**POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**DEPARTMENT OF: Employment and Economic Development**

**STATE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND: Senior Services Unit**

**EMPLOYEE'S NAME:**

**CLASSIFICATION TITLE: State Program Administrator – Senior**

**POSITION CONTROL NUMBER: 01000821**

**PREPARED BY: Ed Lecher**

**EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE: DATE:**

**SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE: DATE:**

**POSITION PURPOSE:**

This position exists to provide adaptive assistive technology-specific solutions, personally customized training materials and intensive, individualized customer training. The incumbent provides expertise in the areas of blindness technologies, technology instruction, development of curriculum materials, implementation of training and technical support to blind and visually impaired Minnesotans in need of independent living assistance. The incumbent has the highly complex task of interfacing systems of varying degrees of complexity, access software and hardware must interface with:

* Applications/Programs/Software
* Operating Systems
* Personal Computers
* Personal Devices (smartphones, tablets, iPads, iPods etc.)
* Organizational systems

This position also trains and updates SSU service providers, community-based agencies, partners, and other interested persons in utilizing and adapting information systems and developing assistive technology solutions for blind and visually impaired seniors and independent living consumers.

**REPORTS TO:** Senior Services Unit Director

**SUPERVISES:** None

**BUDGET:** This position impacts on over $300,000 of case service funds which the Senior Services Unit annually spends on behalf of blind, DeafBlind and visually impaired Minnesotans striving for personal independence.

**CLIENTELE:** 250 to 300 customers working to incorporate assistive technology to maintain personal independence; 50 professional staff of community-based organizations serving seniors and SSB direct service staff.

**RESPONSIBILITY #1**

This position is responsible to provide individual and group instruction to SSU customers in the use of a broad range of assistive and adaptive technologies. This includes instruction in computer software programs, tablets, smart phones, basic computer operations, printers, scanners, optical character recognition devices, braille note takers, braille displays, GPS devices, bar code readers and other assistive technologies as they emerge. The final piece involves conducting research and beta testing of new and emerging technology.

**Priority % of time Discretion**

**A 50 A**

**TASKS:**

1. Work with the individual SSU customers or groups to provide thorough instruction in the use of assistive technology at the request of SSU services providers. The instruction will include teaching of common assistive technology including basic computer use (including internet browsers, e-mail, word processing, keyboarding), smart phones, tablets, assistive computer software, assistive applications, scanners, optical character recognition devices and software and low vision technology and devices.
2. Coordinate with SSU field staff to plan, time, locate and set up logistics for trainings of individuals and groups. Training can take place in personal homes, apartments, assistive living facilities or communal settings (other locations are possible).
3. Provide thorough progress reports to SSU field staff, which will include future recommendations and suggestions for alternative assistive and adaptive technology.

1. Conduct a post-training assessment of customer’s success and efficiency at utilizing the assistive technology and provide any retraining as necessary to augment or enhance the usefulness of the particular technology. This may include creating specific interfaces to meet particular customer disabilities and aptitudes.
2. Provide supplemental training to complement and enhance training that has been provided by community venders.
3. Create customized, customer or group-specific, training material to be used during instruction or as needed for consumers to utilize on their own. This includes materials that can be used by consumers on their own to stay up to date with the training provided.
4. Provide product demonstration to consumers to allow them to make informed choices on the most appropriate technology for their needs.
5. Provide any “courtesy” follow-up as requested from customers needing simple feedback.
6. Research and beta test new and emerging assistive technology solutions and provide demonstrations and recommendations to SSU field staff.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

* Customers are called within 24 hours of referral from the SSU service provider and appointments are scheduled within two weeks of contact.
* Progress reports are provided to SSU field staff within 3 days of a request of a report and final reports are provided within 7 days of the completion of training.
* Customers are called as a follow-up at or before 30 days following the completion of training.
* Requests for follow-up technical assistance are accommodated by phone within 48 hours of the request.
* SSU field staff are kept up to date on new and emerging assistive technology applications.

**RESPONSIBILITY #2**

To conduct assistive technology assessments and develop cost effective, timely recommendations to SSB customers, SSU field staff, community-based organizations serving seniors and other interested parties so that cost effective, compatible applications technology and assistive technologies are utilized to achieve personal independence. Technology includes but is not limited to: current operating systems, screen reading hardware and software, electronic notetakers, Braille embossers and Braille translation software, refreshable Braille displays, screen enlargement hardware and software, optical character recognition systems, closed circuit televisions, mobile devices, DAISY DTB players and software, and other high and low tech technology options.

**Priority % of time Discretion**

**A 15 A**

**TASKS:**

1. Conduct on‑site assessments of current systems utilized by customers to determine assistive technology needs, taking into consideration customer skills, on-site requirements, existing hardware and software, behavior of access technology, training considerations and cost effectiveness.
2. Assist customers and their SSB field staff person in evaluating and defining specifications for access technology and related applications. These should be made by judging the customer’s abilities, knowledge and capacity for learning.
3. Analyze consumer needs/skills and determine appropriate applications to satisfy or enhance independence keeping in mind the ultimate use and viability for seniors with sometimes limited knowledge or experience.
4. Compare needs and skills to existing technology available, including "low tech" technology, and find the most cost‑effective and efficient solutions. This will often involve using community resources or technology loaner programs, which require the incumbent to organize and coordinate with various groups.
5. Document assessment results and recommendations in a timely manner in writing in language readily understandable by SSB field staff, the customer, and other involved individuals.
6. Work with the SSB field staff to identify customer access technology training needs, identify training options, and troubleshoot training problems that may arise.
7. Evaluate customer needs related to blindness skills and, where necessary, make recommendations to the customer and SSU service provider regarding adjustment to blindness training, and other training, particularly as it relates to technology and the ability to use it. Technology solutions should not be substituted for good basic skills and/or adjustment to blindness training.
8. Provide basic instruction on the use and care of the recommended adapted systems as well as regular technology equipment.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

* Assessments are scheduled within 7 days of the referral from the SSU service provider.
* A written report with recommendations for assistive technology is provided to the SSU service provider no later than 7 days following the assessment.
* Documentation is placed in the customer case record with-in 7 days.
* Customers report acquiring the appropriate technology.

**RESPONSIBILITY #3**

To provide technical support, trouble shooting, fixes, set-up assistance and follow‑up assistance to customers on the use of computer technologies/information systems and assistive technologies utilized to access these systems so that customers are able to maintain their independence.

**Priority % of time Discretion**

**A 15 A**

**TASKS:**

1. Set up and install hardware and software, ensuring compatibility and configuring software as needed.
2. Customize assistive technology software and hardware when necessary to meet customer needs and provide custom materials to assist customers to maintain their programs on their own. This may include manuals, “cheat sheets” or item by item instructions.
3. Test all systems to ensure that they are compatible with mainframes, local and wide area networks, and application programs—both standard and custom-built.
4. Provide technical assistance by phone and on‑site to customers. Troubleshoot hardware and software problems, and make appropriate repairs or referral to appropriate vendor for warranty service.
5. Advise customers on repair procedures, make minor repairs, and with SSB service provider, arrange for services by outside vendors as needed for issue that are beyond the scope of personal ease of repair.
6. Modify and update software for customers as necessary to maintain their independence or to execute the provisions of SSB policies and procedures.
7. Prepare Transfer of Ownership and other forms as needed, at the instruction of the SSB service provider and any needed signatures and explain everything to him or her.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

* Customers and SSU service provider requests for technical assistance are answered within 48 hours.
* When necessary, customers are referred to SSU service providers within 24 hours following technical assistance calls.
* Referrals for set-up and hardware installation are accommodated within two weeks of the referral.
* Any transfer of ownership paperwork is completed prior to release of equipment to the customer.

**RESPONSIBILITY #4**

On a continuing basis, monitor new developments in assistive technology, web development, new trends in information systems technology, and their mutual compatibility. Stay abreast of current operating systems, networks, and developments in telecommunications, which may affect operation of available assistive technologies as well as the availability of assistive technologies for such new systems. Communicate any pertinent developments to SSU staff and leadership and provide information on the efficacy of these new developments to SSU staff in meeting and at the request of staff.

**Priority % of Time Discretion**

**A 10 A**

**TASKS:**

1. Maintain up‑to‑date knowledge of software, hardware, and assistive technology.
2. Research, evaluate, test and recommend new applications and assistive technology and communicate results with SSU colleagues and community partners.
3. Monitor and evaluate consumer use of technology and recommend changes, updates or additional training as appropriate.
4. Consult with Branch and Department systems support staff and network with other information systems and assistive technology experts.
5. Monitor and evaluate services provided by outside vendors and contracted programmers to ensure that they are meeting the needs of our customers.
6. Utilize training and information resources and request additional training as needed.
7. Test and evaluate software and hardware as well as any emerging applications for potential use by customers.

1. Participate in all unit wide meetings, trainings and activities as directed.

I. Demonstrate new and emerging technology option so that SSU staff can understand and apply these to   
 their case-specific needs.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

* The incumbent attends no less than 4 continuing education sessions per year on areas relative to assistive technology.
* SSU staff receives periodic, plainly illustrated information on new assistive technology innovations and their efficacy for seniors.
* The incumbent has a functioning, respectful working relationship with all SSU service providers and maintains regular communication by e-mail and in SSU –wide meetings.
* Regular demonstrations are performed at SSU meetings.

**RESPONSIBILITY #5**

To provide consulting services for to a wide range of organizations that also serve seniors such as assisted living facilities, senior centers, libraries, other state program and counties. Additionally, support and consultation should be provided to other assistive technology programs. This position will act as SSU’s liaison to the various groups that deal in assistive technology.

**Priority % of Time Discretion**

**A 10 A**

A. Respond to calls from senior’s organization seeking consultation on providing assistive solutions to their

consumers.

B. Respond to requests for professional involvement in state-wide assistive technology work groups.

C. Serve as needed in agency-wide efforts to improve assistive technology delivery for consumers.

D. Promote assistive technology solution for seniors at state conferences, state agency events and professional

associations.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

* Organizations seeking assistance for seniors are accommodated and satisfied with the results.
* Membership in assistive technology related group is active and maintained.

**RELATIONSHIPS**

This position reports to the Director of the Senior Services of SSB. The incumbent will often work in collaboration with other SSU service providers and assistive technology venders. Because of the essential services provided, this position will have continuous, professional interaction with SSB staff at all levels, customers, partners, community-based organization and others.

The successful performance of this position requires that positive relationships be developed and maintained with SSB customers and service providers as well as staff in community living settings such as assisted living facilities, co-op housing and senior apartment buildings. The incumbent must establish strong relationships with housing providers, government agencies, advocacy groups, consumer organizations, and private agencies serving the blind and visually impaired. The incumbent must work independently and have the ability to make decisions outside of common practice. The incumbent must present the professional image necessary to establish creditability in a business environment.

This position also requires communication and collaboration with specialists in both the general field of information systems technology and the specialized field of assistive technology, including system support staff, manufacturers, vendors, trainers and other experts.

**PROBLEM SOLVING, ADULT TRAINING SKILLS & CREATIVITY**

This position requires the creative capacity to solve technical and customer expectation problems. Diplomacy, clear and effective communication, the ability to help customers choose between options, and the ability to solve problems as part of a team are required. Effective time management is required to maintain deadlines and commitments. Further, this position requires the capacity to resolve highly technical problems in a human environment. Problems are usually presented in layman terms often overstated, often misdirected. It is necessary for the incumbent to be tactful, speak intelligently, and use diplomacy to diagnose the problem and institute fixes or replacements as necessary. To accomplish this, the incumbent must have the highest understanding of the relationships between the needs and desires of the consumer, the available personal computer technology and the assistive technology available.

The incumbent needs to be familiar with and efficient in the types and methods of training styles necessary to teach and train seniors (adult training techniques) on the use of assistive technology. This individual will need to have the flexibility and creativity to help individuals understand technology whether they have some previous experience, a lot of previous experience or no experience at all.

The incumbent also must possess the skills necessary to provide solutions, to walk consumers through problems, and to teach consumers and support staff the processes. Many problems develop at the spur of the moment and require not only the ability to solve problems rapidly, but the capacity to remain focused on the tasks, and re-prioritize while completing work in a timely fashion.

Creativity is an essential requirement, as many solutions to problems may not exist at the time the problem appears. Mature judgment and the ability to work with others to creatively develop effective solutions are critical to resolving consumer problems often critical to their success or failure.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES**

**Knowledge of:**

* Hardware and software, including understanding of application interface with mainframe systems and/or networks;
* Personal computer operating systems;
* Web-based applications;
* Qualitative and quantitative analysis of training techniques and training delivery;
* Managing a budget of funds available for use in assistive technology interventions;
* Assistive technology hardware and software including Braille, screen review, screen enlargement, and print access hardware and software;
* Detailed understanding of the Internet, World Wide Web network structure, protocols
* Alternative techniques used by blind persons;
* The causes of blindness and how assistive technology can compensate;
* Low tech solutions, the ability to use them and to compare/contrast them with high tech solutions;
* Local, national and international resources for assistive technology for blind and visually impaired individuals;
* Americans with Disabilities Act, WCAG 2.0 and Section 508 requirements;
* Window Eyes Apps and Set Files, User Windows and Hyperactive Windows;

**Skill in:**

* Designing accessible approaches which will allow blind or visually impaired persons to live independently in environments primarily designed for sighted persons;
* Designing custom training materials for group and individual training;
* Designing customer materials for independent, self-instruction;
* Installing, testing, debugging and troubleshooting hardware and software;
* Communicating complex technical information in an understandable, non‑technical manner;
* Assessing individuals with all levels of technical experience;
* Interpreting technical manuals and applying knowledge;
* Human relations sufficient to assist often reluctant seniors to adopt technology solutions;
* Coaching/training individuals at all skill levels.

**Ability to:**

* Effectively collaborate with customers, SSU service providers, other senior service providers and others to produce effective solutions;
* Consult with other access technology specialists to insure compatibility with assistive technology;
* Analyze and assess consumer skills, needs training, and limitations;
* Maintain current knowledge and skills regarding developments in computer and assistive technology and the world wide web;
* Understand and respect blind or visually impaired persons and provide services in a comfortable, equitable manner;
* Produce timely, clear and readable reports;
* Exhibited ability to learn new skills quickly and evaluate trends of developing new web-centric systems;
* Ability to respond quickly to requests for assistance and work well under deadlines;
* Ability to analyze and resolve complex problems thoroughness and an eye for detail is critical;
* Excellent verbal and written communication skills;
* Ability to convey complex, technical issues in patient and understandable ways to those less knowledgeable;
* Ability to adapt to organizational changes due to increasing technology demands;
* Ability to share knowledge and "teach" processes and theories, etc;
* Must be self-motivated, independent, creative, innovative, and persistent.

**FREEDOM TO ACT**

The person in this position operates on an "A" level of responsibility in all functions with considerable freedom to act. An individual must be able to identify and prioritize customer needs while in the field and work with other team members to prepare a work schedule that meets those needs. The incumbent must also be able to work with a wide variety of individuals involved with web content, prioritize work, and ensure that SSB’s technology offerings are up to date. In addition, the individual must be able to solve complex technical and communication problems in the field with no supervision.

Interaction with senior organization’s presidents, managers, personnel directors, human resources personnel, IT directors and staff, systems technicians, programmers, and other individuals occur daily therefore the incumbent must be a facilitator, then a technician, problem solver and diplomat.

Effective action is essential to increase options for independence for seniors and to preserve existing independence for Minnesotans who are Blind or Visually Handicapped; to preserve and expand delicate partnerships with other senior providers; to preserve strong collaborative working relationships with SSB customers, consumer organizations, internal and external partners; to maintain constructive collaboration with access technology suppliers and to preserve strong support of SSB and the Department by Minnesota taxpayers.

**PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENTS**

**Professionalism:** Exhibits a professional demeanor at all times, including positive and effective working relationships. Complies with applicable statutes, rules, regulations and policies in order to effectively carry out the requirements of the position, the Division, and DEED.

1. Completes work assignments willingly and without complaint.
2. Develops and sustains productive, effective, positive relationships with staff and all constituencies.
3. Possesses current knowledge of applicable statutes, rules, regulations, and policies including, but not limited to: Affirmative Action, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Harassment policies; Code of Ethics; Violence Prevention.
4. Attends all required training and other sessions necessary to remain current in job knowledge and skills, and for growth and development purposes.
5. Reports for duty as scheduled. Uses time wisely. Minimizes all types of waste, is conscious of costs.

**Workplace Values:**  Every individual is responsible for adhering to and implementing the Agency’s core values while performing their job so that the working environment is supportive of and conducive to improving team and individual capabilities, productivity and quality. Each of us has accountability for achievement of the mission and vision of the department.

We value one another by:

* Respecting each other’s skills, talents, and contributions.
* Recognizing that all jobs are equally important and that each and every one of us plays an important role in doing the work of the group.
* Listening to each other and acting on that which we hear.
* Supporting each other during times of change.
* Being flexible, tolerant, and adaptable; incorporating our different ‘styles’ so that objectives are achieved taking advantage of diverse methods and varying ideas.
* Taking responsibility to share learning and growth.
* Constantly seeking and being open to opportunities to improve both personal and task performance.

**Customer Service:** Responsible for satisfying the needs of your customers by providing quality customer service. Information/assistance is provided in an appropriate and understandable manner with a courteous and professional approach in a timely fashion that satisfies the customer’s needs.

1. Present a positive attitude and pleasant image in customer interactions.
2. Provide assistance in a timely, courteous, knowledgeable, and professional manner.
3. Deliver technical information in a user-friendly, non-technical manner, when appropriate.
4. Promptly respond to voicemail and e-mail messages.
5. Ensure accurate, current voicemail and e-mail messages.
6. Dress neatly and be well groomed at all times.
7. Recommend improvements
8. Cultivate respect for individual differences.

**Data Security:** Each employee is responsible for safeguarding the data that he or she collects or uses in the course of their work. This includes understanding the importance of data that DEED maintains, knowing how data is classified, and taking all necessary steps to safeguard DEED data.

1. Informs customers of their rights when collecting data.
2. Strives for a high degree of accuracy in collection and maintenance of data.
3. Exhibits safe data handling and system security practices.
4. Responds promptly and appropriately to requests for data.
5. Involves higher authority as defined by statutes, rules, regulations, and policies.