

**Lane Council of Governments
Job Classification**

Job Title:	Disability Analyst/Hearings Specialist	FLSA Status:	Exempt
Division:	Senior & Disabled Services	Range:	15
Reports To:	Program Supervisor	Last Revised:	March 2004

General Statement of Duties

The Disability Analyst/Hearings Specialist exercises critical judgment to determine whether applicants for General Assistance (GA) meet Supplemental Security Income (SSI) impairment criteria and advocates to help them get SSI benefits, assisting them with applying for and following through with SSI application and appeal processes. Represents the agency in administrative hearings processes for Title XIX Financial and Service programs for clients appealing decisions made by S&DS staff.

Supervision Received

Work is performed under general supervision and work performance is evaluated through periodic checks, frequent case consultations, the adequacy and timeliness of services provided, and results achieved.

Supervision Exercised

None.

Resource Responsibility

Moderate responsibility for monetary and human resources. Includes final decisions or recommendations regarding correct use of resources with both specific and general checks for reasonableness of actions. Decisions made within complex policy guidelines.

Distinguishing Features

Disability Analyst/Hearings Specialists must become expert in understanding medical, psychological, and vocational information and evaluating it in reference to Social Security's List of Impairments for adults. Strong analytical, organizational, and advocacy skills are required.

Essential Job Functions

Reads, analyzes, and evaluates medical and psychological reports, and determines whether enough information has been obtained to make decisions. Identifies conflicts and inconsistencies within medical, psychological, and vocational information and other evidence. Interviews physicians, psychologists, and other professionals by phone or contacts them by letter to resolve the inconsistencies. Whenever more information is needed, decides what to get and how best to procure it, ordering additional medical and psychological reports as needed. Analyzes clients' Residual Functional Capacity for employment-related activity. Compares all the data with

complex, technical SSA impairment standards to determine whether the severity of medically determinable impairments meets GA standards. Makes recommendations for denying or approving GA.

Helps Financial Service Workers (FSWs) decide what evaluations and reports to order.

Notes treatment recommendations in medical and psychological reports and determines need for pursuing treatment to improve prospects of SSI approval. Helps clients choose and access mental health, alcohol and drug, or medical treatment and monitors their progress. Informs FSWs of the need to apply sanctions when noncompliance occurs.

Monitors the entire GA caseload to ensure that all clients have active SSI applications or appeals pending and that they meet deadlines. Ensures that interim assistance agreements have been filed. Conducts interviews with clients to assist them in completing forms, gather pertinent information, and ensure that they apply for SSI. Advises FSWs to apply sanctions when clients fail to cooperate. Advises FSWs to close GA when SSI appeals have been exhausted.

Develops profiles of clients' disabilities and coordinates the development of supporting medical evidence with FSWs, vocational rehabilitation workers, mental health specialists, and other professionals.

Determines reasons for initial SSI denials. Assists clients in filing for reconsideration, with emphasis on fuller development. Works with Disability Determination Services (DDS) Disability Analyst/Hearings Specialists to facilitate the quickest possible approval.

Assists clients in filing for hearings when they are denied at reconsideration. Conducts pre-hearing conferences to formulate strategies, assess the need for further medical and vocational reports, and establish the need for expert or lay witnesses. Performs thorough vocational assessments for some clients.

Represents clients at SSA hearings before Administrative Law Judges (ALJs). Includes organizing and presenting evidence, questioning witnesses, and presenting arguments to persuade ALJs of the severity of clients' disabilities.

Ensures that clients are notified when approved by DDS and that SSA has the GA interim assistance agreement recorded in their system.

Serves as consultant to agency staff on all matters related to SSA regulations. Provides training for new staff on SSI liaison functions.

Represents all S&DS offices in hearings processes when clients appeal decisions made regarding Title XIX financial benefits and services. This includes scheduling and conducting pre-hearing conferences with clients and agency staff; thoroughly evaluating prior agency actions and current options and obligations; evaluating evidence, noting contradictions and inconsistencies and developing strategies for resolving them; frequently developing more evidence, including medical and psychological reports; writing pre-hearing summaries and assembling and mailing

evidence packets; presenting S&DS's arguments and evidence and questioning witnesses in hearings; assuring that hearing orders are promptly and properly executed.

Works closely with AFS Hearings Officers, Lane County Law and Advocacy Center staff, medical professionals, service providers, family members and other involved parties.

Maintains up-to-date knowledge of agency, state and federal rules, regulations, policies and procedures; reviews manual releases and/or memos (on-line or in hard copy form) for accurate processing; obtains clarifications as needed. Has a working knowledge of SSA regulations for evaluating impairment severity.

Maintains accurate records that provide for proper evaluation of hearings case actions and position effectiveness. Prepares required reports and correspondence.

Helps identify areas where individual or group corrective actions are needed. Concerns are communicated to appropriate individuals and supervisors.

Maintains monthly statistics of activity and program results.

Attends S&DS meetings, and local and state training in regard to policy and procedure.

Other Job Functions

Performs other duties as assigned, including backup of essential functions in times of heavy absences or work overload.

Working Conditions

The work is performed primarily indoors, requiring hand/eye coordination in the operation of office equipment. Work involves some travel to visit clients in homes or facilities, with potential exposure to hostile persons, animals, diseases, unsanitary conditions, and traffic hazards.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of issues, problems, and concerns of people with disabilities and community resources they can access.

Knowledge of laws, rules, and regulations governing state and federal disability programs.

Considerable knowledge of anatomy and physiology and medical, psychological, and vocational terminology, assessment methods, and associated care needs.

Knowledge of physical and mental impairments and their effects on ability to work.

Considerable knowledge of commonly accepted treatments for mental and physical impairments, prognosis, and duration of impairments.

Considerable knowledge of a wide variety of occupations and their necessary skills.

Knowledge of client assessment techniques, and the skills to apply this knowledge in the completion of a comprehensive assessment of a client's functioning, resources, and needs.

Knowledge of service plan development and the skills and ability to apply this knowledge in the development of a comprehensive and safe plan to meet a client's needs.

Ability to communicate effectively with other employees, clients, representatives of clients, representatives of other agencies, physicians, nurses, other medical providers, and the general public, using tact, courtesy, and good judgement.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other employees, clients, representatives of clients, representatives of other agencies, physicians, nurses, other medical providers, and the general public.

Strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills, and the ability to resolve conflicts effectively.

Ability to respond and work effectively with angry and hostile clients, client representatives, and service providers.

Ability to work with (1) individuals who abuse alcohol and/or drugs, (2) individuals who are non-compliant with medical treatment.

Ability to maintain accurate, up-to-date records and prepare reports.

Ability to work with accuracy and attention to detail.

Ability to understand and execute oral and written instructions, policies, and procedures.

Ability to work in a fast-paced environment, to manage a high volume of work, and to set priorities in order to meet deadlines.

Ability to operate a networked personal computer and other standard office equipment, such as a calculator, fax machine, and photocopier.

Ability to physically perform assigned duties.

Education and Experience

Bachelor's degree in social work, vocational rehabilitation, nursing, or related field, and three years of progressively responsible experience working in human service programs, preferably with the elderly or disabled, or any combination of education and experience that provides the applicant with the skills, knowledge, and ability required to perform the job.

Licenses, Certificates, and Other Requirements

Valid Oregon State driver's license or the ability to obtain reliable transportation to various sites within Lane County.