performs follow-up contacts for the specified time with participants whose cases have been successfully closed.
 - j. Makes home visits.
3. Develops and initiates training agreements, employment, and community service placements for individuals that are disabled or receiving benefits to ensure compliance with department guidelines.
 - a. Locates work training and community service sites and assesses the feasibility of placement opportunities.
 - b. Negotiates and writes agreements with employers.
 - i. Sets guidelines.
 - ii. Negotiates hours and wage.
 - c. Places individuals in training, work components, or community service sites based on the applicants' skills and abilities and recipient and employer needs.
 - d. Provides job coaching and training to participants.
 - e. Monitors the work of recipients.
 - f. Meets with work area supervisors to determine the effectiveness of placements.
 - g. Counsels recipients and work area supervisors to resolve problems.
 - h. Initiates, schedules, proctors, and evaluates tests and presents workshops and training services for recipients and employers.
 4. Serves as a designated Employer Relations Representative to promote Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) services and provide employment development opportunities.
 - a. Conducts employer outreach activities through extensive business contacts.
 - i. Promotes department services.
 - ii. Provides labor market information.
 - iii. Conducts employer surveys.
 - b. Participates in employment development activities.
 - i. Researches area openings, new employers, and events.
 - ii. Addresses workforce needs based on information gathered.
 - c. Participates in workforce initiatives.
 - i. Markets programs and encourages business partnerships.
 - ii. Educates community and service organizations, schools, and other agencies on programs.
 - d. Performs public relations activities to promote the department's services.
 5. Provides data for federal, state, and interdepartmental reporting requirements to show individual participation by program components and program expenditures.
 6. Maintains records of payroll information, project success or failure, and budgetary expenditures to provide statistical records of placement.
 7. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Reports to a DLR Local Office Manager or Assistant Manager. May train other staff.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenged to motivate participants. This is difficult because the participants may have many barriers to gaining employment and have many disappointments in their lives. The Employment Specialist has to get the message to them that the programs are available to them, and if they do not comply with program requirements they will have sanctions imposed upon them which include the limiting or loss of benefits. Also challenging is locating and developing employment opportunities that provide job training and the supervision needed by the participants. This is further complicated by the need to satisfy the employer and ensure that the participants who have multiple disabilities do a job, which will not aggravate their disability or limit productivity.

Typical problems include locating suitable work, training, and community services site; resolving problems between employers and program participants; identifying family needs; determining diversion services; finding community resources for each participant's needs; work issues; identifying job skills and strengths; family compliance; removing barriers; negotiating agreements; and performing hypothetical determinations.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decision include determining specific participant needs; whether applicants are eligible for services, payments, or referral services; which community resources a participant could use; content of individual assessments; limiting factors preventing employment; time limits for Personal Plans; whether participants are in compliance with plans; work, training, and community service sites for applicants; content of work agreements; how to place participants; the effectiveness of placements; and the content of workshops and training.

Decisions referred include the final approval of contract of agreements, final sanctions on participants, and supportive service expenditures.

G. Contact with Others:

Regular contact with participants to give and receive information and to determine and provide services; with other state and local agencies to coordinate services; employers and community services to obtain support and services for participants and to monitor participants and give or receive information. Contact also with outside training providers and a variety of school faculty and students.

H. Working Conditions:

Typical office environment. Travel may be required.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- interviewing, placement, and counseling techniques;
- community resources and support services;
- program eligibility requirements;
- department employment and training programs;

- adaptive equipment to overcome employment barriers;
- reasonable accommodations;
- disabilities and how they affect individuals.

Ability to:

- use a computer and typical office software;
- communicate information clearly and concisely;
- observe and evaluate physical capacities, education, work background, potential abilities and interests of clients and to interpret these factors in terms of their occupational potential;
- develop and maintain effective relationship with coworkers, job applicants, employers, and representative of public and private agencies;
- work independently;
- multitask;
- probe for critical information;
- tenaciously pursue alternatives and identify potential barrier breakers;
- maintain accurate records.