

STATE OF WISCONSIN
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION

REHABILITATION SPECIALIST FOR THE BLIND
CLASSIFICATION SERIES

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of This Classification Specification

This classification specification is the basic authority under ER 2.04 Wis. Adm. Code for making classification decisions relative to present and future professional positions located within the Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Blind and Visually Impaired Unit, which are responsible for coordinating the provision of regional outreach services for blind and visually impaired persons, as defined in s. 46.293, Wis. Stats. This classification specification will not specifically identify every eventuality or combination of duties and responsibilities of positions that currently exist, or those that result from changing program emphasis in the future. Rather, it is designed to serve as a framework for classification decision-making in this occupational area.

Classification decisions must be based on the “best fit” of the duties within the existing classification structure. The “best fit” is determined by the majority (i.e., more than 50% of the work assigned to and performed by the position when compared to the class concepts and definition of this specification or through other methods of position analysis. Position analysis defines the nature and character of the work through the use of any or all of the following: definition statements; listing of areas of specialization; representative examples of work performed; allocation patterns of representative positions; job evaluation guide charts, standards or factors; statements of inclusion and exclusion; licensure or certification requirements; and other such information necessary to facilitate the assignment of positions to the appropriate classification.

B. Inclusions

This series encompasses professional positions located within the Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, which perform duties specific to assisting visually impaired individuals.

C. Exclusions

Excluded from this series are the following types of positions:

1. Positions that meet the statutory definitions of supervisor or management as defined in s. 111.81(19) and (13), Wis. Stats., as administered and interpreted by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.
2. Positions which are engaged in vocational rehabilitation counseling a majority of the time, require a certification as a Professional Counselor by the State of Wisconsin, and are more appropriately classified as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.
3. Positions that are engaged in the performance of social work as defined in s. 457, Wis. Stats., a majority of the time and are more appropriately classified as Social Worker.

4. Positions that are engaged in the provision of psychotherapeutic counseling activities a majority of the time and are more appropriately classified as Psychologist.
5. Positions that are engaged in the provision of physical, occupational, speech/language, recreational, music, or pre-vocational therapy activities a majority of the time and are more appropriately classified as Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech/Language Pathologist, Audiologist or Therapist.
6. All other positions which are more appropriately identified by other classification specifications.

D. Entrance Into and Progression Through This Classification Series

Employees enter positions within this classification series by competition. Progression to the Rehabilitation Specialist for the Blind-Senior or Advanced level is through competition or reclassification as the employee satisfactorily attains the specified training, education, and experience. Upon attainment of the prescribed certification (see qualifications section), positions are reallocated to, and perform the full scope of duties identified at, the Advanced level.

II. DEFINITION

REHABILITATION SPECIALIST FOR THE BLIND SERIES

This series encompasses professional positions responsible for providing rehabilitation services for persons who are blind or visually impaired including elderly persons and young persons and their parents or guardians. These services include assessments of each client's service needs, development of an individual service plan, instruction in Braille, training in orientation and movement in the person's home or neighborhood, counseling and guidance to increase the blind or visually impaired person's independence, instruction in the use of low-vision aids, personal and home management training and instruction in leisure activities.

As a member of the Rehabilitation team, positions conduct a comprehensive assessment of the consumers current skills levels; assist the consumer to develop reasonable goals through the creation of an Individualized Rehabilitation Plan; and provide instruction in adaptive techniques to increase independence and integration in the community; and to perform other duties as required. Additionally, positions are members of their regional planning team for the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired to provide assessment and instruction to consumers who are blind or visually impaired; to instruct in the areas of communications, home management, personal management; to support and assist adults who are blind and visually impaired to become vocationally and personally adjusted to their disability.

REHABILITATION SPECIALIST FOR THE BLIND

This classification is used as an entry progressing to a developmental level for positions providing rehabilitation services for persons who are blind or visually impaired. Positions allocated to this level perform their duties under close or limited supervision.

Positions at this level are generalists responsible for assisting visually impaired individuals by providing a "fixed point of referral." Job duties include assessing client's service needs and developing individual service plans to allow for independent living through physical orientation and personal adjustment. Positions assess skills in the areas of activities of daily living, use of optical aids, communications, and leisure activities; provide direct services to client and family and referrals to resources; and provide low vision and/or orientation and mobility evaluations to determine the individual's visual functioning and ability to travel independently. Positions provide direct instruction to clients based on their individual plan; determine the need for and coordinate referrals to others; work cooperatively with the Independent Living

Services for Older Individuals who are Blind (ILOB) program, public, and private agencies; educate regional service organizations concerning the needs and capabilities of blind and visually impaired persons; and plan and provide continuing education and training opportunities.

REHABILITATION SPECIALIST FOR THE BLIND-SENIOR

This is the objective level for professional positions performing complex rehabilitation services for persons who are blind or visually impaired. Positions allocated to this level perform the duties described in the Rehabilitation Specialist for the Blind definition statement under general supervision. Positions at this level may also mentor Rehabilitation Specialist for the Blind positions in addition to performing the core duties described in the definition statement.

REHABILITATION SPECIALIST FOR THE BLIND-ADVANCED

This is the advanced level for professional positions performing very complex highly specialized skilled adjustment training to persons who are blind or visually impaired along with the cultivation of service partners. The skills provided shall include one or more of the following: mobility, activities of daily living, low vision therapy, or assistive technology. Positions must develop Service Delivery Systems in an assigned region to achieve the five competencies (rehabilitation teaching, low vision therapy, orientation and mobility, rehabilitation counseling, and assistive technology). Duties also include developing and implementing group and individualized teaching with customers who are blind or visually impaired. The position has advance credentials (see qualifications section) to serve as an expert in mobility, vision rehabilitation therapy, low vision therapy, or assistive technology. Positions serve as a resource and a team leader on vision loss and blindness issues in their assigned region. Duties include providing training, technical assistance and direction to the Rehabilitation Specialist for the Blind associates in their area of expertise.

III. QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications required for these positions will be determined at the time of recruitment. Such determinations will be made based on an analysis of the goals and worker activities performed and by an identification of the education, training, work, or other life experience which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired. At the Advanced level an employee must be certified in orientation and mobility, vision rehabilitation therapy, low vision therapy, or assistive technology by a nationally recognized body in blindness personnel preparation.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

This classification series was created effective August 13, 2000 in Bulletin CLR/SC-116 in order to reflect a difference between the job duties and credentialing requirements of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and the Rehabilitation Specialist for the Blind positions. These positions were formerly classified as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. The modification effective July 9, 2006 was announced in Bulletin OSER-0121-MRS/SC to reflect the evolution of the Older Blind Grant Project to the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals. The classification was modified effective June 21, 2009 and announced in Bulletin OSER-0252-MRS/SC to combine the Entry and Intermediate levels by creating the Rehabilitation Specialist for the Blind and to create an Advanced level for positions providing very complex highly specialized skilled adjustment training. To be eligible for the Advanced level, the employee must be certified by a nationally recognized body in blindness personnel preparation.

This classification specification was modified effective November 24, 2019 to update the reference to the Division of Public Health, allow for competition or reclassification to the Advanced level, and to add assistive technology to the list of acceptable certifications at the Advanced level.

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