Government of
Northwest Territories

IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Foster Care and Adoption Social Worker	
Position Number	**Community**	**Division/Region**
48-15489	Fort Simpson	Child, Family and Community Wellness / Dehcho

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Foster Care and Adoption Social Worker is responsible for the effective and efficient delivery of the Child and Youth placement services and programs in the Dehcho region of the Northwest Territories. The incumbent provides leadership and consultation to staff and community members and coordinates and manages direct program delivery within the context of appropriate legislation, policies and standards.

SCOPE

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) is the single provider of all health and social services (HSS) in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with the exception of Hay River and Tłı̨chǫ regions, covering 1.2 million square kilometers and serving approximately 43,000 people, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-indigenous. HSS includes the full range of primary, secondary and tertiary health services and social services including family services, protection services, care placements, mental health, addictions, and developmental activities, delivered by more than 1,400 HSS staff.

While the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency will operate under a separate board and Hay River Health and Social Services Agency will in the interim, the NTHSSA will set clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and monitoring for the entire NWT. Service Agreements will be established with these boards to identify performance requirements and adherence to clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and policies as established by the NTHSSA.

Under the direction of the Minister of Health and Social Services, the NTHSSA is established to move toward one integrated delivery system as part of the government's transformation strategy.

Cultural safety is an outcome where Indigenous peoples feel safe and respected, free of racism and discrimination, when accessing health and social services. Relationship-based care is fundamental to cultural safety because it prioritizes the need for trusting, caring and ongoing relationships between patients and clients with providers. Embedding a culturally safe approach in HSS has been identified as critical to supporting equitable access to care with the long term goal of improving health outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

For Indigenous residents of the NWT, who represent over 50% of the population, these shifts are particularly significant because despite some improvements over time, there remain significant disparities in their overall health status in comparison to non-indigenous residents. Health disparities are largely attributed to inequalities in the social determinants of health, which for Indigenous residents include the legacies of colonization and systemic racism. With specific reference to Child and Family Services (CFS), Indigenous families and their children are disproportionately overrepresented in the system. Most of the children who are involved with CFS are Indigenous, a fact that can be attributed both to the historical legacies and systemic racism as mentioned above, but also to the lack within the CFS System of culturally safe and accessible family supports. These factors have also impacted the way health and social services are delivered and accessed by Indigenous peoples in the NWT, contributing to additional complexities in Indigenous health disparities. When Indigenous peoples feel culturally safe interacting with staff and the HSS system they are more likely to access care when needed, leading to improved health outcomes.

Colonization has a continuing and profound impact on NWT Indigenous families today; therefore, the Child, Family and Community Wellness Division position is responsible to promote and support a system-wide shift towards prioritizing early childhood development, culturally-based prevention, and family and community-driven programing that supports the health and wellbeing of all families in the NWT and supports families who are struggling with multiple barriers to safely staying together.

The legacies of colonization and residential schools have impacted Indigenous health outcomes and the way health and social services are delivered and accessed. Staff are expected to honour and promote a culturally safe environment at all times, and to demonstrate compassionate care that is free of racism and discrimination to clients, families, community members, and other members of the health care team. Practicing from a trauma- and violence-informed care perspective is expected and the position requires that interaction with clients and families, community members, partners and colleagues is tactful, respectful and humble.

Located in Fort Simpson, the Foster Care and Adoption Social Worker reports directly to the Regional Manager, Child and Family Services and is responsible for ensuring the appropriate placement of children and youth from the Dehcho region. In this capacity, the Foster Care and Adoption Social Worker will assist front line child protection staff and their supervisors with training, orientation, placement and support of Foster Homes in the Dehcho region.

The Foster Care and Adoption Social Worker plays a key role in planning, development, coordination and evaluation of Foster Care services, Adoption services and regional group homes, where applicable. The incumbent will develop and implement strategies to deal with

issues regarding the recruitment of foster parents in isolated communities. They will provide information to, and complete home studies with potential adoptive homes. The incumbent plays a critical liaison role between NTHSSA, the client, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and other community stakeholders to ensure that individuals have access to the care that they need. They will also act as liaison with Community Leaders, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and other Government Departments to ensure proper service delivery in their program areas.

The client base for this position is the population of the seven (7)) communities that comprise the Dehcho region.

The incumbent, in conjunction with the Child and Family Services (CFS) Supervisor/Manager is responsible and accountable for the allocation of resources in terms of direct service delivery.

The requirements of this position may include the performance of on-call duties; incumbent may receive calls during off hours and be required to respond to situations. The Foster Care and Adoption Social Worker will be responsible for keeping Regional Manager, Child and Family Services Supervisors and staff up to date on the work in the region.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Provide leadership and model best practice methodology to Community Social Service Workers (CSSWs) in the areas of the Foster Care and Adoption programs.**
   - Provide placement consultations with regards to foster care.
   - Act as resource for front line staff in determining appropriate placements for children and youth with particular placements needs.
   - Liaise with approved Child and Youth treatment programs.
   - Listen and respond to foster parent, group home proprietor (where applicable) and staff ideas, strategies and concerns.
   - Participate in effective two-way communication with all staff and placement resources.
   - Assist staff members to acquire knowledge and skills related to the Foster Care Program.
   - Model best practices in terms of decision making.
   - Demonstrate leadership and make effective decision in a timely manner via the Regional Supervisor/Manager, Child and Family Services' guidance.

2. **Ensure NTHSSA regional placement resources receive appropriate support, training and compensation.**
   - Provide guidance in working the DHSS, the NTHSSA, Child and Family Services Supervisors and CSSWs in the delivery and implementation of a training program, in keeping with the philosophy and vision of the program.
   - Provide an orientation to new foster parents on Foster Care services in the NTHSSA in Fort Simpson and the outlying communities.
   - Complete annual foster home reviews in the region and follow up on recommendations for training and any other items related to enhancing the program.

- Identify training needs for foster parents, community placements; develop training resources and venues to meet identified training needs.
- Assist the NTHSSA and Regional management team with the development of operational standards, policy and program manuals.
- Research and identify methods of improving efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of placement services.
- In collaboration with the CSSWs, maintain up to date placement lists with contact information and ensure timely and accurate payment of foster parents.
- Conduct monthly meetings with Foster parents either virtually or face-to-face.

3. **Participate in the research and planning activities designed to ensure that the child and youth placement needs are identified and programs are planned to meet these needs. This includes in making recommendations to the Regional Manager, Child and Family Services and Supervisors regarding resource allocation.**
   - Compile data to support recommendations for programs and services including the completion of monthly occupancy reports.
   - Compile and maintain monthly, quarterly and annual statistical reporting.
   - Evaluate the effectiveness of Foster Care Programs and other placement resources in the communities.
   - Collaborate with CSSWs to ensure the special needs assessment tools are completed accurately within timelines, and provide recommendations to the appropriate Supervisor/Manager to assist with the determination of appropriate foster care rates.
   - Develop a communication method to regularly deliver information to foster parents.

4. **Oversee and provide support for adoption services in accordance with established standards and procedures.**
   - Raise community awareness about the importance and value of adoption.
   - Provide information/support to CSSWs, families, and community organizations regarding adoption services. These services include but are not limited to: departmental adoptions, private adoptions, step-parent adoptions, interprovincial adoptions, inter-country adoptions, and indigenous custom adoptions.
   - Organize and participate in National Adoption Awareness Month with planned activities.
   - Complete adoption family assessments, pre-placement reports, and other related tasks.
   - Provide support for families throughout the adoption process, by explaining the adoption process and options within the process, performing adoption home study, and supporting families as they move through the process.
   - Ensure practice is in line with established standards and procedures.

5. **Provide direct service delivery of the Child and Family Service program, within applicable legislation, regulations, policies, and standards of NTHSSA and DHSS.**
   - Respond to reported concerns and complaints and begins the investigation process within 24 hours.
   - Provide voluntary support services to children and families.

- Provide voluntary support services to children 16 to 19 years of age within the guidelines of the legislation and Departmental Policies.
- Investigate a child protection report by conducting interviews with all appropriate parties in order to determine if a child is in need of protection as outlined in the legislation.
- Develop and implement Plan of Care Agreements to provide services when there are child protection concerns.
- Coordinate the that will include preparation, filing, and serving of documents, presenting child protection cases in court, consulting with and instructing legal counsel acting on behalf of the Director.
- Implement and monitor case plan which may include referrals to other care facilities, community partners and/or service providers.
- Facilitate foster home care including the application, development, assistance with recruitment, and support to foster parents.
- Place children in foster homes and actively monitors the placement ensuring minimum contacts are met as per CFS Standards.
- Maintain up to date documentation on the CFS physical and electronic files.
- Complete statistical data to forward to the Supervisor/Manager.

6. **Support, enhance and develop placement resources in the Dehcho Region.**
   - Responsible for the management of the contract with group home services, where applicable.
   - Where applicable, liaise with group home proprietor to ensure their issues and concerns are addressed and that they are fulfilling the commitments of their contract.
   - Where applicable, develop admission criteria and Admission Committee for the Child and Family Services Group Home.
   - Develop recruitment and publicity campaign for the foster care and adoption program.

7. **The incumbent would receive statutory and competency training as a Child Protection Worker and would provide child protection services when requested to do so by the Regional Manager, Child and Family Services.**

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

On average, this position requires the incumbent to carry luggage and awkward items, such as beds and dressers, for approximately ten percent (10%) of the week.

The incumbent will be required to carry and transport young children, and in some cases, where children are physically resistant to being carried, for approximately ten percent (10%) of the week.

Environmental Conditions

Approximately, fifty percent (50%) of each day will involve exposure to communicable diseases while in home situations and while seeing clients/patients in the office.

Sensory Demands

On average, forty percent (40%) of the incumbent's day will be spent providing direct therapeutic services for clients, requiring the use of the combined senses of touch, sight, smell, and hearing during assessment and provision of services.

The incumbent will spend approximately forty (40%) of the day providing services to families in emotionally distressing situations which can distort communication, requiring the incumbent to be highly sensitive and accurate in their communication, balancing the need for intense listening and observation.

Mental Demands

Professionals providing child and youth care program services will be exposed to hearing children and youths' traumatic stories (i.e., sexual abuse, physical and emotional abuse, neglect, multiple losses, family violence, parental addictions, etc.). On average, ten percent (10%) of the incumbent's day will involve this type, and level of exposure.

The incumbent is often required to provide support to foster parents who may be in conflict with a Social Worker. This can create conflictual relationships with co-workers which may require mediation and interpersonal skills to manage.

Incumbent will be exposed to clients in public places, after hours, and in some instances subjected to threats and verbal harassment. The incumbent will also work with clients with a history of violence, a criminal record of violent acts, and who may pose a real and significant threat and danger to personal safety. This approximates forty percent (40%) of the day.

Approximately, ten percent (10%) of incumbent's week may involve travel outside of the community in poor road conditions and/or in unsafe weather conditions, including travel by small aircraft.

Incumbent is aware that decisions that affect children's and families' future must be made in stressful situations; there is also an on-going awareness of potential for physical assault when responding to calls in unsecured situations to investigate child abuse allegations and/or apprehend children.

Job holder will be required to respond to crisis at any time, day or night, often without the foreknowledge of the danger of the situation they may be walking into.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of child welfare and social work in rural/remote and predominately indigenous communities.

- Knowledge of *Child and Family Services Act, Adoptions Act* and their regulations, standards, and guidelines.
- Knowledge of other related legislation and policies such as *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and *Mental Health Act*.
- Knowledge of dealing with non-voluntary clients in adverse situations.
- Knowledge of word processing, spreadsheets, and electronic charting software.
- Knowledge and sensitivity regarding the geographical and cultural needs of the community, and ability to understand how community and culture impact the delivery of health and social care.
- Skills and abilities to deal with crisis management as it pertains to life threatening situations, such as domestic violence and the prevention of suicide.
- Ability to diffuse potentially critical situations.
- Ability to communicate (orally) effectively in a cross cultural setting.
- Ability to advocate in a positive manner to build community supports and resources.
- Ability to draft written documents, which are clear, concise and easy to understand by both professionals and non-professionals.
- Ability to adhere to a professional code of ethics.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

A Diploma in Social Work and at least three (3) years of experience or Bachelor of Social Work and at least one (1) year experience.

Other equivalencies maybe considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Proof of immunization in keeping with current public health practices is required.

Must have a valid Class 5 Drivers License (or equivalent).

Must be able to obtain a NWT Child Protection Appointment.

Must be able to obtain a NWT Adoption Worker Appointment.

Must be able to obtain a NWT licensed or registration under the *Social Work Profession Act*

NTHSSA – Regional Requirements

Within the region, the incumbent must be able to acquire within a reasonable time frame and remain current with the following training and certifications:

- Fire Training
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)
- Certification in First Aid & level C CPR/AED
- Non-violent Crisis Intervention
- Cultural Training
- Mental Health First Aid
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

- Workplace Safety
- Hand Washing Certificate
- Training under the Accreditation Canada Standards

Position Security

☐ No criminal records check required
☐ Position of Trust – criminal records check required
☒ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

French Language (check one if applicable)

☐ French required (must identify required level below)
Level required for this Designated Position is:
ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION
Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
READING COMPREHENSION:
Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
WRITING SKILLS:
Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
☐ French preferred

Indigenous Language: Select Language

☐ Required
☐ Preferred