

Department: Area Agency on Aging
Reports to: Director of Aging and Volunteer Services

General Statement of Duties

Performs complex, professional advocacy, investigative, program education and promotional work to protect residents' rights and enhance the quality of care and quality of life for older adults, disabled and mentally ill in the Land-of-Sky regions facilities.

Distinguishing Features of the Class

An employee in this class is responsible for serving as an advocate for residents' rights in long-term care facilities, investigating complaints and mediating disputes, providing technical assistance, education and promotion to help improve the quality of life for older adults. Work includes reviewing and identifying complaint trends and issues, building relationships with volunteers, community agencies and organizations, local and state officials and legislators. Work requires considerable knowledge of the Federal Older Americans Act, federal and State program laws and regulations, facilities licensure requirements, long-term care systems and programs for the aging. Tact, diplomacy, sound judgment and initiative are required in the performance of the work. Difficult or precedent setting situations/cases are discussed with the Aging and Volunteer Services Director. Work is supervised by the Aging and Volunteer Services Director, and is reviewed through case discussion, observation, review of work performed, and feedback from clients, families and the public.

Duties and Responsibilities

Essential Duties and Tasks

- Investigate complaints from disabled, mentally ill and elder citizens in long-term care facilities, family members, or others on their behalf regarding care issues, violation of residents' rights, or concerns over services or benefits, complaints against a facility, other service provider, mediates/resolves complaints on behalf of residents.
- Observes and gathers evidence regarding care and/or other complaints; documents findings; meets with facility management to report findings and negotiates a plan of correction with a timeline; refers serious findings to the appropriate state agency; prepares a final report and maintains related files; maintains confidentiality of clients during the investigation of complaints.
- Orients and trains Community Advisory Committee volunteers on mandated volunteer duties; offers training to facilities' staff and on-going quarterly in-service education for volunteers; trains in variety of legal and program related issues and topics.
- Works closely with Community Advisory Committees covering the geographical and/or types of facilities assigned; attends all meetings; plan speakers or make presentations; provides update on current trends and issues.
- Provides administrative and technical assistance to volunteers, local communities, older adults and families, facility staff, etc.; assists with navigating the long-term care system and resolving problems; counsels the public regarding long-term care placement; disseminates information regarding legislation and regulations governing the rights of older citizens and long-term care.
- Responds to a high volume of calls covering complaints, requests for information, long-term care, and technical assistance to community volunteers, facility staff, members of the public, media, and elected officials.
- Develops effective working relationships with county commissioners, facility administrators, local departments of social services and mental health, councils on aging, and others involved with long-term care issues.
- Develops special projects, emphasizing local and regional involvement and collaboration, to address critical long-term care issues.
- Stays abreast of laws, regulations, policies, procedures and actions affecting older citizens and long-term care facilities; participates in the quarterly training for regional ombudsmen.
- Serves as a resource to the public, legislators, media and health care professionals; gathers data on changes in provider and resource information and forwards to staff handling the Long Term Care Directory; represents program and long-term care population at hearings and professional meetings; does public speaking to help the community understand the service.
- Promotes elder abuse awareness and prevention within the community through presentations, community forums,

and distribution of materials and education.

- Completes required documentation and reporting of investigations and all other records and reports as needed.
- Develops and implements educational efforts to educate the public on long-term care issues and promotes increased community involvement in long-term care facilities.
- Monitors long-term care facilities to ensure that residents' rights are not being violated.
- Provides information to facility surveyors regarding facility practices.

Additional Job Duties

- Performs related duties as required.

Recruitment and Selection Guidelines

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Considerable knowledge of federal and state laws, rules and regulations regarding long-term care facility licensure and reimbursement, Medicare, Medicaid, residents' rights and other aging services.
- Considerable knowledge of local and state structure and agencies involved with the older adult population, and the physically disabled and mentally ill population.
- Knowledge of adult learning theories, principles and methodologies necessary for conducting effective training.
- Working knowledge of computers and skills in using personal computers for word processing, spreadsheet, presentation software, email, and Internet.
- Skill in making public presentations and speaking before legislative groups, community organizations, volunteers, etc.
- Ability to investigate and resolve a complaint including interviewing a variety of people, listening carefully, maintaining confidentiality and advocating for the resident.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with local officials, advisory committees, legislators, facility administrators, local agency staff, council on aging, state and local regulatory agencies, volunteers, older adults, families, coworkers, supervisors and the general public.
- Ability to conduct training and to make presentations utilizing methods that fit the needs to different groups.
- Ability to communicate effectively, in written and oral forms, with a wide variety of people.
- Ability to organize the work and exercise independent judgment with minimum supervision.
- Ability to mediate varied problem situations.
- Capacity to complete successfully the certification requirements for the position.

Physical Requirements

- Must be able to physically perform the basic life operational functions of fingering, talking, hearing, and repetitive motions.
- Must be able to perform sedentary work exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects.
- Must possess the visual acuity to prepare and use data or figures, to read extensively, and to operate a computer.

Desirable Education and Experience

- Master's degree in social work, or related human service field and considerable experience with aging, long-term care or related field; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Masters' degree in Social Work preferred.

Special Requirements

- Ability and willingness to successfully complete the Regional Ombudsman certification by the State Division of Aging and Adult Services.
- Possession of a valid North Carolina Driver's license and have access to a car on a regular basis for the performance of work functions.

Land of Sky Regional Council - 2013

Special Note: This generic class description gives an overview of the job class, its essential job functions, and recommended job requirements. However, for each individual position assigned to this class, there is available a completed job questionnaire with a physical abilities checklist which can give further details about that one specific position. Those documents should be reviewed before initiating a selection process. They can provide additional detailed information on which to base various personnel actions and can assist management in making legal and defensible personnel decisions.