

# **FORENSIC COUNSELOR**

## **Tompkins County**

**Classification:** Competitive  
**Labor Grade:** 16  
**Approved:** 12/19/2000  
**Revised:** 1/01; 4/05  
**By:** AF, Commissioner of Personnel  
**BBP Risk Factor:** 1

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

Possession of a Masters Degree in Social Work, Forensic Psychology, Psychology, or Counseling from a regionally accredited or New York State registered graduate school at the time of application.

### **SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:**

**BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION:** Applicants may be required to undergo a State and national criminal history background investigation, which will include a fingerprint check, to determine suitability for appointment. Failure to meet the standards for the background investigation may result in disqualification.

**Tompkins County is Committed to Equity and Inclusion. We encourage those with similar values to apply.**

### **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:**

This is a professional counseling position involving responsibility for providing assessment, evaluation and crisis intervention services to individuals who are inmates of the Tompkins County Public Safety Building or who are participating in the Alternatives to Incarceration, Felony Treatment Court, or Family Treatment Court Programs. The clients may have psychiatric, drug abuse, parent/child interaction issues, or may be at risk of suicide. In the jail, the incumbent will consult with jail medical staff and converse with corrections staff in order to determine the psychiatric state of inmates for the purpose of formulating an effective treatment program. In the Alternatives to Incarceration and Treatment Court Programs, the incumbent may be involved in observing parent/child interactions and other types of assessment to determine the need for psychological counseling. This position is also responsible for providing comprehensive forensic psycho-social evaluations to the courts, parole board, Probation Department, Department of Social Services and other agencies as appropriate. The incumbent may perform specific evaluations and specialized group treatment in the Sexual Offender Aggression Retraining (SOAR) program. This class of positions differs from that of Psychiatric Social Worker in that the incumbent works with a specialized population. The work is performed in accordance with agency policies and procedures under the general supervision of a Clinic Supervisor in charge of the forensic program. Leeway is allowed for the exercise of independent judgment when carrying out the duties of the position. The incumbent will perform all related duties as required.

### **TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:**

- Performs preliminary assessments of clients requesting service per agency and state regulations by evaluating information provided on an Intake form and through interviews with the client and Sheriff's Department or Alternatives to Incarceration and Treatment Court Program Staff;
- Performs intake screening and diagnostic duties for new clients, referring clients to the psychiatrist for a medical examination if necessary;
- Provides individual or group psychotherapy to clients as indicated in a treatment plan and in consultation with a multidisciplinary Mental Health team, Sheriff's Department staff, Alternatives to Incarceration staff, Treatment Court Program staff and other agencies as appropriate;
- Provides crisis intervention services and coordinates the provision of other services as needed (e.g., drug/alcohol assessment and treatment), including discharge planning to facilitate transition to the next setting, whether that be a community plan or a higher level of care;
- Refers released clients to appropriate agencies (including the Mental Health Clinic) for ongoing services;
- Maintains all clinical records relevant to cases in accordance with clinic, state and Alternatives to Incarceration and Treatment Court Program policy;
- Coordinates services and treatment plans with other agency professionals for clients who are connected with, or have need of the services of, those other agencies;

- Arranges for Sheriff's Department, Alternatives to Incarceration or Treatment Court Program staff to transport clients requiring hospitalization or psychiatric evaluation;
- Participates in regularly scheduled group supervision and intake meetings, providing peer consultation to the other professionals involved;
- Participates in multidisciplinary teams involved with the screening of recently released forensic patients, the identification of troubled youths or other case management activities involving interagency coordination;
- Provides consultation to professionals, paraprofessionals, and volunteers, law enforcement officials and others;
- Performs court-ordered psycho-social evaluations;
- Maintains a variety of case management related records;
- May supervise MSW-level interns, bachelors-level professionals and/or volunteers;
- May act as an expert witness in legal matters as required.

**FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Thorough knowledge of current theories, principles and practices of psychotherapy;
- Good knowledge of forensic mental health principles and practices;
- Good knowledge of crisis intervention techniques;
- Good knowledge of local resources available to clients;
- Ability to classify the psychopathology manifested by clients in accordance with currently accepted classifications;
- Ability to provide effective face-to-face therapy;
- Ability to function as a member of a multi-disciplinary team;
- Ability to correctly appraise personal situations and make sound judgments concerning action required;
- Ability to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with professionals, para-professionals and volunteers from a variety of agencies;
- Ability to present ideas clearly and concisely both orally and in writing;
- Ability to prepare a wide variety of written records and reports;
- Ability to make decisions and take decisive crisis intervention action in a jail setting;
- Ability to understand and interpret the various federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations that pertain to forensic mental health programs.
- Empathy, good judgment, initiative and tact are required;
- Mental and physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

Created: 12/00

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