

## **Benefit Programs Specialist**

Hanover County Government - Department of Social Services

Salary: \$41,338.00.00 - \$50,049.00 Annually

**General Description:** This is a paraprofessional position. The incumbent performs routine tasks to determine a customer's eligibility for Social Services benefits, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid and Auxiliary Grants.

**Organization:** The Benefit Programs Specialist position is part of Hanover County's Career Development Program (CD). The Benefit Programs Specialist has four levels ranging from Benefit Programs Specialist I to Benefit Programs Specialist - Senior. The incumbent reports to a Benefit Programs Supervisor or Benefit Programs Manager and supervises no staff.

### **Essential Functions:**

- Conducts interviews of persons to determine eligibility for assistance and re-determines their continuing eligibility; exercises sound judgment;
- Explains nature of benefit programs and determines reasons and need for assistance;
- Processes applications for financial assistance and diversion; explains client responsibilities, rights and program availability; determines eligibility for assistance and benefit levels using automated systems and manual methods;
- Evaluates consistency and completeness of data secured, and where indicated substantiates its accuracy; interprets policies and procedures applicable to the various programs;
- Monitors cases for changes in recipient circumstances, and implements changes to appropriately reflect benefit level within guidelines;
- Evaluates employability status of clients and explores potential sources of income;
- Refers clients to service worker as the result of overall assessment of situation; prepares reports and maintains client records;
- Identifies possible fraud and makes appropriate referrals;
- Computes assistance plans;
- Determines the amount of allowances for special circumstance items such as household equipment;
- Identifies clearly discernible social problems and makes referrals to Social Workers;
- Provides applicants or recipients with information about other agencies where they may go for services as needed.
- Explains a variety of programs under the social services umbrella such as employment services, child support services and child care services.
- Determines the need for and amount of allowances for special circumstance items;
- Evaluates such social factors as education, work experience, and levels of social functioning;
- Contacts vendors for services and ensures payments to allow for the restoration or continuation of services.
- Monitors efficacy, trends of programs, and completes seasonal, quarterly and yearly reports; Prepares reports regarding quality control and makes recommendations to the supervisor;
- Participates on task forces, strategic planning, mentoring volunteers, students and new employees, teaching classes, and conducting outreach;
- Reviews cases for correctness, identifies significant errors/problems in caseloads and determines if the errors/problems are with the section, unit or with an employee;
- Provides statistical data and other information to support budget requests;
- Documents data and information gathered and compares findings with established guidelines of program eligibility; Conducts follow-up as needed;
- Carries a caseload of clients receiving public assistance that involve complex issues;
- Serves as a resource to staff and the public concerning public assistance programs and eligibility requirements;
- A senior worker serves as lead worker and assists supervisor by conducting program training for staff, reviewing case files and providing back-up supervision of staff;
- Provides training to other workers on an individual or group basis;
  - Coordinates training programs and orientation for new employees and clients; ensures that established deadlines are met;
  - Coordinates and interacts with other community resources and partners to assist clients in meeting assessed needs.
- Performs related work as assigned.

### **Working Conditions:**

- A. Hazards
  - Customers – May interact with difficult customers.
- B. Environment
  - Office
  - Field – May be required to visit customers in their homes.
- C. Physical Effort
  - Policy Manual – Must be able to lift up to fifteen (15) pounds.
- D. Non-exempt

**Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:** Comprehensive knowledge of: applicable laws, codes, public assistance program policies and regulations, and procedures, including civil and Circuit Court procedures; basic human behavior, social problems and resources, and interviewing techniques; social, economic, health, and cultural factors which can serve as barriers to employment; and counseling techniques; financial assistance programs sufficient to determine benefits eligibility; human services programs and how each interrelates; the strategic planning process; mathematics to calculate percentages, formulas and averages to solve mathematical problems; Skill in operating a personal computer and the associated office and agency software;

Ability to make eligibility determinations independently by applying policies, rules and regulations; knowledge of, preferred; must be computer literate, preferably in Microsoft Office and Social Services Information Systems. Demonstrated ability to: communicate effectively both orally and in writing with broad spectrum of individuals to include, but not limited to, customers, employers, courts, and medical professionals in person and on the phone; interview, gather information, re-evaluate each client's situation, and make referrals; determine a client's ownership share in situations; make mathematical computations; analyze information and determine from a variety of sources missing information and gaps; apply common sense understanding to carry out instructions furnished in written or oral form; use various types of automated technology to establish and maintain case records, access data such as estates, retirement accounts, and real estate, reports, and manipulate data; maintain professional ethics related to confidentiality; exercise sound judgment, discretion, tact and resourcefulness in solving problems and drawing logical conclusions; and establish and maintain effective working relationships with applicants and recipients, other public and private agencies, associates, and the public in a positive and tactful manner under sometimes stressful situations.

**Education, Experience and Training:** High school diploma or equivalent required (bachelor's degree preferred) with recent eligibility and/or social services experience desired – OR – Any equivalent combination of education, experience and/or training sufficient to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities is acceptable. Higher levels on the Career Ladder require additional education, experience and training. A senior worker will possess work experience in a leadership role and benefit programs.

**Special Conditions:**

- Criminal Records Check, including fingerprinting
- Work beyond normal work schedule
- CPS (Child Protective Services) Check
- Twelve-month probationary period
- Mandatory Participant in the Citizen Emergency Response On-call Plan

For complete job description and to apply, visit our website at [www.hanovercountyjobs.com](http://www.hanovercountyjobs.com)