

## JOB DESCRIPTION: BENEFITS SPECIALIST

**DEPARTMENT:** Service

**SALARY LEVEL:** TBD, full-time, non-exempt

**SUPERVISOR'S TITLE:** Program Manager

**PREPARED BY:** Executive Director

**DATE:** April 27, 2005

**APPROVED BY:** Board of Directors **DATE:** April 27, 2005, **Updated:** August 26, 2020

### DEFINITION

Under the direction of the Program Manager and in cooperation with other members of FREED's service team, the Benefits Specialist will provide information and support regarding benefits for people with disabilities. The Benefits Counselor will provide SOAR assistance for individuals with disabilities, including those who are experiencing homelessness, to apply for disability benefit programs. Consistent with the core components of Housing First, this position will collaborate with the Continuum of Care (CoC) and the Coordinated Entry System (CES) to ensure populations with the highest needs are given the highest priority and are able to access SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) services.

### ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Carrying out services, including (but not limited to) providing "core" services related to disability benefits, maintaining the agency record keeping systems, developing relationships with referral agencies and providing consumer information about programs, services and rights.
- Becoming familiar with all aspects of the FREED program in order to assist consumers in understanding their level of independence on a continuum as well as their service needs. The Benefits Specialist shall provide information and support to assist consumers in achieving stated goals and/or refer the consumer to appropriate resources and agencies.
- Obtain or maintain SOAR Certification to provide the highest level of application support to individuals.(or does this go in
- Provide SOAR services to eligible individuals to complete the entire application process for disability income benefit including developing and filing completely prepared documents relative to the disability income benefits
- Coordinate with federal and state offices relative to the disability income benefit.
- Obtaining, reviewing and maintaining all relevant documentation from hospitals/medical centers, physicians, clinics, employers, case managers and others to meet the necessary burden of proof of a recipient's disability.
- Providing advocacy and guidance to consumers in benefit areas including Social Security, MediCal and other medical benefits, IHSS, housing programs such as Section 8, employee and other benefits programs for people with disabilities.
- Providing peer support and information on various peer support groups and activities to consumers.

### ADDITIONAL DUTIES:

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- Maintaining accurate, comprehensive and confidential case records of services requested and provided utilizing FREED's consumer service records policies and procedures, HMIS policies, and standards, indicators and assurances as required in Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act and corresponding regulations.
- Submit all required records and reports in an accurate, legible and timely manner.
- Other related duties as assigned.

### **QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill and/or ability desired. **Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.**

- **EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE**

High School diploma, or GED, and three (3) years experience providing services to people with disabilities. Volunteer experience in the delivery of services to people with disabilities is acceptable. Experience and knowledge in communicating with people with disabilities.

- **SKILLS**

Ability to read, analyze and interpret written materials appropriate for the delivery of consumer services. Ability to respond to common inquiries from consumers, their families, staff, local or regulatory agencies as well as the general public. Ability to write and deliver speeches and write analytical reports. Ability to effectively present information to consumers and their families, staff, and public groups.

- **COGNITIVE SKILLS**

The Benefits Specialist is regularly required to define problems, collect data, establish facts and draw conclusions, recall details and be able to focus on tasks.

- **STRESS LEVEL**

Moderate. This person is frequently expected to think clearly in emergencies and complete work with deadlines.

- **OTHER SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

Understand and convey the concepts of independent living. Ability to provide consumer driven, person-centered, services in line with the Independent Living Philosophy. Ability to exercise initiative, ingenuity and sound judgment in providing consumer services or participating in community education, advocacy or awareness projects. Ability to work effectively with community resource agencies and/or staff. Basic computer skills a must.

Bilingual in Spanish and English desirable. Knowledge of ASL desirable.

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Ability to become conversant in the Olmstead Decision, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Fair Housing Act.

- **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The noise level of the office working conditions is low to moderate.

Mostly indoors, occasionally outdoors.

Moderate amount of travel: local and regional.

FREED is a fragrance-free work environment.

- **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

FREED is committed to providing an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment based on race, age, creed, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or pregnancy. FREED is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action employer fully committed to achieving a diverse workforce and complies with all Federal and State laws, regulations, and executive orders regarding non-discrimination and affirmative action.

- **BACKGROUND CHECK**

FREED strives to provide a safe environment for staff, consumers, and volunteers. To support this environment and comply with applicable laws and regulations, FREED conducts background checks. The type of background check conducted may vary by position and can include, but is not limited to, criminal (felony and misdemeanor) history, and sex offender registry. Successful applicants will have no felony criminal history. Non-felony offenses may also result in disqualification for employment.

Signed:

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Employee

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Date

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Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date