

# **FAMILY ASSISTANCE SPECIALIST**

## **JOB PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

This position provides support and advocacy services to family members with children under community supervision with behavioral health issues assigned to a specialized program within the juvenile department. Youth, in addition to being on community supervision, will have cross system needs. This position will be part of a team in identifying youth and family strengths and needs, and developing and supporting intervention plans that address the individual needs of youth and family. This may include facilitating linkages between the court and youth and families and community resources. Family Assistance Specialists (FAS) may have daily contact with referred youth, families, service providers, mental health therapists and Juvenile Department employees. This position works under the supervision of a Juvenile Services Program Manager or their designee.

## **CLASSIFICATION DISTINCTIONS**

Family Assistance Specialists (FAS) are similar to that of Juvenile Services Associates (JSA); the work assignment differs in that the FAS work with parents and the JSA with youth. Both are responsible for assisting in program management and providing program support under direct supervision of the program manager or their designee. The class is distinguished from the Probation Counselor by the performance of more routine tasks and duties. They are expected to make choices among policy and procedure options, but are not expected to exercise the extent of decision making and program development found at the Probation Counselor level nor are they deputized officers of the Court.

## **KEY OR TYPICAL TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provide services to family members that increase competency, ensure accountability and promote community safety.
- Develop a trusting and supportive relationship with family members using a strength-based, neutral and engaging approach.
- Provide support, guidance and advocacy for family members, coordinate case related meetings/activities with family members; accompany family members to activities and provide transportation as necessary.
- Assist in creating and implementing strength-based plans by helping family members identify needs in each life domain; build on family strengths utilizing both formal and informal supports and provide and/or broker those services that are flexible and individualized in response to emerging needs.

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- Maintain regular personal contact with family members and model and reinforce appropriate social interactions for them.
- Communicate with school officials, law enforcement officers, social workers and other interested parties to aid in the delivery of services to juvenile offenders and their families.
- Support correctional measures such as supervision, community service, and restitution as guided by statute, precedent or policy and empower parents to more actively participate in the development and implementation of individualized plans and maintain focus on supporting the established plan.
- Attend court hearings to respond to questions if needed.
- Maintain detailed notes and records on case actions and program activities.
- Serve as a resource to parents, guardians, and other interested parties in the handling of delinquent or pre-delinquent behavior patterns of juveniles.
- Provide 24-7 service to assigned families
- Perform other work as required.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Education and Experience:**

Prior or present experience as a caregiver of a child with serious emotional difficulties and/or a child who has had contact with the Juvenile Justice System is highly desirable; two years of experience in Criminal Justice, Mental Health or closely allied field; post secondary education or training in the social and behavioral sciences or in Criminal Justice may be substituted for up to eighteen (18) months of required experience; possession of or ability to obtain a motor vehicle operator's license. Any combination of experience and training that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying.

This position requires and/or involves unsupervised contact with youth, developmentally disabled persons, and/or vulnerable adults, and therefore must undergo a criminal background check.

**Knowledge of . . .** issues faced by families who have children with special needs; identifying youth and family strengths; crisis intervention and conflict resolution; resources for at-risk youth and families and how to access services; rehabilitation, resources, probation, family systems and social casework; causes and treatment of juvenile delinquency and behavioral health disorders; supervision, rehabilitation and counseling of juveniles with deviant behavior patterns; juvenile court laws; placement, welfare, and employment facilities pertaining to juveniles; programs and

practices of the Washington State Division of Children and Family Services; records and case history preparation.

**Ability to . . .** establish rapport and gain confidence of family members; present in a professional, courteous manner and communicate with a wide variety of people; work with family members in the context of their culture; assist in rehabilitation of juvenile offenders and the reintegration of families; conduct interviews with family members to gather sensitive personal information and to clearly communicate information to others both orally and in writing; model and reinforce appropriate social interactions for family members; problem solve, deescalate and resolve potentially volatile actions of family members; know community resources and assist family members to access services; maintain objectivity, remain non-judgmental, and work as part of a team; maintain good working relationships with law enforcement officers, school officials, and personnel of other juvenile related agencies; write clear, concise reports; present job related information to a variety of individuals and groups.

### **WORK ENVIRONMENT AND PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

Family Assistance Specialists will primarily perform their work responsibilities in a community setting. Services will be provided in the homes of families, schools, in community agencies and in other public places. Face-to-face family and public encounters will be routine with extensive phone contact with family and team members. Work hours will include evenings and weekends to not exceed a 40-hour workweek.

Revised: 03/23/2007  
Created 05/01/01  
Office use 05/29/01