

## Realistic Job Preview for a Caseworker

A Caseworker is one of the most challenging opportunities in the field of social services and can be very rewarding if you have what it takes to make a difference. The impact you have with families can be enormous and carries much responsibility. You will be able to make a difference in the lives of many children. Wayne County Children Services is here to assure that children at risk of abuse and neglect are protected and nurtured within a family and with the support of the community.

On a typical day, you may receive a report alleging that a child has been abused or neglected from a mandated reporter or an anonymous citizen. You would investigate the allegations and assess the safety of the child(ren) and family functioning. You would do this by interviewing the child, family members, involved parties and by visiting the child's home. On another day, you may meet with a family at their home or the agency to discuss services to help them achieve behavior changes that will reduce the risk of child abuse or neglect. Other days may include typing up notes and assessments, developing case plans, placing children in out-of-home care, meeting with community service providers, testifying in court, or attending training. No day is a typical day in child protection!

As you consider this position, here are a few of the key rewards and challenges of becoming a Caseworker II:

### **Job Rewards**

- Helping to keep children safe from harm
- Identifying a permanent home for children in out-of-home care
- Building a team with your peers
- Professional development through training and development opportunities
- Working with various public systems to make sure every family's specific needs are met
- Knowing that you have made a positive impact

### **Job Challenges**

- Emotional impact of observing severely abused and neglected children
- Partnering with families who may be upset and not accepting of help
- Going into homes and neighborhoods that are unfamiliar
- Accommodating the family's needs when scheduling appointments
- Testifying in court and replying to complex questions about your assessment of safety and risk
- The workload and time frame requirements can feel demanding

If you are right for this job, it's the best job in the world. So, do you have the competencies that would make you a successful member of our team? We are looking for applicants who have essential social skills and emotional intelligence as demonstrated by the following competencies:

- Adaptability: The only thing consistent is change. Can shift priorities when the day does not go as planned to meet the needs of families.
- Build Trust: Treats others with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Communication: Conveys information clearly and with sensitivity to cultural, gender, educational, and other individual characteristics when communicating with others.
- Conflict Management: Able to facilitate resolution, sizes up situations quickly when conflict arises.
- Continuous Learner: Continually grows professionally through on-the-job experience and applies information learned to improve skills.
- Cultural Competency and Inclusivity: Aware of how own personal beliefs and values influence interaction with others, unconditional positive regard.
- Client/Family Focus: Builds appropriate relationships with clients and families, able to gain the trust and respect of clients and families, understands their needs and expectations.
- Decision Making/Problem Solving: Assumes responsibility for selecting the most appropriate choice after reviewing appropriate options.
- Facilitating Change: Helps others overcome resistance to change.
- Planning and Organizing: Manages time effectively, demonstrates good organizational skills, sets priorities and meets deadlines.
- Stress Tolerance: Remains effective when working under stressful conditions, able to express stress in an appropriate way, enables stress reduction techniques
- Teamwork and Collaboration: Builds collaborative and effective relationships with others in the organization and community.
- Technical/Professional Knowledge and Skills: Possesses the knowledge, skill, and expertise to do the job effectively, efficiently, safely and independently.
- Work Standards: Regularly achieves expected standards and displays effort and commitment to work.