

(I) SOCIAL WORKERS LICENSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 19 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE;

(II) PSYCHOLOGISTS LICENSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 18 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE;

(III) PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS CERTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 17 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE;

(IV) NURSES LICENSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 8 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE;

(V) SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS CERTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS ADOPTED UNDER TITLE 6, SUBTITLE 7 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE; AND

(VI) HUMAN SERVICE WORKERS WHO:

1. HAVE A DEGREE IN AN APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE;

2. HAVE COMPLETED THE MANDATORY PRESERVICE TRAINING AND COMPETENCY TEST; AND

3. ARE SUPERVISED BY LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS.

(2) THE SECRETARY MAY RETAIN PERMANENT EMPLOYEES EMPLOYED ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1998 WHO DO NOT HAVE THE QUALIFICATIONS SPECIFIED IN PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION IF THE SECRETARY FINDS THAT THE EMPLOYEES ARE PERFORMING THEIR DUTIES SATISFACTORILY.

(C) TRAINING AND TESTING OF CASEWORKERS.

THE SECRETARY SHALL:

(1) IMPLEMENT A PRESERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM AND COMPETENCY TEST FOR NEWLY EMPLOYED CASEWORKERS;

(2) REQUIRE THAT ALL NEW CASEWORK STAFF:

(I) BE HIRED PROVISIONALLY;

(II) COMPLETE A 40-HOUR PRESERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM; AND

(III) PASS A COMPETENCY TEST BEFORE BEING GRANTED PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS; AND

(3) IMPLEMENT MANDATORY STANDARDS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR ALL CASEWORKERS AND CASEWORK SUPERVISORS THAT REQUIRE THAT EMPLOYEES WHO FAIL TO OBTAIN THE REQUIRED CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION, INCLUDING DEMOTION, SUSPENSION, AND DISMISSAL.

(D) LIMITATIONS ON HIRING CONTRACTUAL CASEWORKERS.