

NUTRITIONIST I

Work in this class involves providing basic nutrition services to clients eligible for the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infant, Children (WIC) in a local health department. Work requires the employees to independently complete a program eligibility statement, and a basic nutrition assessment. Employees are responsible for providing individual and small group nutrition counseling which is typically limited to such topics as the food groups, child development nutrition needs, and programmatic services. Work requires analyzing clinical and nutritional data in order to prescribe appropriate supplemental foods based upon the clients' nutritional needs and food preference. Employees may also execute contracts with vendors to honor the program food voucher and handle any problems that may occur. Employees may also train vendors and perform vendor monitoring. Usually, clients with complex nutrition and/or medical problems are referred to other health professionals or a higher level nutritionist. Employees may supervise the clerical support function associated with the program. Work may include other related assignments as determined by management. Work is supervised by either a higher level nutritionist, nursing director, or health director.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Employees receive referrals from health department clinics and private physicians, in order to determine the clients' program eligibility based on specific financial and nutritional guidelines. Employees perform a nutrition assessment by evaluating the clients' anthropometric and biochemical measurements, socio-economic conditions, and diet history. Once program eligibility has been determined, a nutrition care plan is developed and documented in the medical record including a food prescription based on the individual's nutritional and developmental needs and preferences. Employees provide basic nutrition counseling usually limited to the basic food groups and normal developmental patterns. The initial certification counseling session is followed up by an additional counseling session to ensure and encourage modified diet habits. Employees also participate in vendor monitoring and problem solving.

Intricacy - Nutrition care plans are based on assessments made through an evaluation of dietary habits, socio-economic conditions, food preferences, and nutritional needs. These nutritional care plans are developed to document intervention and education for the purpose of modifying existing dietary habits that may have adverse impact upon the health of a client. Employees identify problem areas and determine the appropriate programmatic and/or nutrition information for the clients. This information normally is concerned with the application of the food groups, proper diet habits, and nutritional requirements of pregnant women, infants, and children.

Subject Matter Complexity - Work requires a basic understanding of the principles and practices of nutrition applied in a health department setting. Employees utilize program guidelines and operational procedures, basic nutrition knowledge, as well as the clients' food preferences in performing the nutrition assessment, providing nutrition and dietary counseling, and in making food prescriptions instruments.

Guidelines - Guidelines include standard assessment procedures, professional reference materials, nutrition program reference manuals, and professional standards. Interpretations and application of these guidelines and program goals and standards are usually provided by higher level nutritionist or other professional.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Work assignments are typically made on a daily basis and they are reflective of existing health department clinics. Employees may receive technical instructions as it applies to unusual nutritional assessments. When new administrative and/or operational policies and procedures are integrated within the organization scheme, employees receive on-the-job training and assistance from a higher level nutritionist.

Nature of Review - Work is reviewed through submission of a nutritional assessment to the medical record which is subject to periodic review. Depending upon management's quality control system, work may be reviewed on a daily, weekly or quarterly basis, as well as during the annual program monitoring visit. General administrative and technical guidance may be provided by a higher level nutritionist or other health professional.

Scope of Decisions - Decisions regarding assessment and the food prescriptions affect individual clients.

Consequence of Decisions - Decisions regarding the nutritional assessment and the prescription of food instruments affect the clients' nutritional status and may affect overall program mission.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contact - Work requires contact with clients and other health professionals within the health department and community.

Nature and Purpose - Employees work with clients and other health professionals in determining program eligibility, providing nutrition counseling, and prescribing food packages. Community contacts are related to vendor monitoring, contractual agreements, and exploring community resources.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions - Employees work in a local health department setting, which could be characterized as mildly disagreeable.

Hazards - Employees have contact with clients and professionals, which could rarely be considered potentially dangerous.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities - General knowledge of accepted nutritional and dietetic principles and practices. Basic knowledge of foods and nutrition. Basic knowledge of infant and child development. Ability to maintain rapport with clients. Ability to collect and assimilate information. Ability to communicate and be persuasive.

Minimum Education and Experience - Bachelor's degree in foods and nutrition, public health nutrition, or dietetics from an appropriately accredited institution; or bachelor's degree in home economics with 12 hours of coursework in nutrition from an appropriately accredited institution and one year of experience in nutrition, plus the ADA Commission on Dietetic Registration eligibility; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

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