

Senior Center Supervisor

Reports To: Executive Director of Health and Human Services

Location: Orleans, with frequent travel to Happy Camp

Salary: \$25,000 to \$30,000, depending on experience

Summary: The primary responsibilities of the Senior Center Supervisor are to plan, implement and supervise a center-based senior nutrition and activities program serving elders in the communities of Happy Camp and Orleans.

1) What are your typical job responsibilities?

I am responsible for the daily operations of two senior meal sites – in two communities that are located in two different counties. I am also responsible for the Native American Caregiver Program.

2) How do you really spend your day?

I have to make sure that both meal sites have the supplies they need to prepare meals and deliver them to homebound clients. I have to make sure all funding reports are complete and on time. I have to look for funding opportunities to off set the increasing cost of providing services. I have to be a peacekeeper to people that work for our program. I have to motivate people to keep on task and provide training to new people. I have to be around to listen and help elders when they have concerns about medical bills, finding caregiver services for family out of the area, finding services for family that live here but there are no services available that they know of to help....I have to advocate for senior services in our area – so they won't be lost to larger communities. I have to know what is going on in two different counties – as regulations and requirements, services, are different in each county. I have to make sure that employees working for me fill out their time and have it in to the fiscal office on time. I have to do all of the procurement for our program and make sure all the paperwork is in on time. I have to make sure that we are compliant with the county health department and are keeping our daily meal counts and counts of unduplicated seniors and the services we provide to them up to date – and ensure that we don't mix funds for our Native American clients with the funds we receive for our non-native clients. I fill in when I need to – by cooking when there is staff turnover.

3) How do you organize your day to ensure you get everything done?

I write everything in my calendar book – otherwise I will miss something and have to do some crises management – which isn't optimal to get things done on time and meet deadlines. I also have deadlines on sheets posted in my computer desk that stare me in the face everyday.

4) What education/career paths lead you to this position? Were there any life changes that guided your way to this position (ex; closing of the mill, desire not to leave area, family)?

I never planned on being in a food services job. My back ground is business management; I worked for the federal government for 10 years prior to working for the tribe. I worked for the tribe as a computer data entry person for the medical clinics and as a medical clinic receptionist/medical records clerk at the Orleans clinic before

applying for this job. (I think this job would be easier for someone with a college degree in nutrition or background in food services). I was a long distance caregiver for my father after he had a stroke – he lived 125 miles or so away – my hero's became the Elders workers and CHR's that checked in on him and provided him transportation to medical appointments – and they provided more personal care – like helping him program his VCR...their kindness melted my heart. When the new program was starting up in Orleans – I knew the task of starting a new program was going to be daunting – and I felt that senior services were something that our community really needed. I also knew if it failed in Orleans – where the tribe was trying it out first – it would fail for the tribe. So I put in for the job – after all my fast talking couldn't talk the CHR into applying for it. So I guess I would have to say my inspiration was extended family – as I could work to help more than just my father if I could make this program successful. The thing that kept me in the job – when it was more than I thought I could handle – was a very supportive supervisor that was a wonderful mentor. I can not say enough great things about the value of mentors – he will always be a positive thought in my life – even if I never see or talk with him again as he left the program a number of years ago. I strive to be a supervisor like that – one that mentors new people and encourages them to do more than they think they are capable of.

5) Uppers; what is the thing that you love most about your job?

Helping our community – helping our elders. Knowing the meal program and caregiver training makes a difference.

6) Downers; what is the thing that you love least about your job?

I do not like being a supervisor. I do not like spending more hours working than being with my family.

7) What inspires, excites, and/or motivates you in your job?

Knowing the deep need in our tribal communities for senior services – as we, the tribal health programs, are the main provider of social services in the area.

8) What does your average work week schedule look like (ex; hours worked, meetings, appointments, traveling, etc.)?

My time worked should be 40 hours a week. In reality I work ...GOSH.....60 or 70 hours a week. I work even on my holidays and vacation – as I don't want the program to fail – I check in with my people to make sure they have enough supplies – if everything is ok. I travel to get supplies on the weekends – when I need to. I travel to meetings in Eureka and Yreka to advocate for our rural area that is underserved. So that we can retain the tiny amount of services we are funded to provide. I advocate nationally via email with national and regional contacts. I guess I am a workaholic.

9) How do you relieve stress?

When I do have time to myself – I sleep – if I can – if something is bothering me and I can't sleep – I search the web for grants. I started going to a quilting class that our cook brought into our program – so I sew now. But when I am not working – I am also a caregiver for my father, who now lives in my community. So when I am not working – I take him shopping and to the casino – and his doctor appointments. I don't know that I relieve my stress very well.

10) Does your job include a lot of traveling?

I don't have funding for travel that is 'classy'...you know traveling to a big place for meetings or training – I do travel a lot to work at Happy Camp. And I do travel a lot to Eureka to Orleans and Happy Camp picking up supplies and delivering them to the two meal sites. Do you enjoy it? Yes I enjoy traveling – even when it is just to pick up and deliver supplies – I feel like I am doing my share to make things work – and making cost effective choices on the supplies we use.

11) What advice would you give to someone interested in this line of work?

You need to know what is important to you – if caring for seniors is not your passion – this job is not for you. You have to have a reason to stay – as it is a lot of work – and people are only going to let you know about what is going wrong – and what they don't like. YOU DO NOT GET POSITIVE FEED BACK – so if that is what motivates you – you won't find it here – it is rare and you will treasure it on those rare occasions that you do get any. You have to be a self starter and be able to find a reason to keep plugging away at what you are doing. Because what you are doing is very important – not only to the elders you are providing a service to – but to the family members near and far that care about them. You will have to dare to be someone's HERO!

12) What does a typical day in your world look like?

Mountains of paperwork – lots of interruptions – making it difficult to get it all done. You feel obligated to listen to your employees – you feel obligated to listen to your elders – you feel obligated to listen to your supervisor and you feel overwhelmed to meet all your deadlines and still be respectful to the people that are working as your team members to make it all work – and respectful to the clients that you are doing this for.

My computer has letters that are worn off the key board – you do a lot – really a lot of paperwork. The state funding comes with monthly reports – you have daily information that you have to collect from the meal sites – you have to do data input into the computer from that information. The Federal funding comes with annual reports. You have to do needs assessments every 3 years. You have to make sure that homebound people have assessments done every 3 months and have a medical provider's referral for home delivered meals.

You have to create menus – you have to get them approved by a registered dietitian – you have to make sure that you have meals that provide the right balance of required vitamins and other dietary requirements for each day/week. You have to make sure your cooks follow the rules – which is difficult when the two meal sites are 50 miles apart. You have to make sure everyone that works in the kitchen has food handler's certifications – or at least one person in each kitchen does so they can make sure everyone is on task with sanitation and proper food handling to not make the public sick from any food born illness.

You have to provide training to caregivers and keep up to date on things going on in the region and let clients know about those opportunities.

You are always looking for ways to get training that won't cost your program anything, not only for your clients but for your staff and yourself – so many times you volunteer for community action groups to get free training. (If you want to get any training as you won't have funds to travel or pay tuition – you need to collaborate with other organizations – stay open minded).