

Job Title

Forensic Mental Health Specialist I: Adult Mental Health/Trainee (NY HELPS)

The NY HELPS (Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Program Statewide) is a New York State program that allows civil service agencies to hire qualified permanent employees quickly and without requiring them to take a competitive civil service exam. It was created to help agencies fill critical vacancies by streamlining the appointment process, though candidates must still meet all other minimum qualifications for the job.

Department

Mental Health

Division/Work Unit

Adult Mental Health Services

Bargaining Unit

CSEA

Salary

Job Group 10

Starting salary for external candidates: \$60,794. (Non-Negotiable)

Employment Type

Full-Time

Appointment Type

Permanent Probation

Probationary Period Notice

Permanent appointments are subject to a probationary period. The probationary period provides an opportunity for the employee to demonstrate their ability to perform the duties of the position satisfactorily. During this time, performance and conduct will be evaluated to determine whether permanent status should be granted at the end of the probationary term. The probationary period typically ranges from eight (8) to twenty-six (26) weeks.

Shift

Sunday- Thursday or Tuesday- Saturday; Three days 8a-4p and two days 10a-6p

Location

Erie County Correctional Facility or Erie County Holding Center

Distinguishing Features of the Class

This is entrance level professional forensic mental health work which involves responsibility for providing direct mental health services to persons under custody in the Holding Center or Correctional Facility. These include inmates awaiting trial and sentencing, those serving sentences, probation and parole violators. The work is carried out in accordance with established procedures, with leeway permitted for the exercise of independent judgment. The work involves helping to assess the need for psychiatric examination and determination, rendering direct treatment, which at times includes crisis intervention, and providing consultation and reports to referring agencies. The work is performed under the direct rank, and may exercise supervision over a small number of para-professional or clerical employees. The class differs from Mental Health Specialist II in that cases assigned are generally less complex, and in that supervision exercised by this class is limited to sub-professional staff. Does related work as required.

Typical Work Activities

- Provides direct and continuing mental health treatment to persons with mental health conditions held in custody;
- Assesses the need for psychiatric examination and treatment determinations;
- Renders direct treatment, including crisis intervention, consultations, linkages to community-based services and reports to referring entities;
- Conducts preliminary Court-ordered examinations to determine need for Formal Competency, sanity determinations by Psychiatrists, and prepares written reports on such preliminary examinations for review by supervisor;
- Consults with attorneys, families, penal officers and the Courts to help determine appropriate alternatives for sentencing, treatment or other medical/legal dispositions;
- Provides case consultation to legal-penal and mental health agencies on treatment planning for clients in custody.

Minimum Qualifications

FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST I - ADULT MENTAL HEALTH /TRAINEE (Job Grade 10): Possession of a Master's Degree*** in Social Work, Mental Health Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling, Education, or closely related field at the time of appointment. After completion of the one (1) year training term and completion of special requirements, a trainee candidate shall be entitled to advance to permanent status as a Forensic Mental Health Specialist I – Adult (Job Group 11) without further examination.

NOTE 1: *Per resolution presented to State Civil Service Commission, action approved and filed with the Department of State on December 27, 2024, under the Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement (HELP) Program, this title is temporarily reassigned to NON-COMPETITIVE Classification, AND *Per resolution presented to State Civil Service Commission, action approved and filed with the Department of State on October 24, 2025,

under the Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Statewide (HELPS) Program, this title (Trainee) is temporarily reassigned to NON-COMPETITIVE Classification.

Special Requirements

Possession of a New York State Department of Education license to practice as a Social Worker, Mental Health Counselor or Certified Rehabilitation Counselor at time of permanent appointment and maintenance throughout duration of appointment.

Criminal Background Check

In accordance with New York State law, a criminal background check may be conducted after a conditional offer of employment has been made. A prior conviction will not automatically disqualify a candidate from employment, unless required by law or directly related to the duties of the position. Certain positions may be subject to additional background screening based on statutory or regulatory requirements.

Remote Work Eligibility

This position is not eligible for remote work under any circumstances. The duties of this role require full-time, on-site presence.

Diversity Statement

Erie County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other legally protected status.

Visa Sponsorship

Erie County does not sponsor employment-based visa status for any position. All applicants must be legally authorized to work in the United States at the time of application and throughout the duration of employment, without the need for current or future visa sponsorship.

Posting Period

This position will be posted from March 24, 2026 until April 07, 2026.

PLEASE REPLY IN WRITING (RESUME/TRANSCRIPT) TO: Christine Pearl, 95 Franklin St. Room 604 Buffalo, NY 14202 OR EMAIL Christine.Pearl@erie.gov