

ELIGIBILITY SPECIALIST TRAINEE

CLASSIFICATION DEFINITION

The Eligibility Specialist classifications determine the eligibility of applicants and recipients for public assistance programs through interactive interviewing and fact gathering; maintain current knowledge of program regulations and procedures necessary for multi-program caseload administration; initiate and process casework through automated systems; identify needs and make appropriate referrals for health, social and/or employment services; and perform related work as required.

Eligibility Specialist Trainee

The Eligibility Specialist Trainee is the classroom and on-the-job trainee level in the Eligibility Specialist series where emphasis is on learning the basic regulatory and statutory requirements of multiple public assistance programs. Incumbents may receive classroom instruction and/or on-the-job training prior to being assigned casework or tasks. Once incumbents are placed in a unit, they will continue to participate in on-the-job training and may be assigned a variety of duties, including some casework/tasks which will assist them in learning to determine initial and continuing eligibility for one or more public assistance programs. Incumbents work under close supervision to complete initial case functions as they continue to learn procedures and complex regulations and acquire the ability to apply the regulations during the training period. Trainees are given the opportunity to perform increasing levels of eligibility determination to prepare them for the entry-level Eligibility Specialist I classification. Incumbents are expected to progress to the entry-level Eligibility Specialist I upon satisfactory completion of one year as a trainee. Use of the Eligibility Specialist Trainee classification is optional, at the discretion of each County.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED AND RECEIVED

Incumbents in the Eligibility Specialist Trainee classification typically receive supervision from an Eligibility Supervisor and may receive lead direction from an Eligibility Specialist III.

TYPICAL DUTIES

Duties may include, but are not limited to, the following (duties are performed at the trainee level, where the incumbent is learning to perform the duties and progress as more experience is gained):

- Performs interactive interviews to elicit eligibility information, obtain and/or verify financial, employment, tax and personal demographic information and determine eligibility for public assistance programs and services

Merit System Services

- Analyzes financial and eligibility information to determine initial or continuing eligibility for multiple aid programs
- Explains regulations, rules and policies to clients and appraises them of their rights, responsibilities and eligibility for participation in various public assistance programs and services
- Ensures accuracy and completion of application and declaration forms
- Resolves discrepancies by securing documentation, medical records and confirmation from other agencies
- Enters and retrieves numerical and narrative data and issues benefits from an automated computer system
- Determines the level of benefits to which the client is entitled by making complex computations and/or computer entries and then analyzing the results
- Reviews and interprets information provided on a variety of forms both by the client and third parties to assist with eligibility determination
- Evaluates clients for and answers questions on Advanced Payment Tax Credits (APTC) related to health care reform
- Explains a variety of plan options, costs and individual plan features through Covered California
- Monitors on-going eligibility by obtaining periodic updated information of eligibility factors and takes appropriate actions on changes
- Determines need for additional services and makes referrals as needed for employment and other services to outside agencies to assist clients toward self-sufficiency and directs clients accordingly
- Organizes and prioritizes caseload so that necessary case records and documents are processed and updated within specific time limits established by regulation and local policy
- Enters and maintains case records, including written narratives, forms and computer documents in a clear and readable format
- Troubleshoots task and/or case issues to determine appropriate resolution of problems, involving Help Desk as needed
- Communicates both orally and in writing with clients and others related to the initial and ongoing eligibility determination while maintaining confidentiality
- Responds to questions and complaints of clients in person, by telephone, mail and/or email communication
- Provides pertinent forms and pamphlets to clients as required
- Identifies suspected fraud and makes referrals for investigation
- Makes referrals to social service workers as needed
- Participates in special projects, studies, work assignments and committees
- Prepares correspondence and reports
- Performs related duties as assigned

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Note: The level and scope of the knowledge and skills listed below are related to job duties as a trainee.

Knowledge of:

- General goals and purpose of public social services programs
- Laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures governing eligibility for diverse public assistance programs and related case administrative techniques
- Methods and techniques of conducting an investigative interview and information gathering
- Computer terminology and computer keyboard arrangement
- Modern office practices, methods and procedures
- Record keeping practices and procedures
- Principles of mathematical calculations
- Intricacies of health insurance plans, medical health plan options and associated terminology
- Regulations and rules regarding household filing status related to the Affordable Care Act
- Cultural and human behavior, including knowledge of self, to interact effectively with clients and staff
- Principles and practices of effective customer service
- 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 applications) to conduct research, assess information and/or prepare documentation

Ability to:

- Apply the policies, procedures and programs of the County Social Services Department
- Apply the laws, rules and regulations governing eligibility and grant determination for multiple public assistance programs and the case administration of these programs
- Identify available resources and communicate with others to obtain and verify information concerning eligibility
- Use fact finding techniques and perform in-depth and interactive interviewing
- Determine appropriate course of action in emergency situations
- Make referrals to appropriate agencies and social service programs
- Detect and evaluate potential fraudulent situations
- Analyze and interpret written, numerical and verbal data from various sources
- Utilize multiple electronic information social services systems and analyze and interpret such information
- Enter and maintain data accurately and timely into a computerized system

Merit System Services

- Navigate through computer screens and effectively use computer systems, software applications and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks
- Identify when computer output is incorrect and make corrections
- Process cases manually as required
- Plan and organize caseload to ensure work is completed in accordance with regulations relating to eligibility and timeliness
- Function effectively in a system with strict deadlines and constant changes
- Read, understand, apply and explain complicated and detailed correspondence, reports, regulations and policy directives
- Perform a variety of mathematical computations accurately and rapidly
- Prepare clear, concise and accurate records and reports
- Explain complex rules and programs so they can be understood by people of diverse socio-economic, cultural and educational backgrounds
- Gather, record and correctly evaluate tax filing data, income and additional necessary information required for the determination of eligibility for one or more programs
- Explain health insurance plan options and plan details available to clients through the Affordable Care Act
- Review a variety of tax documents to obtain needed household filing information
- Explain health care reform tax credit implications to clients
- Refer clients to other community services as needed
- Assess and manage difficult and hostile persons or situations; or call for intervention when appropriate
- Interact with people, in a courteous manner in person, on the telephone, by mail or email
- Work in a fast-paced, professional office environment and prioritize a wide range of duties with varying time requirements to ensure timely completion
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax
- Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with the public and staff
- Follow written and oral directions and instructions

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS (Education and/or Experience)

Eligibility Specialist Trainee:

Pattern 1: Two (2) years of full-time clerical experience involving public contact, interviewing, math computations, completion of forms or eliciting information from the public;

OR

Pattern 2: One year of full-time experience determining eligibility for loans, financial assistance, unemployment or veterans benefits, or publicly or privately funded health, counseling or social services programs;

OR

Pattern 3: Completion of 60 semester or 90 quarter college units.

Qualifying experience or education may be combined in order to meet the above requirements. When combining education and experience; fifteen (15) semester units or twenty-two (22) quarter units equals six months of experience.

DRIVER LICENSE REQUIREMENT

Some positions in this classification may require possession of a valid California driver license. Employees who drive on County business to carry out job-related duties must possess a valid California driver license for the class of vehicle driven and meet automobile insurability requirements of the County. Eligibility for employment for those who do not meet this requirement due to disability will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the appointing authority.

History

Established: 07/01/16 Eligibility Specialist Trainee