

CORRECTIONS COUNSELOR

JOB PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

This is professional interviewing, counseling, investigative and administrative work in the County Criminal Justice System.

Corrections Counselor is a journey level classification. Work is performed in the areas of sentencing alternatives and pre-trial intervention, and the incumbents deal with inmates and offenders referred by the Courts to the various programs. Programs in which incumbents can expect to be involved include, but are not limited to, Probation, Alternative Detention, Release on Own Recognizance, Supervised Release, DUI Assessment, Deferred Prosecution, Restitution, Work Crews, Jail Programs, Employment and Alternative Community Services.

The duties involved require knowledge of law and justice systems with specific interpersonal skills. Main responsibilities are in the area of pre-sentence investigation; determining eligibility for release on personal recognizance; supervision and counseling of defendants under court order; and casework activities relating to problem assessment, case planning, resource referral and community resource development.

Personal contact is typically high in positions of this class. Daily contacts are made with offenders, office staff, court and law enforcement employees and collateral agencies. Purpose of contacts is to provide, clarify or obtain facts or information directly related to the work being performed. Assessment, training and counseling offenders is a substantial element of work in positions of this class.

Incumbents report to a Program Manager II. The supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines, and assists the incumbent with unusual situations or problems which do not have clear precedents. Special projects are assigned on an individual basis as the need arises. The incumbent is expected to carry out the work independently, and exercise discretion and judgment in making daily decisions. The incumbent is skilled in the technical aspects of specialized subject matter, the results of work performed having an impact on the accomplishment of unit goals. Work is characterized by responsibility for initiating and prioritizing work within established legal guidelines and departmental parameters. Incumbents may recommend policy and procedural modifications where the need for improvement is well documented from case monitoring.

Work is reviewed for timeliness, accuracy, thoroughness and compliance to court rules, regulations, guidelines and departmental policy.

Supervision of staff is not a duty of incumbents of this class. However, incumbents of the class may periodically assign work to entry level positions and clerical staff.

CLASSIFICATION DISTINCTIONS

This class is distinguished from Corrections Program Associate classification by the body of subject matter knowledge necessary in performing the duties being significantly more extensive; the greater degree of independent judgment and action required; the incumbent being more involved in the technical aspects of specialized subject matter; the results of work performed having a greater impact on accomplishment of unit goals; and the level or classification of offense being higher.

KEY OR TYPICAL TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Supervise and counsel offenders placed on conditional release by the courts.
- Perform initial interview and screening of offender applicants to all corrections programs including general records check, collection of needed information and consultation with departmental staff; conduct investigations; make evaluations, recommendations and referrals.
- Monitor, verify and enforce compliance with court ordered conditions: make home, field and work site contacts; case management: maintain files and attendance records, write reports and compose correspondence, assess for offender risk and needs, case planning, offender reporting and caseload audits.
- Provide liaison with courts, Prosecutor's Office, Sheriff's Office, defense attorneys, other criminal justice agencies and the public.
- Monitor UA's; perform Antabuse monitoring for clients and administer related testing instruments; interpret test results.
- Conduct diagnostic interviews to determine offender's level or degree of substance abuse.
- Testify in court as required.
- Assist other staff and perform related work as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university;

- AND -

- One year of experience in interviewing, counseling or supervision of offenders or high risk/needs populations;

- AND -

- Must be appropriate for background clearance for access to jail and classified information;

- AND -

- For positions performing alcohol assessments, certification as an Alcoholism Counselor in the State of Washington is required;

- OR -

- Classification as a Qualified Alcoholism Counselor per W.A.C. 275-19-030 (24);

- OR -

- Classification as a Qualified Alcohol Assessment Officer per W.A.C. 275-19-145 (3).

Knowledge of: interviewing and counseling methods and techniques; criminal justice system and community resources; uses and limitations of testing instruments; applicable regulations, statutes, codes and procedures; statistical analysis and research methods and techniques; and principles of supervision.

Ability to: respond quickly in situations requiring safety and protection of self and others; assess people and situations accurately and adopt effective courses of action; interpret results of testing instruments; evaluate performance of simple and basic work tasks and make recommendations; respond to and evaluate emotional needs of offenders in a supervised environment; interview effectively and obtain needed information; and establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, offenders, other agencies and the public.

WORK ENVIRONMENT AND PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

The work environment has various disagreeable elements which may cause stress. Incumbents are periodically exposed to offenders for the duration of the work shift, and must deal with anger, hostility, low self esteem and poor hygiene habits. With all incumbents of this class there is the additional potential threat of bodily harm, contagious disease and destructive behavior. Since incumbents may be in an unsecured area during most of their contact with offenders, they must remain alert and rely on counseling skills to defuse potentially dangerous situations.

Office use: 6/20/00
Revised 4/17/07; 5/11/09; 2/4/11