County of Santa Cruz

INVITES YOU TO APPLY FOR:

MENTAL HEALTH CLIENT SPECIALIST I

ASW's Encouraged to Apply

Supplemental Questionnaire Required

Bilingual (Spanish/English) Candidates Encouraged to Apply

Open and Promotional
Job # 26-NP5

Salary: $7,167 – 9,060 / Month

Closing Date: Friday, October 30, 2026

County Equity Statement

Equity in action in Santa Cruz County is a transformative process that embraces individuals of every status, providing unwavering support, dignity, and compassion.
Through this commitment, the County ensures intentional opportunities and access, fostering an environment where everyone can thrive and belong.

THE JOB: Under general supervision, to provide a variety of professional mental health and/or substance abuse services and related administrative functions in support of clients and their families, including case management, short term crisis intervention, evaluation, counseling, and/or assisting in the implementation of appropriate treatment or service plans and to do other work as required. Bilingual Mental Health Client Specialist positions require that the mental health and/or substance abuse clinician be fully fluent in Spanish and English to provide the full range of professional level mental health and/or substance abuse services in Spanish, including the facilitation of individual, group, family, and crisis counseling. Bilingual clinicians may be asked to translate written clinical materials and interpret for Spanish speaking clients that need to communicate with monolingual English-speaking mental health and/or substance abuse professionals. Applicants who have completed a master's degree in behavioral health counseling or social work-related field are encouraged to apply. **The current vacancy is for Extra-Help. The list established from this recruitment will be used for current and future full-time, part-time vacancies during the life of the eligible list.**

THE REQUIREMENTS: Any combination of training and experience which would provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain these would be:

Four years full-time experience in a recognized public or private agency providing mental health counseling*****, substance abuse counseling, psychosocial rehabilitation, or case management services to individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders, or emotional disturbance.

OR

BA Degree from a college or university in counseling, psychology, other mental health related field **AND** three years full-time experience in a recognized public or private agency providing mental health counseling*****, substance abuse counseling, psycho-social assessment, or case management services to individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders, or emotional disturbance.

OR

A one-year Master's Degree from an accredited college or university in Marriage, Family and Child Counseling, Social Work, Clinical Psychology, Counseling, Psychiatric Nursing, Psychology, or closely related behavioral science field **AND** two years full-time experience in a recognized public or private agency providing mental health counseling*****, substance abuse counseling, psycho-social assessment, or case management services to mentally ill, substance abusing, or emotionally disturbed individuals.

OR

A two-year master's degree from an accredited college or university in Marriage, Family and Child Counseling, Social Work, Clinical Psychology, Counseling, Psychiatric Nursing, Psychology, or closely related behavioral science field (with a focus in counseling methods or techniques).

*****Educational counseling may be considered for up to 50 percent of qualifying experience for assignments in Children's Mental Health.

License Requirement: Possession of a valid California Class C Driver License, or the ability to provide suitable transportation which is approved by the appointing authority. **Alcohol and Drug Assignment**: All persons providing alcohol and drug counseling services within the Alcohol and Drug Program must be certified as an Alcohol and Drug Counselor **OR** be licensed as a mental health professional, **OR** within six (6) months of the date of hire, all non-licensed individuals, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 9, Division 4, Chapter 8, Subchapter 2, or non-certified individuals providing counseling services in an AOD program, must be registered to obtain certification as an AOD counselor by one of the approved certifying organization (CCR, Section 13035(f)).

Other Special Requirements/Conditions: All assignments: Exposure to offensive odors such as unwashed people and clothes, human, and animal feces; the possibility of infections which may cause chronic disease or death; hostile or violent individuals and may be exposed to cigarette smoke. Juvenile Hall and Acute/Emergency Services assignments: Exposure to noise, such as people yelling. Children's Service assignment: Exposure to disturbing material, such as photos of abused children; allergens such as poison oak, insect stings or bites, and pollens. Some positions may require lifting objects such as boxes of belongings weighing up to fifty pounds. **Note**: Persons in this classification may be assigned to positions with any of the above working conditions on an emergency, as needed basis.

Background Investigation: Fingerprinting is required.

Special Requirements: Positions may be assigned to carry a pager and respond to crisis situations and perform on-call" or call/back duties. Work situations may include evenings, weekends, and holidays.

Knowledge: Working knowledge of symptoms and behaviors of major mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders; basic social rehabilitation, socialization and practical life management skills; psychosocial aspects and characteristics of emotional disturbances, substance abuse and mental illness; principles and methods of interviewing, counseling, crisis intervention and assessing psychosocial behaviors; human behavior and development; and problems, attitudes, and needs of the emotionally or socially disturbed. Some knowledge of community resources; pharmacology of medications and psychotropic drugs; and laws and regulations as they pertain to clients' rights.

Ability to: Assess clients' behavioral, substance use and emotional problems/conditions, making knowledgeable recommendations and/or designing appropriate service plans; interview clients and record pertinent information in an effective manner, obtaining accurate social, personal, and psychosocial information; conduct effective individual and group mental health/substance abuse services with assigned clients including adults with serious mental and/or substance use disorders, individuals in crisis, and/or children with emotional disturbance and/or substance abuse under supervision; participate effectively with assigned treatment or case management team;

prepare a variety of administrative and professional reports; learn the appropriate laws, regulations, Agency policies and procedures of health and social service programs; communicate effectively and persuasively in both oral and written form; establish and maintain effective work relationships with those contacted in the performance of required duties; learn to input and access data utilizing a computer; distinguish speech and non-speech sounds in noisy environments; intervene and diffuse situations involving combative clients which may include active restraint if needed; and stand and walk for extended periods of time may be required for some positions.

THE EXAMINATION: Your application and supplemental questionnaire will be reviewed to determine if you have met the education, experience, training and/or licensing requirements as stated in the job announcement. If you meet these criteria and are one of the best qualified, you may be required to compete in any combination of written, oral and/or performance examinations or a competitive evaluation of training and experience as described on your application and supplemental questionnaire. You must pass all components of the examination to be placed on the eligible list. The examination may be eliminated if there are ten or fewer qualified applicants. If the eligible list is established without the administration of the announced examination, the life of the eligible list will be six months, and your overall score will be based upon an evaluation of your application and supplemental questionnaire. If during those six months it is necessary to administer another examination for this job class, you will be invited to take the examination to remain on the eligible list.

HOW TO APPLY: Apply online at **www.santacruzcountyjobs.com** or mail/bring an application and supplemental questionnaire to: Santa Cruz County Human Resources Department, 701 Ocean Street, Suite 510, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. For information, call (831) 454-2600. Hearing Impaired TDD/TTY: 711. Applications will meet the final filing date if received: 1) in the Human Resources Department by 5:00 p.m. on the final filing date, 2) submitted online before midnight of the final filing date.

Women, and people of color, and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply. If you have a disability that requires test accommodation, please call (831) 454-2600.

To comply with the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, Santa Cruz County verifies that all new employees are either U.S. citizens or persons authorized to work in the U.S.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

ANNUAL LEAVE - 22 days first year, increasing to 37 days after 15 years of service. Available for vacation and/or sick leave.

HOLIDAYS - 14 paid holidays per year.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE – 3 days paid in California 5 days paid out-of-state.

MEDICAL PLAN - The County contracts with CalPERS for a variety of medical plans. For most plans, County contributions pay a majority of the premiums for employees and eligible dependents.

DENTAL PLAN - County pays for employee and eligible dependent coverage.

VISION PLAN - County pays for employee coverage. Employee may purchase eligible dependent coverage.

RETIREMENT - Pension formula 2% at age 60 or 2% at age 62 as determined based on provisions of the CA Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013(PEPRA). Pension benefit determined by final average compensation of three years. County participates in Social Security.

LIFE INSURANCE - County paid $20,000 term policy. Employee may purchase additional life insurance.

DISABILITY INSURANCE - Employees in the General Representation Unit participate in the State Disability Insurance (SDI) program. This program is funded 100% by employee payroll deductions.

DEPENDENT-CARE PLAN - Employees who make contributions for child or dependent care may elect to have their contributions made utilizing "pre-tax dollars."

H-CARE PLAN - Employees who pay a County medical premium may elect this pre-tax program.

HEALTH CARE FLEXIBLE SPENDING ALLOWANCE (HCFSA) - Employees may elect this pre-tax program to cover qualifying health care expenses.

DEFERRED COMPENSATION - A deferred compensation plan is available to employees.

Note: Provisions of this bulletin do not constitute an expressed or implied contract.

MENTAL HEALTH CLIENT SPECIALIST
SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

NAME:

THE SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS ARE DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR THIS RECRUITMENT. A RESPONSE TO THESE QUESTIONS MUST ACCOMPANY THE REGULAR APPLICATION TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS POSITION. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED WITHOUT THE REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION WILL BE SCREENED OUT OF THE SELECTION PROCESS.

Employment, internship, or volunteer experiences referred to in these responses MUST also be included in the Employment History section of the application.

1. Describe the population(s) to whom you have provided behavioral health and/or substance use disorders services and the types of settings in which you have provided those services.

2. Detail your scope of experience providing behavioral health services for adults with serious mental illness.

3. Detail your scope of experience providing behavioral health services for children/youth who are emotionally disturbed and their families.

4. Detail your scope of experience providing substance use disorders counseling/treatment services and Medication Assisted Treatment.

5. Describe your scope of experience in providing behavioral health and/or substance use disorders services in criminal justice/forensic settings such as juvenile hall, California Youth Authority, county jail, prison and/or for adult or youth probationers.

6. **Do you hold a substance use disorder certification from one of the accredited organizations approved by The Department of Health Care Services, DHCS (**Counselor Certification Organizations**).**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

7. How much experience, if any, do you have in locked psychiatric facilities (including youth and/or adult psychiatric hospitals and Institutes for Behavioral Health Disorder's facilities)?

   - ☐ Less than 0.5 Months
   - ☐ 0.5-5 Months
   - ☐ 6-12 Months
   - ☐ 13-24 Months
   - ☐ 25-36 Months

8. How much experience, if any, do you have providing behavioral health and/or substance use disorders services in criminal justice settings such as juvenile hall, California Youth Authority, county jail, prison or programs serving adult or youth probationers?

- ☐ Less than 0.5 Months
- ☐ 0.5-5 Months
- ☐ 6-12 Months
- ☐ 13-24 Months
- ☐ 25-36 Months

9. How much experience, if any, do you have in residential behavioral health or substance use disorders settings (not including residential services for developmentally delayed population)?

   - ☐ Less than 0.5 Months
   - ☐ 0.5-5 Months
   - ☐ 6-12 Months
   - ☐ 13-24 Months
   - ☐ 25-36 Months

10. How much experience, if any, do you have providing behavioral health and/or substance use disorders services in community settings, such as client's home, park, etc. (not in office, residential facility, or clinic setting)?

    - ☐ Less than 0.5 Months
    - ☐ 0.5-5 Months
    - ☐ 6-12 Months
    - ☐ 13-24 Months
    - ☐ 25-36 Months

11. How much experience, if any, do you have providing behavioral health and/or substance use disorders services in a school setting, community-based organization and/or primary care physician's office or primary health clinic?

    - ☐ Less than 0.5 Months
    - ☐ 0.5-5 Months
    - ☐ 6-12 Months
    - ☐ 13-24 Months
    - ☐ 25-36 Months

12. How much experience, if any, do you have placing hostile, distressed and/or acutely psychiatrically symptomatic persons on a 5150/5585 hold and/or assessing such patients to determine if they need to be psychiatrically hospitalized?

    - ☐ Less than 0.5 Months
    - ☐ 0.5-5 Months
    - ☐ 6-12 Months
    - ☐ 13-24 Months
    - ☐ 25-36 Months

13. How much experience, if any, do you have conducting and documenting psychosocial evaluations/assessments, including recommending Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) diagnosis?

    - ☐ Less than 0.5 Months
    - ☐ 0.5-5 Months
    - ☐ 6-12 Months
    - ☐ 13-24 Months
    - ☐ 25-36 Months

14. How much experience, if any, do you have providing behavioral health and/or substance use disorders services while collaborating with co-workers or representatives from different disciplines (psychiatrists, consumer employees, therapists, case managers, social workers, public guardians, probation officers, teachers, psychologists, law enforcement officers, and/or different agencies)?

- ☐ Less than 0.5 Months
- ☐ 0.5-5 Months
- ☐ 6-12 Months
- ☐ 13-24 Months
- ☐ 25-36 Months

15. Indicate the area(s) of specialization for which you would like to be considered from the list below:

- ☐ Adult Behavioral Health
- ☐ Children/Youth Behavioral Health
- ☐ Forensic Behavioral Health
- ☐ Integrated/Primary Care Clinic Services
- ☐ Substance Use Disorders Services

*Please submit a copy of your Alcohol and Drug certificate or proof of registration if applicable.

(Note: Selective certification to positions will be based on the preference(s) you have indicated above along with the demonstrated working knowledge and abilities you have listed on your application and supplemental questions**)**.