

DEPARTMENT: PROBATION
CLASSIFICATION: COMPETITIVE
APPROVED: APRIL 24, 2008

PROBATION OFFICER (MINORITY GROUP SPECIALIST)

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: Probation Officers are peace officers specifically responsible for providing public protection, rehabilitating offenders and preserving family life. The duties require the application of modern social work techniques in making evaluations of adults or juveniles and in supervising persons on probation. A Probation Officer is called upon to exercise sound professional judgment in analyzing data and in making recommendations concerning court dispositions. The incumbent assists persons on probation and other persons whom the probation agency services. Assistance is also provided to criminals who have histories of committing violent crimes and/or persons who may have open, hostile attitudes towards the Probation Officer. A Probation Officer works under the general supervision of a professional employee of higher rank and may help to supervise the work of probation assistants or volunteers. Provides evaluation, investigation, and supervision services to the courts. Does related work as required.

Probation Officer (Minority Group Specialist) incumbents perform the same activities and tasks as performed by Probation Officers along with the additional responsibility of identifying and relating to the specific problems encountered by minority probationers and communities upon assignment. The caseloads for these positions may to a significant extent be comprised of individuals who need special attention due to the socio-cultural environments from which they come. Incumbents in these positions may provide insight which could enhance and increase county probation departments' special sensitivities, experiences and knowledge necessary to operate and to assist in the evaluation of local programs and service delivery to make them more responsive to the diverse and pluralistic populations which county probation departments serve.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES: The following are the regular activities of a Probation Officer:

1. May be assigned to an intake unit to evaluate matters for adjustment at the intake level or to perform supervision of persons in lieu of court action;
2. Obtains and analyzes social and legal data and prepares reports in relation to matters pending in the courts concerning persons awaiting disposition by the courts;
3. Enters and retrieves data as necessary by accessing the department's database;
4. Interprets conditions of sentence to persons placed under probation supervision, supervises such individuals by ascertaining compliance with conditions of probation, and counsels and assists them in problems related to compliance and to the maintenance of lawful behavior in the community;
5. Completes progress reports on persons under supervision and periodically reviews case histories to determine degree of adjustment;
6. Completes violation reports and testifies at delinquency hearings;
7. Collaborates with other social and law enforcement agencies in matters of mutual interest;
8. Participates in the maintenance of various records utilized by the probation office;
9. Utilizes Peace Officer powers when acting pursuant to special duties;
10. Visits personally the probationer's home or place of employment or other community agencies (occasionally entering high crime areas in the evening);
11. May be required to carry a firearm while performing duties as a Probation Officer.

In addition, incumbents will perform additional activities and tasks that may include but not be limited to the following:

12. Reviews local probation department programs, literature, forms, instructions, etc., for accessibility to minority clients;
13. Assists in identification of programs, policies and practices which may impede effective service delivery to minority communities;
14. Participates in special studies, assignments and research projects related to the impact of county probation department policies and practices on service delivery to ethnic minorities;
15. Prepares written reports, with recommendations, regarding the impact of county probation department actions, decisions and requirements on service delivery to ethnic minorities;
16. Establishes and maintain relationships with minority groups and organizations on service delivery to ethnic minorities;
17. Participates in special outreach and recruitment activities;
18. Serves as department resource concerning minority issues.

PROBATION OFFICER (MINORITY GROUP SPECIALIST)... CONTINUED

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Thorough knowledge of social sciences, including sociology, psychology, and economics; thorough knowledge of social service programs and other community resources; thorough knowledge of laws pertaining to probation work and functions and procedures of Family and Criminal courts; thorough knowledge of factors related to crime and delinquency; good knowledge of computers and software programs; skill in the use of firearms; ability to understand, interpret and prepare written material; ability to maintain composure when dealing with hostile people; ability to think quickly and act effectively in emergency situations; sound judgment in dealing with people; normal hearing ability; good distance vision in at least one eye and ability to read normal size print; willingness to work irregular hours, evenings, weekends and holidays; physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Graduation from high school or possession of a high school equivalency diploma and one of the following:

1. Graduation from a regionally accredited college or university or one accredited by the New York State Board of Regents to grant degrees with a Graduate Degree in Social Work, Education, Administration, Law, Sociology, Psychology, Criminology or closely related field;
2. Graduation from a regionally accredited college or university or one accredited by the New York State Board of Regents to grant degrees with a Bachelor Degree **and** two (2) years of full-time paid experience in counseling or casework in a recognized agency that adheres to acceptable standards in probation, parole, social services, psychiatric or medical social work or related work.*

* Social Welfare Examiner and/or Support Investigator experience is not acceptable qualifying experience.

AND ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. Completion of a major course of study in American Indian, Black or Hispanic Culture Studies, from a regionally accredited college or university or one accredited by the New York State Board of Regents to grant degrees, which must have included a minimum of twenty-four semester credit hours;
2. Two (2) years of a close cultural association with American Indians*, Black or Hispanics**, or a work association in a criminal justice setting that requires advocacy for or interaction with American Indians, Blacks, or Hispanics.

*Person having origins in the original people of North America and who has maintained cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

**Person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture other than European.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. Possession of a valid New York State Driver's License.
2. As a condition of employment, all candidates hired on or after November 1, 1991 must successfully complete the following Peace Officer Training components within one (1) year of date of appointment:
 - a. 70 hours in the Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DCPA) Fundamentals of Probation Practice program ("the special nature of a probation officer's duties as a peace officer") within the first six (6) months of appointment;
 - b. 35 hours in the DCPA's Peace Officer/Officer Safety and Survival Training (OSST) Certification program or any local program approved by the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) for generic Peace Officer training within the first year of appointment;
 - c. 47 hours of Firearms/Weapons training provided by the employer within one (1) year of the date of appointment, whether or not the new officer is authorized to carry or use a weapon on the job.
3. After successfully completing the above courses, Probation Officers must annually complete an eight (8) hour Firearms/Weapons re-certification program as a condition of employment.
4. All Probation Officers with one (1) or more years of service must complete a minimum of twenty-one (21) hours of annual continuing probation education as a condition of employment.

For Probation Officer and Probation Officer (Minority Group Specialist) Exam Announcements:

NOTE:

In order to be permanently appointed candidates must comply with the following Niagara County conditions of employment.

1. Candidates must obtain and possess a valid N.Y.S. pistol permit.
2. Candidates may be required to carry a firearm while on duty.
3. Candidates shall be required to work evenings, weekends and holidays.
4. Candidates shall undergo a medical and psychological exam to determine their suitability for employment.
5. Candidates will be required to submit their fingerprints prior to employment for the purposes of conducting a criminal history check by the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Conviction of a felony will bar, and conviction of a misdemeanor or other offense may bar examination or appointment. Candidates shall undergo a personal background investigation by the Probation Department to determine their suitability for employment with the Department.