

DISABILITY PROGRAM SPECIALIST

KIND OF WORK

Advanced professional disability determination program analysis and training.

NATURE AND PURPOSE

Under limited supervision, adjudicates the most medically and legally complex Social Security disability claims, reviews and evaluates determinations made by other disability professionals, designs and implements training programs in complex medical and legal subject areas or coordinates diverse, program-wide disability determination activities and support functions; performs related work as required.

EXAMPLES OF WORK (A position may not include all the work examples given, nor does the list include all that may be assigned.)

Reviews, analyzes and adjudicates the most medically and legally complex disability claims (e.g., those classified as either medical improvement expected or medical improvement possible) to determine whether the claimant is presently entitled to retain social security benefits by periodically reviewing all medical and vocational evidence submitted by a claimant; by obtaining additional substantiation of claim from claimant or medical professionals, as necessary (e.g., requesting specific diagnostic medical tests, physical exam by approved consultant, clarification of information provided by physician, etc.); by comparing current medical severity/ functional capacity of claimant to do basic work activities with claimant's condition at the time of the most recent favorable disability decision and with benefit guidelines defined by Title II and Title XVI of the Social Security Act; by determining, on the basis of this analysis, whether benefits should be continued or terminated, and/or whether claimants condition should be reclassified (e.g., from expected to improve to permanent); by thoroughly documenting the decision rationale; and by setting appropriate re-examination diaries.

Reviews benefit determinations adjudicated by peers to verify that decisions to terminate benefits have been rendered accurately by evaluating all evidence submitted; by collecting additional information; by analyzing the claimant status under the Social Security Act; and by gathering, organizing and preparing records for an evidentiary hearing when a decision is made to uphold a determination which terminates benefits.

Reviews and critiques a sampling of disability determinations adjudicated by other professional staff to assess the effectiveness and quality of agency staff performance by reviewing all evidence and documentation relating to each decision; by analyzing decisions through the application of knowledge of the historic and current medical practices and statutes; by identifying deficiencies in evidence, interpretation of evidence or in the documentation of the decision rationale; by returning deficient claims to adjudicative units with recommended corrective action; and by communicating these deficiencies to supervisory and managerial staff in summary reports which identify policy issues, trends, and recommendations for corrective action.

Designs and conducts research studies to evaluate agency performance by identifying methods to secure data; by developing study design; by gathering and compiling data; and by preparing a report of study findings and recommendations to managerial staff.

Designs and recommends training programs to improve staff performance and achieve agency training objectives by assessing staff training needs through the use of questionnaires, interviews, assessment tests and quality assurance reports; by researching and identifying methods to deliver specific skills, knowledge to staff in the most effective and cost efficient manner; by designing, selecting, adapting and/or preparing necessary training materials; by arranging from outside trainers and/or expert speakers; and by periodically revising training curriculum and materials based on trainee feedback.

Trains agency staff in disability program statutes, regulations, policies and procedures and in the symptoms, treatments, prognosis and accompanying functional restrictions of medical/psychological conditions to orient/train new employees and to improve the efficiency of existing employees by developing lesson plans, instructional materials and case samples; by arranging for rooms and equipment; by delivering prepared lectures/lessons; by counseling trainees on an individual basis; by providing regular feedback to trainees about their performance; and by developing methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the training.

Monitors, analyzes and develops long range projections of human and fiscal needs to provide Social Security Administration and Disability Determination Services management with the information necessary to plan for and obtain resources to effectively manage its workload by developing and maintaining systems for tracking actual case load and financial expenditures; by analyzing data and developing projected figures based on knowledge of adjudication and program trends and federal programmatic and budgetary directives; by preparing fiscal reports and budget documents for the State and Social Security Administration.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED

Knowledge of:

Title II and Title XVI of the Social Security Act and all Federal regulations and rulings sufficient to evaluate and adjudicate complex disability claims and to review and critique determinations made by other professional staff.

Previous Title II and Title XVI regulations sufficient to adjudicate continuing disability reviews based on law in effect at the time the claim was approved.

Federal and State laws and regulations relating to vocational rehabilitation, workers' compensation and any other program which may interact with the Social Security Disability Program sufficient to make determinations regarding the claimant's future vocational potential.

Medical impairments and illnesses, their symptoms, methods of diagnosis, alternative treatments, prognosis and accompanying functional restrictions sufficient to determine whether adjudication is warranted, whether additional diagnostic tests should be ordered and how the tests/treatments/medical conditions may interact (e.g., to worsen the disability, to create a potentially life threatening situation, etc.).

Historic unit activity levels and budget requirements sufficient to monitor, evaluate and project DDS workload, and financial expenditures in consideration of technical issuances from the Social Security Administration and State policy directives.

Skill in:

Human relations sufficient to effectively coordinate statewide activities and programs with a wide variety of State and Federal personnel.

Oral and written communications sufficient to critique professional peers' claims determinations in a constructive and positive manner; to clearly and thoroughly explain decision rationale to claimants; to convey in fiscal reports and budget documents agency resource needs; to design and report on research that is conducted and to train agency staff.

Mathematics sufficient to summarize records of departmental activities by adding, subtracting, and calculating averages.

Ability to:

Identify and define deficiencies in evidence and in the interpretation of evidence sufficient to identify and explain errors in disability determinations to staff.

Organize and prioritize work sufficient to perform diverse responsibilities in a timely fashion and to maintain numerous record keeping and reporting systems.

Organize supporting documentation and evidence and to summarize departmental position in writing sufficient to prepare case for an evidenciary hearing.

Recommend corrective action (training, policy clarification, establishment of qualitative and quantitative performance standards, etc.) sufficient to correct staff performance problems and improve the quality of service delivered to claimants.

Est.: 03/73
Ck: 4/16
Rev.: 04/87

T.C.: 04/87
Former Title(s): Disability Quality Assurance
Specialist