QUALITY ASSURANCE SPECIALIST
CS-1910-13

INTRODUCTION

This position is located in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice (ODMPSJ) in the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS). The mission of the DFS is to provide high-quality, timely, accurate, and reliable forensic science services using best practices and best available technology, focusing on unbiased science and transparency, to enhance public safety and health.

This is a standard position description that is utilized for any organization entity in DFS.

MAJOR DUTIES

Primarily responsible for accreditation strategy, planning, execution, coordination, and maintenance and prepares and implements an annual Quality Improvement and Enhancement Plan which includes a review of quality assurance data and findings, as well as an annual plan for quality assurance monitoring, for tracking trends as it pertains to quality assurance data.; and serves as an expert advisor for accreditation, certification, and national standards as they pertain to quality improvements and accreditation issues and provides technical expertise to DFS personnel as it pertains to quality improvements issues, and guidelines, for all operational components to meet and best serve the agency's goals and mission.

Assists with identifying and establishing training needs and resource requirements after evaluating all programmatic areas; and develops monitoring instruments to enhance agency and staff performance (measures and goals).

Ensures that evaluations of all programs offered by DFS have established standards/SOP's that are meaningful and measurable; and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that the programs meet the needs of the clients.

Reviews and participates in the agency's procurement planning sessions to provide guidance on the methodology to be used to assess performance measures, incentives, and penalties.

Conducts research and analysis of best practices in order to keep abreast of new and revised procedures, laws, regulations, policies industry standards. Revises and recommends policies governing operating procedures, to ensure that best practices and industry standards are utilized so as to enhance agency organizational structure.

Coordinates all laboratory activities in support of QA and safety programs, ensures that activities are properly designed and expeditiously implemented in a manner that will provide reliable support for those objectives that are responsive to the mission(s).

Resolves difficulties between all program units contained within DFS, as well as establishing measures/standards that safeguard the integrity of the agency when interacting with vendors or other governmental entities.

Deals with DFS managers and other D.C. agencies on significant issues that affects Laboratory Quality Assurance; and critically evaluated and maintains accreditation standards; schedules periodic QA audits to ensure conformance with approved policies and procedures; responds to requests; and recommends and manages implementation of preventive measures and corrective action to ensure non-recurrence of deficiencies.

Designs and executes test plans on computer applications; records and documents results and compare to expected results; documents anomalies and issues and performs reviews, walkthroughs, and/or inspections; and ensures data integrity standards.

Performs other related duties as assigned.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

Mastery of quality assurance concepts, operating principles, and methodology applicable to agency program(s) or mission area. This includes expert knowledge of organizational missions, objectives, and procedures; the relationship with other program/operation areas.

Exercises a very high degree of skill in applying knowledge to the analysis and resolution of complex or sensitive problems related to quay assurance, and in applying new developments and methodologies.

Expert skill and ability to deal with extremely broad and complex quality problems which are further complicated by such factors as the dispersion of assignments within the organization and activities involved, and the multiplicity of authorities, policies, and controls.

Ability to research/study internal and external program directives covering new and innovative conceptual approaches, technologies, and methods for enhancing the assessment of quality performance, and identifying areas for improvement.

Ability to compare past performance to present performance to determine which areas need improvement and the ability to make modifications, if necessary.

Excellent communication skills both orally and in writing with top management officials and representatives, federal government and private sector officials; and skill in articulating concerns and positions on sensitive and complex issues, both orally and in writing; and ability to listen to, work with, and elicit cooperation among and from others.

Ability to work effectively with other technical staff, contractors or vendors and demonstrated expertise in exercising tact, diplomacy, discretion, originality and persuasive techniques to

develop, present and explain controversial facts, views and options to high level government officials.

Demonstrated skill and ability to use a PC and software packages (e.g., Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and Power Point, etc.) and software applicable to various reporting systems.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

Works under the administrative supervision of the designated supervisor/manager, who provides assignments in terms of the overall objectives to be achieved, coordinates resources, and relies on the incumbent's expertise when coordinating, and accomplishing program objectives and the incumbent plans and carries out assignments independently, determining the scope and level of quality activities based on agency requirements and establishes priorities, interprets and applies agency quality assurance policies and procedures. Consults with and advises the supervisor on priorities, funding requirements and project milestones and periodically briefs the supervisor on progress of assignments and potentially controversial issues. Having developed expertise in quality assurance and in resolving problems, the incumbent uses personal initiative to deviate from established procedures, unfamiliar situations or unusual requirements.

The assignments are assessed from the standpoint of overall effectiveness of quality assurance efforts through periodic status reporting, briefings, or reviews of program documentation and accomplishments. Completed work products such as technical reports, reports of investigations, or reports of surveys are controlled for timely completion, but are generally accepted as technically sound; and controversial decisions or findings are reviewed primarily so the supervisor can become familiar with the circumstances and determine if there is a basis for modification of operating instructions or procedures.

GUIDELINES (will this apply across the agency?)

Guidelines include DFS quality assurance policies, program directives and procedures; laws and regulations of the District and Federal government, Mayor's Orders, instructions, and the Deputy Mayor's policy and priorities. Relevant legislation and standards include documents and resources from ISO, ASCLD-LAB, FQS, ASTM International, Inc., American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA), Centers for Disease Control, NIST, and forensic community working groups, international standards relevant to forensic science, and other guidelines that pertain to a specific division. These guidelines are presented in general terms and frequently outline major areas of program planning along with suggested approaches (such as surveys and audits, control of quality costs, technical reviews). The incumbent develops detained approaches and methodologies; also initiatives, extensive experience, and a broad knowledge of quality assurance principles and practices is utilized to develop new methods and recommend policy changes; and keeps abreast of new developments having potential application through review of study reports, industry specifications/standards, and textbooks, etc.

Sound judgment is exercised when selecting, interpreting, or adapting available standards and guidelines to specific issues or subject. Many situations are not covered by the guidelines, and therefore, require interpretation and adaptation of many alternatives.

COMPLEXITY

The work involves a broad range of duties involving substantial breadth and depth of analysis; consideration of numerous interrelationships and variables to develop new approaches; or to resolve persistent, widespread, or critical quality problems; and conducts long-term studies which concerns major quality assurance programs within the realm of forensic sciences. Occasionally the incumbent develops criteria and methods for evaluating program accomplishments and trends, and make recommendations on changes in program organization and emphasis.

Decisions concerning what needs to be done are complicated because of such factors as: the wide dispersion of organizations and activities involved; difficulties in determining scope of the problem in these activities; multiple authorities, policies, and regulations governing the activities; relationship to and interdependence of activities, e.g., maintenance/supply/logistics function; and impact of quality costs on programmed resources.

SCOPE AND EFFECT

The purpose of the work is to provide advice and guidance to managers and DFS employees regarding quality assurance. As an expert, the incumbent is responsible for conducting in depth studies and investigations to analyze and resolve critical problems or issues; evaluates new developments in technology or regulatory matters associated with forensic sciences; and develops policy and procedural guidelines for various areas within the agency that are relevant to accreditation.

The work affects the protocol and regulations of various forensic sciences. Ensures that the agency is in compliance with regulations/legislations that dictate how a laboratory and other forensic sciences processes, methods and techniques are carried out in terms of problem resolution, program direction, and the agency's mission and goals.

PERSONAL CONTACTS

Contacts are with DFS' managers and lab employees, Federal and District agencies, and contractors associated with forensic sciences as well as other agency employees; and with the District of Columbia's Officials.

PURPOSE OF CONTACTS

Purpose of contact is to influence and motivate individuals and to use considerable tact and persuasion to motivate individuals who may be reluctant to effect corrective action because of

the potential impact or cost factors. The incumbent also deals with agency officials, who may have a meager understanding of the quality requirements involved, and may dispute the nature of the requirements, or have a less than cooperative attitude.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The work is primarily sedentary and periods of walking, standing, or bending may be required when in the laboratory; and maybe required to drive to various locations.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work is primarily performed in an office setting and may occasionally perform work in a laboratory.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

This position's duty station will be housed within the Consolidated Forensic Laboratory (CFL) which is a protection-sensitive facility. As such, incumbents of this position shall be subject to criminal background checks, background investigations, and mandatory drug and alcohol testing, as applicable. Due to the handling of primary evidence, the applicant will be required to submit a buccal swab for the purposes of the DNA Quality Control database for the DFS.

The nature of the DFS mission necessarily involves the potential risks associated with biological or chemical hazards, including morgue functions. Although contact with these functions is intended to be minimal, the risks are nevertheless possible; training to recognize, address, and mitigate these risks is required as is dealing with potentially personally difficult topics, such as crime, death, and disease.