**Class Summary**

The responsibilities of this classification include assisting attorneys in developing critical defense strategies by providing expert advice and recommendations in assessing clients and their families, participating in case strategy and planning, and presenting relevant social service needs of clients, particularly as it pertains to establishing the best possible legal defense and/or outcome.

**Distinguishing Characteristics**

This is the first level in a two-level classification series. The incumbent works collaboratively with an interdisciplinary team under the direction of the attorney representing a particular client by applying advanced social service tools and knowledge and clinical mental health expertise as a consultative specialist on cases within the Department of Public Defense. Incumbents in this classification work with adult and juvenile clients involved with the criminal justice system many of whom present with significant mental health issues. This classification is distinguished from the Public Defense Mitigation Specialist II in that the Public Defense Mitigation Specialist I does not diagnose mental illness or addictions and does not provide testimony regarding mental health status, competence or developmental issues.

**Examples of Duties**

1. Conduct social history interviews to collect information, and gather records for mitigation/competency assessment. Prepare comprehensive psychosocial histories as needed.
2. Participate in case management and case consultation with representatives from internal an external agencies.
3. Advocate for clients in the criminal justice system by investigating, developing, and presenting information that supports an alternative sentencing plan or dispositional plan as well serving as an advocate for clients in obtaining appropriate treatment and continuity of care.. Similarly, advocate for clients in the legal system who are responding to a dependency petition, Sexual Offender Commitment petition and other proceedings affecting the client’s liberty or other constitutionally protected interest.
4. Provide assessments and referrals.
5. Recommend treatment options, determine appropriate service delivery agencies, follow up on client progress, and evaluate and modify treatment plan as needed.
6. Identify and establish working relationships with community resources for clients, establish referral protocols, and act as liaison between clients and those resources as needed.
7. Perform other duties as assigned.

**Knowledge/Skills**

Knowledge of the role of the attorney-mitigation specialist relationship and familiarity with the Washington State Bar Association Rules of Professional Responsibility and other ethical standards which govern Mitigation Specialists

Knowledge of principles, methods and techniques of social services, including case management, coordination/referrals, research, mediation, report writing, and oral communications

Knowledge of the use of mitigation in criminal justice cases

Knowledge of community programs and resources

Skill in handling confidential information

Skills in identifying potential ethical issues and seeking advice/counsel when ethical issues arise or require clarification

Skill in interviewing and assessment methods and techniques, including motivational interviewing

Skill in building rapport with defendants, their families, and witnesses from various backgrounds

Skill in assessing cases appropriately and utilizing resources to provide effective client services

Skill in preparing detailed narrative reports, correspondence and other written materials

Skill in using current office software programs including word processing, spreadsheet, database and email

Ability to testify effectively at trial, sentencing or other hearings

Ability to communicate effectively and professionally, in person and in writing

Ability to work calmly and respond courteously when in stressful situations

Skill in working with a variety of individuals from diverse backgrounds

Ability to work independently and as a team member

**Education and Experience Requirements**

Bachelor’s degree in social work, mental health counseling, or a behavioral science field relating to mental health counseling from an accredited college or university

Or any combination of experience/education/training that provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the work

**Licensing, Certification and Other Requirements**

Valid Washington State Driver’s License

Valid Washington State Social Work or Mental Health License preferred

Some licenses, certifications and other requirements determined to be necessary to meet the business needs of the employing unit may be required.

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| **FLSA Designation** | Non-Exempt |
| **Service Status** | Career Service |
| **EEO Code** | 2 |
| **Levels within same series** | Public Defense Mitigation Specialist I  Public Defense Mitigation Specialist II |
| **Class History** | Created 09/2015 |