

BENEFITS SPECIALIST

FUNCTION OF THE JOB

Under supervision, to provide information, advocacy, and representation to County residents eighteen years of age and older and people with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, mental illness, and/or substance use disorders, to ensure receipt of benefits, entitlements, and legal rights; and to perform other duties as required.

CHARACTERISTIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Assesses problems and concerns for needed intervention initiates investigations to gather information to pursue advocacy duties.
2. Provides information and assistance on private and public (government) benefits within the scope of the services set forth by the Department of Health Services including, but not limited to, medical payments, insurance, housing, and utilities, consumer matters, small claims, economic support, disabled and elder rights, and surrogate decision making.
3. Provides assistance in applying for benefits; writing correspondence for clients, files appeals, researches cases, prepares evidence and information.
4. Provides representation at administrative hearings and grievance steps; and negotiates settlements.
5. Advises on rights and grievance and appeal processes; assists in preparing and filing grievances and appeals.
6. Consults with legal assistance provider for guidance, support, and representation in handling specific cases.
7. Negotiates disputes over long term care, benefits, and/or mental health, and substance abuse services.
8. Identifies and documents problems and concerns with program participants and related system-level issues and presents to appropriate entities.
9. Makes referrals for employment and other disability-related counseling and services.
10. Maintains knowledge of complex state and federal laws and regulations regarding benefit, offerings, programs, and services, including program changes and interrelationships.
11. Selects, assigns, and evaluates volunteers in the benefit programs; develops and conducts training and orientation sessions.
12. Provides public education on entitlements, benefits, and community resources to encourage self and family advocacy.
13. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with program participants, co-workers, community agencies, legislators, attorneys, entitlement agencies, physicians, governmental agencies, and the public.
14. Maintains confidential case records for clients.
15. Prepares and maintains detailed records and reports.
16. Performs other duties as required.

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential Knowledge and Abilities

1. Comprehensive knowledge of available departmental, governmental, and community resources.
2. Considerable knowledge of a wide variety of complex and changing benefit and entitlement programs and their rules, regulations, requirements, and interrelationships.
3. Considerable knowledge of life issues affecting adults with disabilities and older adults including, but not limited to, financial, medical, and legal issues such as insurance, economic support, housing,

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential Knowledge and Abilities (continued)

- and long term care.
4. Working knowledge of such legal areas as landlord/tenant law, consumer matters, small claims, disability rights, elder abuse, and surrogate decision making.
 5. Working knowledge of the psycho-social and physiological aspects of disabilities and aging and their effects on the individual.
 6. Working knowledge of computerized department software, internet access, and database, spreadsheet, and word processing programs.
 7. Ability to interview, conduct accurate needs assessments, analyze information, and take appropriate action.
 8. Ability to work independently and with minimal supervision.
 9. Ability to provide counseling, intervention, and referral services.
 10. Ability to exercise judgment and creativity in solving problems.
 11. Ability to gather facts, investigate, and document matters essential to specific cases.
 12. Ability to read, understand, interpret, and explain complex eligibility criteria and guidelines relating to a wide variety of benefits, entitlements, and legal rights.
 13. Ability to utilize word processing, database, and spreadsheet programs.
 14. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with program participants, co-workers, community agencies, legislators, attorneys, entitlement agencies, physicians, government agencies, and the public.
 15. Ability to establish and maintain accurate records of a confidential nature.
 16. Ability to meet targeted deadlines.
 17. Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.
 18. Ability to effectively interact with sensitivity with persons from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, racial, ethnic, and professional backgrounds, and persons of all ages and lifestyles.

Training and Experience

1. Graduation from a recognized college or university with a bachelor's degree in social work, sociology, psychology, or business or public administration, or a closely related field.
2. One year of full-time experience in a health or human service field working with the elderly or adults with physical or intellectual/developmental disabilities.