

YOUTH ADVOCATE

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: Under the general supervision of the Superintendent of Recreation or a higher level administrator, an employee in this class is responsible for the planning, implementation and coordination of recreation, counseling and advocacy programs for community youth to address their social, recreational, emotional and psychological needs. Professional counseling is not a function of this position. Related activities are limited to crisis intervention and referral. The incumbent acts as an advocate for and a liaison between the youth population and the local community and local service agencies. An employee in this position is required to exercise a considerable amount of independent judgment and decision making. Oversight may be exercised over other employees, particularly in the area of recreation programming. Does related work as required.

EXAMPLES OF WORK: (Illustrative Only)

Reviews and evaluates recreational programming established for community youth;

Meets with community youth to organize and conduct recreational programs after school, on weekends and during school vacation periods;

Initiates communication and establishes relationships with community youth;

Identifies problems and needs of community youth and takes appropriate action to render assistance through counseling, group sessions or referral to area health professionals;

Meets with a clinical professional on a routine basis to discuss general or specific youth problems, assesses resources for referral, if necessary, and initiates referral;

Develops and maintains positive working relationships with mental health professionals and various community organizations or services, i.e., schools, police, churches;

May organize and/or oversee programs at a recreation center, drop in center or similar facility for community youth;

May assist in budget preparation where it relates to youth programming or community youth facility;

May assist in purchasing items such as food, supplies, and equipment for the youth at the community center;

May work with a Youth Council or similar group to provide educational programs for the community;

Uses computer applications such as spreadsheets, word processing, calendar, e-mail and database software in performing work assignments.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND ATTRIBUTES: Good knowledge of the characteristics, problems, needs and interests of youth; good knowledge of community resources and facilities available to youth; good knowledge of youth programming; ability to establish trust and maintain support with youth; ability to plan, organize, implement, coordinate and evaluate programs to meet the needs of youth; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with health professionals and community organizations or agencies; ability to make accurate and objective observations; ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; ability to work independently; ability to effectively use computer applications such as spreadsheets, word processing, calendar, e-mail and database software; ability to read, write, speak, understand, and communicate in English sufficiently to perform the essential duties of the position; good judgment; maturity; initiative; tact; courtesy; physical condition commensurate with the duties of the position.

MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE: A Bachelor's Degree* with a minimum of 15 credits in Recreation, Social Work, Psychology, Behavioral Science, Human Services, or a related field and two (2) years of experience which involved working with youth in a community development, social service, recreational or educational setting.

SUBSTITUTION: A Bachelor's Degree* in Recreation, Social Work, Psychology, Behavioral Science, Human Services, or a related field may be substituted for one (1) year of the experience described above.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENT: At time of appointment, possession of a valid license, appropriate for the vehicle to be operated and issued by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. The appointing authority is responsible for verifying and ensuring that the candidate meets these conditions at time of appointment and throughout the course of employment.

*SPECIAL NOTE: Education beyond the secondary level must be from an institution recognized or accredited by the Board of Regents of the New York State Department of Education as a post-secondary, degree-granting institution.