

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
SOCIAL SERVICES PRACTITIONER

**ATTACHMENT C-3**

EST: 9.89

REV: 4.15

Replaces: Social Services Practitioner I/II

**DEFINITION:** Under general direction, performs professional-level social work in the most difficult social service assignments in adoptions, adult and child protective services; performs related duties as required.

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:** This class is characterized by the responsibility for performing complex social service caseload or the most difficult social service assignments with only consultative supervision. Incumbents investigate, assess, and case plan the most difficult child and/or adult protective services and adoption cases. This class functions in a multiagency, multidisciplinary environment.

**EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:**

1. Responds to and investigates complaints of child, elder, or dependent adult physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, severe and general neglect, and exploitation, abandonment, isolation, and financial abuse; performs intake screening in order to make emergency response assessments; interviews clients and other involved parties in order to assess home environment, individual functioning, and family background and dynamics; makes diagnostic assessments of problems; takes action necessary to minimize the risk of abuse to children, elders, or dependent adults, including short-term crisis intervention counseling, takes into custody neglected and abandoned children, and places children with relatives, foster homes, group homes, institutions, or other suitable placements, or assists in the conservatorship process for elder or dependent adults who are mentally incapacitated.
2. Develops and implements service plans; counsels children and parents, elder, or dependent adults and their relatives to enhance functioning of family unit; develops agreements with families to meet voluntary or court-ordered objectives and monitors progress toward delineated objectives by evaluating behavioral adjustment; acts on behalf of child, elder, or dependent adults, within legal authority, to arrange for medical treatment and/or other needs; makes referrals to community resources.
3. Coordinates activities with law enforcement, legal, and the court systems; prepares court reports and legal documents; obtains police, medical, and psychological reports to substantiate recommendations; reports cases of suspected abuse to appropriate law enforcement and legal agencies; testifies and/or presents case investigative findings; participates in out-of-court settlement.
4. Places children in appropriate care facilities and makes permanency planning recommendations based upon an analysis of individual physical and psycho-social needs, available facilities and homes; determines suitability of applications for adoptions and investigates environment; matches children with prospective adoptive parents; counsels adoptive parents and children to assess and provide for needed support services; provides supportive counseling to children and parents.
5. Manages assigned caseload; prepares narrative and statistical reports, documents, and correspondence regarding client status; documents case files; prepares and serves legal documents; testifies in court;
6. Represents the department in the community and speaks before groups on matters related to assignment.
7. Utilizes mainframe computer applications including Child Welfare System/Case Management System and Adult Protective Services Database for caseload management; uses personal computer application including Microsoft Office Suite in preparation of various reports, documents and correspondence.

**EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS:**

- 1) Possession of a master's degree from an accredited school of social work; or,
- 2) (a) Possession of a master's degree from an accredited school, college, or university in marriage, family, and child counseling; marital and family therapy; psychology; clinical psychology; counseling psychology; or counseling with an emphasis in marriage, family, and child counseling; **and**, (b) completion of supervised practicum in accordance with Business and Professions Code Section 4980.40.

**Additional Requirements:**

- The ability to speak, read, and writes fluently in English and Spanish is preferred for some positions. If you indicated on your application that you are bilingual, Human Resources will place you on the employment list for a job requiring bilingual skills. Hiring departments will test you on your fluency. If you do not demonstrate sufficient fluency, your name will be removed from the employment list for bilingual only, in accordance with Civil Service Rule 7.
- Possession of a valid California Driver's License Class C is required at time of appointment. Independent travel, including client transportation, is required and incumbents of this classification may be required to travel overnight and/or to areas outside of the County.
- Selectees for employment in this class must, as a condition of employment, sign a statement agreeing to comply with Section 11166 of the California Penal Code relating to child abuse reporting and Section 15630 of the Welfare and Institutions Code relating to dependent adult abuse reporting.
- Selectees for positions in this class assigned to Child Welfare Services are subject to fingerprinting for the purpose of a criminal record check as authorized by Section 16501 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code and Section 11105.3 of the California Penal Code.
- May be required to work outside normal business hours and be available on call.
- This position will require you to serve as an emergency respondent needing to be available after hours and on holidays and weekend on an assigned basis, which will require you to be within emergency response time range when assigned.

**Knowledge of:** principles and practices of social work as applicable to child or adult protective services; philosophy and function of public assistance and social services systems; laws and regulations governing the operation of child welfare services; legal processes related to child welfare services; principles and techniques of interviewing, diagnostic assessment, and various counseling modalities; psychosocial, medical, and economic relationships contributing to sociopathology; appropriate utilization of social resources; social service investigative research methods; principles of child development/parenting, family dynamics, aging, and human behavior; narrative case report writing practices; documentation requirements of the court.

**Ability to:** plan, develop, and implement service plans; assess undefined and complex problems, immediate potential for risk of elder or dependent adults, or of children in abusive family or other living situations; take action needed to minimize the risk of child, elder, or dependent adult abuse including temporary/permanent removal of children from parental custody; determine suitability of out-of-home and adoption placements; assess physical and psycho-social needs of children, elders, or dependent adults; counsel abused children and/or adults and relatives to enhance social functioning of individual and family unit; monitor and evaluate behavioral change of clients; determine when to involve law enforcement officials and courts in cases; prepare case reports and legal documents needed to effectuate case recommendations; interview a variety of people with diverse socio-economic backgrounds and temperaments; assess social service needs of clients; determine the appropriate course of action in emergency or stressful situations; understand program objectives in relation to departmental goals and procedures; identify and make referrals to local and regional providers of social, medical, and/or other specialized services; learn, apply, and explain complex regulations and policies governing child welfare processes or adult protective services; work independently; understand and follow directions; listen to and cope with unusual life circumstances; manage a caseload and recall case details; maintain confidentiality of information; encourage clients in progress toward social functioning; prepare routine statistical reports; project consequences of decisions; organize and prioritize work assignments; make decisions and independent judgments; deal firmly and fairly with clients; maintain accurate records and document action taken; communicate effectively both verbally and in writing; establish and maintain cooperative working relationships; access and use personal computer applications in a Windows (or equivalent contemporary operating system) environment; and learn to use mainframe computer applications and personal computer applications such as word processing.