



THE ARC OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES
Job Description

Job Title: Advocate
Department: Advocacy
Reports To: Advocacy Director
FLSA Status: Full-time/Exempt
Revised Date: 08/2018

SUMMARY

Responsible for all facets of the Advocacy process, including participation in the intake process as needed, identification of primary need of individuals, creation of family goals, education and skill set transfer to families, complete all required documentation, participate in both the IU20 & IU21 local task forces, and attend appropriate conferences and seminars to keep abreast of the most recent policy changes and community resources. Provide supports in a manner consistent with The Arc's mission to empower families and individuals to be effective lifelong advocates, always maximizing independence and self-determination. Demonstrate dedication to the ideals and values of The Arc, including: assurance and protection of rights; belief in the inherent worth and dignity; the right to self-determination; the right to community inclusion; and respect for and recognition of the strengths and needs of individuals and families.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Must gain, and maintain, extensive knowledge of both special education and adult disability rights.
 - a. Attends relevant continuing education conferences and seminars as necessary to keep abreast of most recent statutes/changes/interpretations of these laws.
2. Must form, and maintain, professional relationships with families they serve, as well as with local school district personnel and service organizations.
3. Must participate in, and adhere to Arc, and Advocacy specific policies and procedures to maintain fluidity throughout the department
4. Must work diligently towards best practices to ensure that each client served feels as though their "voice" is being heard; to be able to articulate their clients' needs effectively.
5. Must maintain a current list of appropriate, available resources, and can instruct their clients and their clients' families on how to best utilize these resources.
6. Must be able to formulate goals for both their individual client and/or their clients' families based upon identified needs.
 - a. Must track progress in meeting these specific goals to ensure that individuals and families are moving effectively through the advocacy process.
7. Data management: must accurately complete all relevant documentation relating to each specific client. Must be able enter notes in a timely manner into the electronic data management system (Unicentric).
8. Intake: Ensure timely and meaningful intake, information and referral support for families and individuals, prioritizing of intakes, etc.

9. Must have the ability to work within a team setting where information and resources are shared between colleagues and use that shared knowledge to problem solve when difficult cases present themselves.
10. Must maintain self-discipline to work independently by manage schedules to ensure proper work time parameters are adhered to, while still meeting the needs of the individual and the individuals' families.
11. Community Support: Represent the agency in various public forums. Offer support and facilitation and consultation to local education/disability support groups and other community based advocates, including representing The Arc on the Right to Education Task Force.
12. Program Compliance/Standards: Participate and comply with implementation of program standards and requirements. Comply with all regulatory and policy requirements.
13. Act as mandated reporters of abuse and neglect in both the adolescent and adult systems.
14. Other duties as assigned.

COMPETENCIES

To perform the job successfully, an individual should demonstrate the following competencies:

Quality - The extent to which employee's work is completed thoroughly and correctly following established process and procedures. Required paperwork and documentation is thorough and neat.

Productivity/Independence/Reliability – The extent to which the employee produces a significant volume of work efficiently in a specified period of time. Ability to work independently with little or no direction/follow-up to complete tasks/job assignment.

Job Knowledge – The extent to which the employee possesses and demonstrates an understanding of the work instructions, processes, equipment and materials required to perform the job. Employee possesses the practical and technical knowledge required of the job.

Interpersonal Relationships/Cooperation/Commitment – The extent to which the employee is willing and demonstrates the ability to cooperate, work and communicate with coworkers, supervisors, and/or others. Employee accepts and responds to change in a positive manner. Accepts job assignments and additional duties willingly, takes responsibility for own performance and job assignments

Attendance/Punctuality – The extent to which the employee is punctual, observes prescribed work schedules and has an acceptable overall attendance record. Employee's willingness to work overtime and holidays, as required.

Initiative/Problem Solving – The extent to which the employee seeks out new assignments, proposes improved work methods, suggests ideas to eliminate waste, finds new and better ways of doing things. Motivates others to support problem solving.

Adherence to Policy Requirements & Safety – The extent to which the employee follows company policies, procedures and work conduct rules. Complies with and follows all safety rules and regulations, adheres to all safety rules when operating equipment/ agency vehicles/ personal vehicles.

Leadership – The extent to which the employee demonstrates proper judgment and decision-making skills when collaborating with others. Work flow in assigned areas is completed effectively to meet service/program/division goals.

QUALIFICATIONS

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. Position requires refined communication skills and ability to relate to a wide variety of people. Individual must demonstrate dedication to the ideals and values of The Arc.

EDUCATION and/or PREFERRED EXPERIENCE

1. Bachelor's degree from an accredited college/ university in related field is required.
2. Relevant experience in the field of Advocacy, working/demonstrated knowledge of relevant laws, entitlements, policies, current funding options, and the processes involved in accessing services.
3. At least 3 years' experience providing volunteer or paid advocacy supports or related supports for individuals outside of their own family.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Ability to read and interpret documents such as IEP's, Evaluations, Policies, State and federal laws, etc. Ability to write routine reports and correspondence; Ability to communicate effectively with individuals, family members, board/committees, public, school staff, etc.; Ability to teach those same skills to individuals and families and to facilitate meetings.

MATHEMATICAL SKILLS

Ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide in all units of measure, using whole numbers, common fractions, and decimals; Ability to compute rate ratio, and percent; Ability to apply concepts such as fractions, percentages, ratios, and proportions to practical situations.

REASONING ABILITY

Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form. Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts and draw valid conclusions from materials dealing with several abstract and concrete variables.

CERTIFICATES, LICENSES, REGISTRATIONS

Valid Driver's License and clearances.

OTHER SKILLS AND ABILITIES

1. Must have own reliable vehicle.
2. Strong organizational, interpersonal, communication and writing skills required
3. Ability to work independently, to set priorities and follow through on details
4. Computer skills with word processing software.
5. Experience working with volunteers.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to sit; use hands to finger, handle, or feel; reach with hands and arms; and talk or hear. The employee is occasionally required to stand and walk. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and ability to adjust focus.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.

Is there any reason why you would not be able to fulfill the requirements of the job?

Yes No If Yes, reason: _____

I have reviewed and determined that this job description accurately reflects this position as Advocate.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____