

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

TITLE: Principal Therapeutic/Inclusion Specialist GRADE: 26 DATE: 8/4/2023
SERIES: Recreation CODE: 2027 EEO: Professional FLSA: Exempt

Class Definition:

Under direction, leads the development and administration of the department's disability services and professional staff responsible for delivering therapeutic recreation programming or inclusion services on a countywide basis. Performs difficult and complex professional therapeutic recreation work, that involves planning, developing, coordinating, administering and evaluating highly specialized therapeutic recreation programs and inclusion services; such as adaptive sports or aquatics, specialized recreation and leisure programs for adults and teens, and programs for disabled veterans. Manages program plans, activities and results; including coordinating with various recreation programs specifically for individuals with disabilities and coordinators of other groups. Coordinates multiple patron components with differing demands upon recreation programs with complex, varied and overlapping regulations and policies that may impact program planning and administration; and the use of intermittent employees and volunteers. Leads countywide program staff, and assists in management of the countywide budget. Provides technical guidance and assistance in the areas of therapeutic recreation, program accessibility and disability services as determined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Serves as a liaison both internally and externally (e.g., professional, governmental and community advocacy groups). This is a highly visible position in the county requiring close contact with individuals with disabilities, groups, government officials and agencies. Applies extensive knowledge of, and skill in, therapeutic recreation, inclusion support, modifications, disability characteristics and behaviors support, recreation and leisure activities, assessment tools for therapeutic recreation, legislation and regulations affecting individuals with disabilities (e.g., ADA, safety and health), disability advocacy organizations and services, public relations and marketing; as well as knowledge of statistical analyses, park and recreation administration, program management, grant procurement, transportation systems and County, State and Federal building codes on accessibility. Independently performs various types of research and analyses to solve difficult, highly complex and challenging problems. Interacts with people inside and outside the organization to exchange information, coordinate, instruct, guide, advise and obtain agreement or compliance or achieve other desired actions. Performs other duties, as assigned.

Work is assigned in terms of ongoing functional responsibilities, specific assignment requirements and anticipated problems. Incumbent independently plans and carries out the work in conformance with established policies and procedures, program and Commission requirements, and accepted customer service practices. Independently resolves problems or deviations by interpreting or varying established policies and procedures to deal with situations not covered; and brings challenging and highly sensitive problems to the supervisor for guidance or resolution. Work is evaluated in terms of effectiveness and results, meeting program and Commission requirements, adherence to ADA requirements and applicable policies and procedures, customer service standards, technical adequacy, appropriateness to requirements, and overall countywide goals and objectives.

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Examples of Important Duties:

1. Core Functions (±85%) – assigned functions vary by position

- Leads countywide program staff in a therapeutic unit or program access office and assists with defining goals and objectives and establishing standards. Evaluates program effectiveness, develops and interprets policies and procedures; reviews programs, projects and services, and recommends permits and fee structures. Coordinates activities with other Commission units, outside government agencies, disability resources and advocacy groups.
- Leads program management staff including career and intermittent employees, volunteers and contractors. Ensures that work is planned, scheduled and assigned; recruits, selects, hires and trains staff. Assists with coordination, development and evaluation of technical and other training workshops for staff. Approves hiring of intermittent staff, including salary levels and job assignments. Serves on interview panels and as panel chair for hiring and promoting career staff; evaluates work and counsels staff on ways to improve performance. Recommends or initiates disciplinary actions. Approves timecards and leave requests; advises staff on ways to solve highly technical and time sensitive problems.
- Reviews and provides interpretation of all relevant regulations, policies and procedures for therapeutic recreation or inclusion services. Revises or drafts new policy developments when there are challenges, issues or complaints (e.g., Insulin Dependent, Diabetes Policy and Procedure, Participants Prone to Seizure Policy and Procedure, Mental Health Action Plan). Monitors programs for quality, safety and effectiveness; drives Commission vehicles to conduct on-site program visits to monitor safety and quality and assists in writing and monitoring ADA compliance plans. Evaluates and provides recommendations on specific programs and staff, addressing level of service, effectiveness and quality. Provides technical assistance in determining level of service and reasonable modifications to patrons with disabilities; ensures consistency of service delivery regarding ADA and established Departmental policies and procedures. Monitors staff performance and ensures programs are safe and activities are age appropriate; and reviews the program site forms and surveys conducted once program is complete.
- Assists in management of the unit budget and with preparation of annual budget requests; monitors revenues and expenditures in accordance with approved budget. Coordinates service area budgets for therapeutic program leadership; reviews and submits purchase requisitions and check requests. Initiates contracts to conform to purchasing practices and requirements; coordinates administration of grants. Assists with preparation of Requests For Proposals (RFPs) and bid specifications and obtains and evaluates bids and price quotes; and assists with solicitation of donations and scholarships.

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- Serves on Departmental committees for reviewing Commission policies and procedures; ensures Commission facilities and programs provide consistent service delivery and equal access and enjoyment to individuals with disabilities. Assists in providing recommendations to all facilities within the Department; such as universally accessible features, (e.g., adult changing tables in family changing rooms). Participates in renovation and new facility design meetings; as well as special event and festival committees and provides input to meet the requirements for Temporary Accessible Events. Promotes structured scheduling, physical set up arrangements or adapted activities to be incorporated into program planning for equal access.
- Builds relationships with citizens, community and advocacy groups and other stakeholders, and advocates for resources and support for services; represents Department before various groups, organizations and other stakeholders regarding programming on various occasions. Coordinates and participates in community events, fairs and expositions. Provides support for various presentations for Department programs; and supplies information, education and training opportunities for staff, volunteers, community service providers and government agencies, on trends, frameworks and programming (e.g., ADA program access, Therapeutic Recreation, Inclusion Services, Disability Awareness).
- Responds to issues of non-compliance or discrimination regarding ADA and program accessibility; responds to Department of Justice findings of noncompliance concerns. Responds to patron, parent and caregiver complaints. Maintains accurate records of all complaints and concerns.

2. Other Duties (±15%)

- Speaks at professional conferences at local, state and national level. Reviews newsletters, articles, program newsletters, webpages, flyers, press releases, public service announcements and program brochures; assists with developing and implementing marketing plans.
- Oversees records of revenues and expenditures, inventory of supplies and equipment, personnel, correspondence, program site visits and evaluations, inclusion services reports, monthly and annual reports and complaints; ensures periodic administrative and operational reports are written.
- Conducts research, attends specialized trainings and professional conferences to identify and report on new programs, methods and equipment.
- Performs special project work as assigned.

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Important Worker Characteristics:

- A. Extensive knowledge of, and skill in (1) therapeutic recreation; (2) inclusion support; (3) modifications; (4) park and recreation administration; (5) disability characteristics and behavior support; (6) recreation and leisure activities; (7) assessment tools for therapeutic recreation; (8) budget procedures and principles*; (9) statistical analyses; (10) legislation and regulations affecting individuals with disabilities, (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)); (11) program management; (12) grant procurement; (13) office practices; (14) transportation systems; (15) disability advocacy organizations and services; (16) County, State, and Federal building codes on accessibility; (17) safety and health regulations; (18) public relations; (19) marketing; and (20) Commission organization, policies and procedures*.

**Typically acquired or fully developed primarily after employment in this job class.*

- B. Knowledge of, and skill in assigning or reviewing tasks, setting the pace, and otherwise assisting the supervisor by leading a permanently formed work group or ability to rapidly acquire knowledge and skill set.
- C. Skill and ability to (1) use judgment and originality in planning and prioritizing the sequence, direction and progress of the work; (2) modify existing applications, processes, precedents and techniques; (3) exercise considerable judgment in determining the appropriate needs assessments for each child/family/participant and develop new and innovative approaches to therapeutic recreation services and activities; and (4) perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) and first aid.
- D. Skill in problem solving to select, organize and logically process relevant information (verbal, numerical or abstract) to solve a problem. Examples include devising solutions and actions to resolve issues, conditions and problems; and identifying, interpreting and analyzing diverse situations and factors in order to discern interrelationships among different approaches and methods to explain and justify determinations, recommendations and implemented actions.
- E. Skill in communication to understand verbal and written information (including facts, descriptions and ideas) and to express such information so that others will understand. Examples include communicating clearly and concisely to a varied audience with wide ranging needs and requirements.
- F. Interpersonal skills to interact effectively with contacts in a businesslike, customer service-oriented manner; this includes skill in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships and working as a member or a leader of a team.
- G. Skill in operation of (1) computer and software; (2) enterprise computer software; (3) various assistive devices (e.g., wheelchairs, assistive listening devices, hydraulic lifts); (4) adapted recreation equipment; (5) audio visual and video equipment; and (6) outdoor equipment.

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Minimum Qualifications (MQs):

1. Bachelor's Degree in Therapeutic Recreation, Special Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Occupational Therapy or any related field.
2. Four (4) years of progressively responsible experience in therapeutic recreation or closely related experience.
3. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted, which together total eight (8) years.
4. A valid driver's license in accordance with both State and Commission rules and regulations. Driver's licenses must be unencumbered by restrictions, revocations, suspensions, or points that could limit the employee's ability to drive Commission vehicles or perform driving duties required of the position.
5. Obtain and maintain all applicable certifications.
6. Pass Commission medical examination.
7. Certification as a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist is preferred.

Working Conditions:

Works in office and in community. Some work outside of core business hours including evenings, weekends and occasional holidays is required. Some driving is required. Works with individuals with a variety of disabilities, including some with potentially unpredictable or aggressive behavior. Responds to crisis intervention situations. Incumbents in this class must frequently: remain in a stationary position, position self to complete work, assist people with disabilities, communicate and exchange information with internal staff and the public, be able to see objects and words, and lift objects weighing up to 49 pounds. May be subject to various job demands such as high volume or work, interruptions and tight deadlines.