

New York State Department of Civil Service
DIVISION OF CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION

Classification Standard

Occ. Code 2293620

Advocacy Specialist 2, Grade 18	2293620
Advocacy Specialist 3, Grade 23	2293630
Advocacy Specialist 4, Grade 25	2293640
Advocacy Specialist 5, Grade 27	2293650

Brief Description of Class Series

Advocacy Specialists perform a range of professional functions that connect individuals with services, resources, and supports, and promote changes in policies, procedures, and practices in treatment, rehabilitation, and support service systems of care across New York State. Incumbents function as professional advocates for individuals and their families, link individuals with services provided by State agencies and licensed community providers and perform functions that seek to identify and eliminate disparities in service systems by promoting awareness of recovery, resilience, self-help, and empowerment, and effectively address treatment and service needs in a manner consistent with cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and spiritual norms, beliefs, and values.

Positions are classified at the Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs, Office of Mental Health, and Office for the Aging, in the non-competitive jurisdictional class.

Distinguishing Characteristics

Advocacy Specialist 2: full performance level; reporting to a higher-level Advocacy Specialist, performs a range of professional advocacy functions that supports individuals and their families in seeking and receiving appropriate services and treatments; and promotes awareness of the importance of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and spiritual competence in treatment, rehabilitation, and support systems.

Advocacy Specialist 3: first supervisory level; reporting to a higher-level Advocacy Specialist, supervises a unit of Advocacy Specialists 2 and directs unit activities; functions as an expert in providing advocacy services to individuals and in the identification of treatment and service disparities in service systems of care.

Advocacy Specialist 4: second supervisory level; reporting to an Advocacy Specialist 5, higher-level manager, or exempt position, supervises multiple teams led by Advocacy Specialists 3, and oversees work processes for multiple units.

Advocacy Specialist 5: managerial level; reporting to a higher-level manager or exempt position, supervises multiple teams led by Advocacy Specialists 4, and directs work for a large team consisting of multiple work units.

Related Classes

Long Term Care Advocacy Assistance Specialists oversee coordinated networks of local advocacy programs that receive, investigate, and resolve complaints and concerns of individuals served by long term care facilities, assisted living residences, and family homes.

Crime Victims Advocates provide victim services in an assigned geographic region. Positions work closely with police and local victim service agencies to best meet the needs of each crime victim.

Illustrative Duties

Advocacy Specialist 2

Performs professional advocacy functions by meeting with individuals and their families, answering questions about programs, services, and supports, and referring individuals to appropriate agencies.

Advises and informs individuals of services and supports available under State and federal laws and grant programs, such as assistive technology and vocational rehabilitation services.

Researches State and federal laws, grants, and other programs related to advocacy supports and services; drafts documents and materials for dissemination and distributes information to stakeholders.

Implements and monitors individual support and advocacy grant programs; reviews program and fiscal reports submitted by contracted organizations and agencies to ensure that groups meet State and federal requirements.

Conducts community outreach activities and delivers and facilitates training on advocacy programs and services to individuals, families, and other stakeholders; modifies material and curriculum as necessary.

Performs functions to address disparities in treatment, rehabilitation, and support service systems of care by ensuring that recipient and underserved populations' perspectives are included in policy making, planning, program development, and evaluation, such as the mental health system.

- Gathers data and creates reports to develop new agency initiatives, policy documents, and agency service expansions that address cultural and linguistic competence in treatment areas.
- Promotes inclusion of individuals who are current or former users of treatment, rehabilitation, and support services in planning, policy implementation, program development and evaluation, and monitoring activities by soliciting individuals' feedback, and by representing individuals' viewpoints within an agency.
- Participates in workgroups made up of individuals, health care providers, families, governmental staff, and the public to ensure that individuals' cultural interests are represented in service systems; works directly with facility and field office staff to implement cultural competence into agency services.
- Develops and facilitates trainings for agency staff and stakeholders; evaluates trainings and makes suggestions for improvements.
- Holds focus groups, town meetings, work groups, and other events to gather feedback from individuals who utilize services and facilities.
- Develops project proposals and outreach and engagement strategies to foster community buy-in, and develops and modifies goals, timelines, strategic plans, and deliverables.

Provides advocacy and support services to individuals who are alleged victims of abuse and/or neglect.

- Advises individuals on appropriate services that are available, reviews and resolves complaints, accompanies victims to interviews and court proceedings, assists victims with drafting and delivering impact statements, and provides and refers individuals to crisis intervention services.
- Contacts victims of abuse and neglect and provides information regarding processes, rights, and resources, such as service providers, treatment and education programs, restitution, legal and financial assistance, and investigation processes.
- Notifies victims, families, and guardians of legal updates.
- Assists individuals with filing protective orders and ensures compliance with State crime victim law requirements.

Advocates for individuals by monitoring Surrogate Decision Making Committee processes and ensuring that cases are properly administered.

- Advocates for individuals by making stakeholders aware of individuals' rights and ensures that requirements for hearings are followed.
- Reviews cases to ensure that volunteer panel members have required information to make informed decisions at hearings.
- Provides resources to contractors and issues guidance on committee policies and procedures; oversees contractors providing hearing services for one or more geographic regions.
- Ensures contractors meet requirements stipulated in funding agreements by reviewing deliverables.
- Consults with legal organizations, such as Mental Hygiene Legal Services, for required legal opinions and other supporting documentation.
- Ensures consistency of hearings by developing contractor guidance documents and running conference calls to brief contractors on program updates and requirements.

Advocacy Specialist 3

Supervises a unit of Advocacy Specialists 2 and other staff assigned to the above functions in central and regional office settings; performs the above functions, oversees unit workflow, and provides guidance to lower-level staff.

Functions as a technical expert for assigned advocacy programs or services, or programs that promote awareness of cultural and linguistic competence and disparities in treatment, rehabilitation, and support systems of care; may be assigned to serve as a project lead for agency initiatives.

Coordinates advocacy programs and services with other State agencies to ensure consistent messaging and effective implementation and monitoring of programs, services, and initiatives.

Advocacy Specialist 4 & Advocacy Specialist 5

Advocacy Specialists 4 and 5 perform similar functions, however, Advocacy Specialists 5 oversee large teams consisting of multiple work units that are each directed by Advocacy Specialists 3 or 4.

Provides direction for all work unit and team activities and establishes and maintains unit and/or bureau policies, procedures, and internal controls.

Directs community outreach functions and represents an agency in statewide outreach events, interagency workgroups, public forums, and in meetings with advocacy and legal organizations.

Develops advocacy program budget proposals in consultation with agency budget staff; assists financial staff in developing language for request for proposals and other grant or contract needs.

Reviews program operations and advocacy research activities and proposes improvements to leadership.

Creates, updates, and monitors agency-wide strategic plans to achieve program goals.

Minimum Qualifications

Advocacy Specialist 2

Non-Competitive: a bachelor's degree in a human services field, and two years of experience as a professional advocate or service provider in rehabilitation, developmental disabilities, or mental health.

Advocacy Specialist 3

Non-Competitive: a bachelor's degree in a human services field, and three years of experience as a professional advocate or service provider in rehabilitation, developmental disabilities, or mental health. One year of the experience must have been at a supervisory level.

Advocacy Specialist 4

Non-Competitive: a bachelor's degree in a human services field, and four years of experience as a professional advocate or service provider in rehabilitation, developmental disabilities, or mental health. Two years of the experience must have been at a supervisory level.

Advocacy Specialist 5

Non-Competitive: a bachelor's degree in a human services field, and five years of experience as a professional advocate or service provider in rehabilitation, developmental disabilities, or mental health. Three years of the experience must have been at a supervisory level.

Substitution: a master's degree in a human services field may substitute for one year of the general experience for all titles above. Four years of experience may also substitute for a bachelor's degree for all titles above.

Note: Classification Standards illustrate the nature, extent, and scope of duties and responsibilities of the classes they describe. Standards cannot and do not include all of the work that might be appropriately performed by a class. The minimum qualifications above are those which were required for appointment at the time the Classification Standard was written. Please contact the Division of Staffing Services for current information on minimum qualification requirements for appointment or examination.

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