

SOCIAL WORKER III

CLASSIFICATION DEFINITION

Under general direction, the Social Worker III carries a difficult caseload involving the determination of need for basic social services functions for applicants or clients; performs social studies and assignments involving individualized treatment and specialized application of casework methods and skills; provides comprehensive casework services of a tangible nature; and performs other related work as assigned.

Social Worker III is the advanced journey level in the Social Worker series. Incumbents are normally assigned a selected caseload of the more difficult cases and when needed are given supervisory consultation in development of treatment plans. They may also be assigned to a specialized function requiring a high degree of perception such as a special problem caseload or they are assigned to a specific geographic or functional area such as Court Investigations, Family Maintenance/Reunification, Emergency Response, Child/Adult Protection, or Foster Care. A Social Worker III may act as a lead worker to other social service workers. Incumbents are expected to work independently.

Social Worker III differs from 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. Social Worker III differs from Social Worker IV-A/B in that the latter is the most experienced worker and requires both advanced education and social work experience.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED AND RECEIVED

Incumbents in the Social Worker III classification receive general direction from a Social Worker Supervisor or other higher-level manager or deputy director, and may act as lead worker to lower classification working in the same program area.

TYPICAL DUTIES

Duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Carries a caseload of more difficult types of social services cases requiring a high degree of technical competence, such as situations where environmental forces affect family life
- Receives and responds to reports of suspected abuse; obtains information from reporters; personally investigates and assesses situations to protect vulnerable adults and children and recommends alternate placement; 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 social treatment plans for an assigned caseload; ensures all

Merit System Services

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 provides guidance and support to individuals and/or families with more complex or specialized needs including Adult Protective Services, crisis intervention, special medical or legal needs, and other social services
- 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 report, 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
- May be required to testify in court
- 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
- Maintains client confidentiality; performs all duties in conformance with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics
- Performs related duties as assigned

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Knowledge of:

- Principles and practices of organization, workload management and time management
- Principles and practices of note taking, report writing, and English composition, grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- Phone etiquette and interview techniques
- Socio-economic conditions and trends
- Basic principles of individual and group behavior

Merit System Services

- Current issues in the field of social welfare
- Principles of analysis and problem-solving methodology
- Basic public welfare programs on the Federal, State, and local level
- General principles of public assistance policies and programs
- Principles and techniques of interviewing and recording of social casework
- Laws, rules, and regulations governing the operation of the public welfare agency and the role and responsibilities of a social worker
- 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
- Medical, legal, economic, and social management needs of individuals and families with special medical needs such as HIV disease, drug dependency, the medically fragile child, Alzheimer's, and the terminally ill
- Strategies and protocols surrounding crisis intervention techniques such as voice modulation and assessing the potential for suicide
- 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

Ability to:

- Communicate effectively with others in writing, in person and over the telephone
- Analyze data, interpret directions, procedures and regulations, and develop appropriate responses
- Perform job duties under stressful conditions
- Respond appropriately to situations
- Maintain confidential information in accordance with legal standards and/or county regulations
- Understand and apply the agency program, policy and procedures
- Obtain facts and recognize the relevance and significance
- Organize and maintain work detail
- Establish and maintain effective working relationship with agency staff, clients, and outside organizations
- Analyze situation and adopt effective courses of action
- Apply the principles of psychology and family relationships to engage individuals and families in social services
- Recognize signs of abuse for children, elderly and dependent adults; assess risk factors

Merit System Services

and potential dangers to clients

- Apply existing laws, rules, and regulations to welfare department operations
- Interpret and explain to applicants, recipients, or others public social service programs, policies, rules and regulations
- Develop skill in interviewing case, recording, and interpretation
- Work within a community setting and effectively use appropriate resources and services
- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with legal standards and/or county regulations
- Communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Operate a personal computer and other office equipment and related software
- Act appropriately in emergency and stressful situations
- Interact professionally and respectfully with clients including difficult, hostile, or distressed clients
- Respect cultural differences
- Work with difficult or complex cases/clients including clients with dual diagnoses, potentially dangerous clients or legally complex cases
- Analyze data from multiple sources, interpret and apply complex directions, rules, policies, procedures and regulations, and develop appropriate responses

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS (Education and/or Experience)

Pattern 1: One (1) year of full-time experience performing journey level social work case management in the Social Worker II classification in an Interagency Merit System (IMS) county;

OR

Pattern 2: Two (2) years of full-time social work case management experience in a public or private agency; **AND** Thirty (30) semester units (45 quarter units) from an accredited college or university, including fifteen (15) semester units (22.5 quarter units) in social welfare, social/human services, sociology, or other social or behavioral science,**

OR

Pattern 3: Bachelor's degree and successful completion of twenty-four (24) semester (36 quarter units) of a Master's degree program in Social Work, or a Counseling program from an accredited college or university, emphasizing Marriage, Family and Child Counseling or Marriage and Family therapy, Gerontology or Clinical Psychology; **AND** Twelve (12) months of social work case management experience.*

*Qualifying social work case management includes direct case work management, such as: assessment, evaluation; conducting investigations of abuse and neglect; preparing court reports; responsibility for a long term caseload, monitoring compliance through home calls 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, education, ethnic studies, history, human development, law, human services, nursing, nutrition, psychology, public health, social welfare, sociology, welfare, women's studies.

DRIVER LICENSE REQUIREMENT

Some positions in this classification may require possession of a valid California driver's License. Employees who drive on County business to carry out job-related duties must possess a valid California driver's 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

Date Established: 1/22/76

Date Revised: 7/1/03

Date Revised: 11/7/07

Date Revised: 1/17/14

Date Revised: 3/13/17 to add on-call language