



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Education, Culture & Employment (ECE)	Client Services Officer	
Position Number(s)	Community(s)	Division/Region(s)
71- 10604	Fort Simpson	Dehcho

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Client Services Officer (CSO) delivers Income Security Programs using a Service Management approach and provides comprehensive and quality programs and services that enable Northwest Territories (NWT) residents in need to obtain the necessities required to maintain their health, dignity and reach self-sufficiency. This position delivers Income Security Programs in accordance with NWT legislation, policies, guidelines, and established procedures, and holds a statutory appointment under the Social Assistance Act.

SCOPE

Reporting to the Regional Manager, Income Security Programs, Dehcho this position is located in Fort Simpson and is responsible for the delivery of the Income Security Programs (ISPs), which range in scope from full assistance to income subsidies. Income Security Programs assist eligible NWT residents to meet their financial needs and maintain their health, dignity and reach self-sufficiency.

The ISPs consists of an annual budget for the NWT of approximately \$40 million.

Due to the fact that the CSO is often in a different community than his/her supervisor, the CSO must work with a high degree of autonomy and independence to adjudicate eligibility and establish entitlement using problem-solving techniques, judgment, precedence, legislation, policy, guidelines, and procedures.

The CSO works with ECE staff, other GNWT departments and outside agencies using a service management approach to integrate services, ensure effective program delivery, and make the best use of resources available. The CSO has authorization of up to \$2,500 per cheque and holds spending authority for all community based Income Security programs. Several cheques may be issued to one applicant/recipient or a number of applicants/recipients per day. Funds are withdrawn from the Regional Income Security budget. Expenditures in Fort Simpson

totaled \$625,466.00 in the 2009/10 fiscal year.

The position has a significant impact on individuals, families and the community by providing the necessary supports to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to provide assistance with developing productive choices.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Determine eligibility for program funding and identify other required supports by conducting individual assessments

Main Activities:

- Interview applicants and use assessment processes to determine need and eligibility criteria to ensure applicants qualify for program support
- Educate applicants on program benefits, guidelines and appeal processes
- Review clients' health or social needs for referral to community support services, and assess clients' ability to work or take part in education and training opportunities
- Assist clients to develop and recommend productive choices
- Verify all information supplied by applicants during the assessment process
- Complete client assessments online using the Case Management Administrative System (CMAS) software program

2. Provide Income Security Program benefits and services to eligible NWT residents in accordance with NWT legislation, policies, guidelines, and procedures

Main Activities:

- Establish client files
- Monitor client progress and ensure compliance with regulations and standards
- Maintain on-going professional relations and assist clients with participating in productive choices
- Collect and include all relevant documentation on case file (electronic & paper) in a consistent, accurate and timely manner
- Manage all operational records from creation or receipt, through processing, distribution, organization, retrieval and disposition
- Assist clients with appeals when necessary and prepare case file reports for appeal review
- Attend appeal hearings and provide verbal reports to the appeal committee
- Interpret the relevant sections of the Income Security Program regulations, policies, guidelines, and procedures and recommend changes where appropriate
- Process client payments using the Case Management Administrative System (CMAS) software program
- Investigate suspected fraud and recover overpayments on CMAS
- Implement and adhere to all office security procedures and protocols ensuring safety for self and colleagues

- Maintain all client personal and financial information in a confidential and secure manner and store all files according to ATIPP guidelines
- Work with outside agencies (e.g. RCMP, Immigration Canada, Health and Social Services, etc.) on specific client situations

3. Provide comprehensive integrated services to individual clients using a service management approach

Main Activities:

- Manage a high volume, complex caseload in various Income Security programs
- Interview clients on an individual basis to review client histories, goals and perceived needs to achieve self-reliance
- Assist clients to identify potential barriers to achieving self-reliance and helping them to establish development plans
- Ensure clients are clearly informed as to agencies, institutions and support groups which may alleviate individual barriers and make referrals where appropriate
- Case conference with other professionals working with the client to ensure an integrated approach to client development
- Consult and develop partnerships with non-government organizations, government departments, ECE staff, aboriginal organizations and community organizations to identify local support services and productive choices for clients
- Participate in inter-agency teams composed of other governments, community and special interest groups as required
- Participate in promotional activities as required, explaining Income Security Programs and benefits to the general public
- Maintain accurate case notes and records for reference and department statistical purposes
- Plan, coordinate, and deliver Lifeskills Workshops for income assistance clients on Budgeting and Orientation to Income Assistance

4. Develop community capacity in order to provide enhanced programs and services

Main Activities:

- Working as part of a team with other community professionals (e.g. Adult educator, Economic Development Officers, school staff, career development officers), establish community based career/employment development plans and identify other “productive choices” suitable for the client
- Work with other members of “Inter-agency” groups to support and promote “wellness” activities
- Develop working relationships with other community and regional agencies who may also work with income security recipients (e.g., social worker, alcohol and drug worker, community justice worker)
- Make presentations to schools, organizations, community groups and the general public about income security programs
- Update and distribute income security program information

- As required, will participate in the development and delivery of capacity building programs

5. Perform other duties as assigned to achieve Governmental and Departmental goals through special projects and initiatives.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Thorough knowledge of all Income Security Programs, as well as a working knowledge of other funding sources such as Employment Insurance (EI), various Pension Plans, Income Tax, and the National Child Benefit Program
- Thorough knowledge of the different community based agencies and resources available to appropriately refer clients, including productive choice possibilities in the community and region
- Demonstrated skills in service management, assessment, interviewing techniques and program compliance
- Strong financial investigation skills to authenticate client financial information and prevent program abuse
- Strong communication skills, including writing, empathic listening, conflict resolution, providing feedback, questioning, paraphrasing and interpreting verbal and non-verbal information
- Computer skills, including familiarity with window-based programs, word processing, spreadsheet, communications software and basic trouble-shooting
- Decision-making, problem solving, planning, time management, calculating, record keeping and report writing skills
- Personal management competencies such as self-control, initiative, information seeking, stress and anger management, teamwork and cooperation, relationship building, and working in a changing work situation
- Client service oriented including valuing diversity, treating all clients fairly and equally, being flexible, and maintaining confidentiality
- Ability to communicate in the Aboriginal Language of the region may be required.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

A Diploma in a Social Science Field and a minimum of one year experience in a related field. A combination of post -secondary education and directly related experiences in the assessment and delivery of programs and services may be considered.

Valid Class 5 driver's license may be required in some regions.

Successful completion of Statutory and CMAS training to deliver Income Security Programs in the NWT is mandatory. These will be obtained through departmental training initiatives.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

Most of the incumbent's time will be spent sitting with frequent opportunity to move about. The incumbent also spends a great deal of time operating the computer, which can have an impact on the eyes, arms, wrists, and back.

Environmental Conditions

The incumbent works in a generally comfortable work environment, but at times may be exposed to illnesses in the community. The incumbent may also be subject to harassment in or outside of the workplace by clients who have been denied assistance.

The CSO is required to deliver income security programs in outlying communities on a monthly basis or occasionally as a replacement officer. Travel is by small aircraft or truck often in harsh winter conditions. The CSO will deliver income security programs alone with limited support from local agency representatives and in rudimentary office conditions. Accommodations and food services in the community can often be challenging.

Sensory Demands

The incumbent must be able to concentrate and conduct confidential business while working in an open area. The CSO must be vigilant to detect fraud and program abuse. Officers need to scrutinize all documents for validity, look for verbal and visual signs during client assessments, act and follow-up on tips provided by community members, and consult with colleagues, supervisor, and HQ program staff.

Mental Demands

The incumbent works in an isolated environment where there are high public expectations, diverse client needs and program responsibilities that require constant attention and action. Pressure to meet deadlines and provide quality service may place mental fatigue on the incumbent. In many cases, the CSO may be the only Officer in the community and as such the opportunities for debriefing client situations with other CSOs are limited. Added to this are the limited social support services in most communities.

The CSO will be involved in situations that require dealing with hostile, angry and uncooperative clients or their advocates in a professional manner.

CSOs are expected to enforce regulations, policies, guidelines, and procedures including to extended family, friends and acquaintances that can be stressful.

Heavy daily workload, enforcement of GNWT legislation, client dissatisfaction, dealing with disputes regularly and working toward resolutions of issues and meeting time lines while making attempts to deal with questions may be extremely stressful.

There is high stress associated with this job due to the requirement of having to inform some applicants they are not eligible for financial assistance as per the rules of the ISP. Clients routinely question the authority and the decisions of the CSO and complain of unfair treatment to the manager, other agencies, and departmental and political heads. The Officer must remain objective while providing background documents and supporting policies to uphold their decisions.

The CSO is required to demonstrate understanding and empathy while working with a great number of clients who are experiencing difficult life situations. The Officer must have the ability to work closely with the client to enhance their ability to become independent from full assistance or income subsidies.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Position Security (check one)

- No criminal records check required
- Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check