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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
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DSS-4037EL (Rev. 9/89)

Transmittal No: 94 LCM-106

Date: August 31, 1994

Division: Management Support
and Quality
Improvement

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: Providing Local District Job Opportunities for Public
Assistance Applicants/Recipients

ATTACHMENTS: Sample Position Description for Community Services Aide
(Available On-Line)

In order to successfully promote as well as fully support a Jobs First approach to welfare reform, it is extremely important that both the State and local Departments of Social Services provide leadership through example, by establishing and promoting job opportunities for applicants/recipients within their own organizations.

While at the State level we are exploring a number of possibilities to provide such opportunities, a vehicle for local districts has been available for many years in the use of the Community Services Aide title.

Established by Department Regulations in response to federal requirements in 1968, this non-competitive title performs routine paraprofessional tasks in support of social services programs, and was intended to be filled by applicants/recipients in order to gain working experience with a goal of transitioning to competitive, higher level agency titles or to employment outside the agency. Originally, appointment to this title was to be for a maximum of two years.

A past Department study of local paraprofessional positions found 100 Community Services Aide positions existing in 23 districts, but found that fewer than one-third of the districts held to the two-year appointment limit, and fewer still used the title exclusively (though sometimes selectively) for the appointment of applicants/recipients. The study included, among others, recommendations that the Aide be used to employ applicants/recipients as originally intended and to increase the appointment duration to a three-year maximum to facilitate transition to other employment.

Although, along with other local titles except Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, the Community Services Aide is no longer provided for in Department Regulations, it is a common classification in use currently in several local agencies and remains a viable and practical vehicle for providing local employment opportunities for applicants/recipients.

We strongly urge that all districts practice what Jobs First advocates by establishing a reasonable number of these titles if they do not presently exist in your agency or, where they do exist, to use them exclusively to employ applicants/recipients as individual positions become vacant. Again, we also recommend a locally regulated three-year maximum term of appointment to ensure these positions remain a transitional employment opportunity, eventually becoming available to others.

A sample Community Services Aide position description is attached for your information and use. Any technical assistance you may need in establishing the Community Services Aide title, or in developing career paths for transitioning appointees to competitive titles within your agency is available through Gary Martinus [(518) 474-9289/Userid OHM080] of our Office of Human Resources Management.

Nelson M. Weinstock
Deputy Commissioner
Management Support and Quality
Improvement

COMMUNITY SERVICES AIDE

- a) Distinguishing Features of the Class: This position is designed primarily to provide an opportunity for indigent persons including recipients or potential recipients of public assistance to enter into meaningful employment and through training and experience to obtain the job skills necessary to advance in the Department or to obtain employment elsewhere. The work is designed to relieve the professional and technical staff of routine but necessary tasks requiring no previous education or experience but which would enrich the services of the client.
- b) Typical Work Activities (Illustrative only)
1. May transport clients to hospitals, clinics, doctor appointments or other necessary appointments.
 2. Performs switchboard and reception duties, directing clients to appropriate units within the agencies.
 3. Assists clients in completing forms, and explains in general terms benefits available to them.
 4. If bilingual, may act as an interpreter to help clients compete the eligibility determination process.
 5. May assist Casework or other staff in securing clothing, furniture and other necessities for clients in emergency situations.
 6. Helps to process forms, gathers routine data, and other clerical tasks on a limited basis when required by agency needs.
 7. Provides other routine assistance to clients as directed by higher level staff in accordance with agency needs.
- c) Full Performance Knowledges, Skills, Abilities, and Personal Characteristics: Ability to create an effective bridge between the client group and social services staff; ability to understand and follow instructions; ability to read and write English; sensitivity to the reactions of others; tact; emotional maturity; judgment; physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.
- d) Minimum Qualifications Required: There are no minimum requirements of training or experience.
- e) Special Features of the Class: This is a non-competitive position. Appointments are to be made for a term not to exceed three years.