

City Methodical Association as an Institution of Professional Development of Employees of State-Financed Social Welfare Facilities of St. Petersburg

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses a special form of professional development of employees of state-financed social welfare facilities: a methodological association which is a public methodological collegial body consisting of representatives of the professional community. The experience of organizing and working methodological associations is presented on the materials of city methodological associations of leaders and specialists of social welfare facilities of St. Petersburg. A special place in the article is highlighted by the work of the city methodological association of managers and specialists of personnel departments, specialists in standardization and labor norming as a unique form of work in the field of professional development of specialists of personnel departments, specialists in regulation and labor norming.

Keywords: social protection, methodological association, labor norming, personnel department

The sphere of social protection of the population is currently witnessing active processes of institutionalization and professionalization¹. The institutionalization of professional activities is the formation and consolidation of norms and organizational structures.

Professionalization is raising the status of a professional group by limiting the possibilities of entering the relevant field of professional activities through the requirements to the qualification². The enactment of Federal Law No. 442-FZ dd. 28.12.2013 "On the Fundamentals of Social Servicing of Citizens in the Russian Federation" and the relevant bylaws, the development and implementation of professional standards in the field of social protection of the population, many of them providing for new positions and areas of professional activities (for example, professional standards of "Specialist in work with the family", "Specialist in rehabilitation work in the social sphere" and others), have become important stages of these processes.

The formation and consolidation of the requirements to employees of social protection organizations in regulatory legal acts incentivized many employees to training and self-improvement, actualized the need to organize work with the staff, to provide effective information, methodological support of social protection. Informational and methodological support allows accumulating, generalizing, disseminating the best practices, ensures the continuous development of professional skills of specialists, and contributes to their innovative activities.

To improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of social services through the use of advanced technologies and innovations, to assist the organizations of social protection of St. Petersburg population in the exchange of experience in accordance with the regulation of the Committee on Social Policy of St. Petersburg dated 12.11.2019 No. 798-r "On the Activities of City Methodological Associations of Managers and Specialists of Organizations Providing Social Services to the Population of St. Petersburg", the Regulation on the activities of city methodological associations (hereinafter — CMA) of managers and specialists of organizations providing social services to the population of St. Petersburg was approved.

The regulation on the activities of city methodological associations of managers and specialists of organizations providing social services to the population of St. Petersburg stipulates that CMAs are public methodological collegial bodies, consisting of representatives of the professional community of managers and specialists of organizations providing social services to the population of St. Petersburg. CMAs coordinate the methodological work of organizations providing social services to the population

¹ See: *Grigoryeva I.* Transformation of Social Work in Russian Consumer Society // The Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology (JSSA). 2011. No 5. Vol. 14. Pp. 287–297; *Parfenova O. A., Malyshev A. G., Popova V. V.* What Does It Mean to Be a Qualified Employee? : Reconstruction of the Ideas of Social Service Workers // Social Policy and Sociology. 2019. No 1 (130). Vol. 18. Pp. 124–131.

² See: *Selchonok A. K.* The Professional Standard of a Specialist in Social Work as a Resource for the Cultural Legitimation of the Profession // Journal of Social Policy Studies. No 1. Vol. 13. Pp. 164–173.

(analytical, expert, informational and advisory and methodological support) and are formed from the most experienced and proactive managers and specialists of organizations providing social services to the population and other organizations, including scientific research organizations, higher educational institutions of St. Petersburg. The activities of each CMA are coordinated by a supervisor from among the specialists of the Committee on Social Policy of St. Petersburg.

Such a form of methodological support for professional development as CMA appeared in organizations of social protection of the population more than ten years ago, but at the time these were CMAs of certain groups of specialists, sociologists, for example³. Today we can talk about the systemically organized work of CMAs which cover both professional groups of workers directly involved in providing social services to citizens (for example, psychologists, managers and specialists of organizations providing social services to families and children), and workers making the infrastructure of the institution of social protection of the population: specialists in the regulation and remuneration of labor, employees of personnel services, sociologists, specialists responsible for professional development and the organization of coaching. Today there are total fourteen CMAs, among them: CMAs of sociologists, CMAs of managers and specialists of personnel services, specialists in labor norming and remuneration, CMAs of managers and specialists providing social services to graduates of institutions for orphans and children deprived of parental care, CMAs of managers and specialists of organizations providing social services to elderly and disabled people, and others.

CMAs analyze the relevant professional needs of specialists of the social sphere. Specialists being CMA members study scientific literature, regulatory legal and methodological documentation, advanced practical foreign and domestic experience in identifying the best methods and technologies in the field of social services for the population.

As part of the work of CMAs, working groups are created consisting of the most experienced specialists with the participation of representatives of the scientific community, unified methodological approaches to solving topical problems arising in the system of social services for the population are developed, technologies and methods effective for use in the social sphere are developed and tested, methodological seminars, meetings and conferences on topical issues of professional activities are held, and methodological materials are also developed and updated.

There are certainly special CMAs focused on workers of the “infrastructure” of organizations of social protection of the population. While methodological associations, for example, for teachers or even specialists in social work are traditional, methodological associations of specialists in personnel, specialists in labor remuneration and norming are an institution that has practically never existed before. In this regard, it is advisable to consider the work of these “non-traditional” CMAs.

To provide effective assistance to employees of personnel services, as well as specialists in labor remuneration and norming of state institutions of social protection of St. Petersburg, the Committee on Social Policy of St. Petersburg gave these employees of state institutions of social protection of the population of St. Petersburg the opportunity to create CMAs, their major purpose being ensuring their needs in mutual professional communication and enrichment, exchange of experience, as well as the development of common approaches to solving urgent professional tasks.

The creation of CMAs was preceded by the organizational work of the organization, on the basis of which CMAs were created (St. Petersburg “Family” City Information and Methodological Center State Budgetary Institution), and the Committee on Social Policy of St. Petersburg. For example, in March 2019, an organizational meeting was held on the creation of a city methodological association of personnel service workers, specialists in labor norming and remuneration of social protection institutions. The meeting discussed the issues of organizing the work of CMAs. The decision was made to create two sections within the CMA: a section of personnel service employees and a section of specialists in labor norming and remuneration. CMA participants can be members both of one section or both sections at the same time. The sessions of the sections are conducted by different moderators, but they are coordinated in time so as not to allow simultaneous holding of meetings of two sections on the same day, thereby providing the opportunity for CMA members to participate in all meetings of the CMA sections.

Organization of the work of the section of personnel service employees

A human resources specialist is faced with a wide range of issues related to staffing, formalizing of employment relations with employees, training of the personnel, maintaining personnel records and other equally important and relevant areas of activities. In the recent years, there have been changes in

³ See: *Malyshev A. G., Parfenova O. A. Sociologist in the Space of Public Social Service: the Professional Distinctiveness, Challenges and Opportunities // Journal of Social Policy Studies. No 4. Vol. 13. Pp. 547–562.*

the personnel work related with the adoption of a considerable number of regulatory legal acts in the field of employment relations which influenced the work of the personnel service of the institution of social protection of the population. The personnel employee was to adjust the local regulations and employment contracts with employees in the organization regarding every change. Every specialist is daily faced with the task of how to correctly and effectively organize his work in the large flow of regulatory acts, how to prevent violations in the maintenance of personnel documentation in the development and execution of mandatory documents, as well as in the application of regulatory legal acts on the legal regulation of employment relations with employees

Very important in the work of a human resources specialist, like most professionals, is the desire and opportunity to improve in his work, to develop, the opportunity to participate in seminars and webinars on relevant topics, to share experiences with colleagues. And even with a good organization of HR record management in an institution, the specialist needs to improve his professional level.

The section of personnel service workers included 43 people. The section was preceded by a study of the professional needs of its participants. With account of the results obtained, a work plan for the section was developed. The main purpose of the work of the section of personnel service employees is to contribute to the creation of conditions ensuring high-quality effective professional activities in the field of personnel records management.

To accomplish the purpose, it is necessary to solve the following tasks formulated at the organizational meeting:

- promotion of scientific and methodological support and practical assistance to expand knowledge in the field of HR record management and improve the level of professional competence of the personnel in the HR department;
- study and exchange of experience in issues of HR record management;
- development of methodological products regarding HR record management.
- In 2019 the meetings of the section of personnel service employees were held on the following topics:
- structure and content of an employment contract (effective contract) of employees of the state institution of social protection of the population of St. Petersburg;
- practice of concluding an employment contract (effective contract) with an employee of a state institution of social protection of the population;
- certain difficult issues in the application of professional standards in state institutions of social protection of the population of St. Petersburg;
- protection of personal data of employees of state institutions for social protection of the population.

The meetings devoted to the employment contract (effective contract) considered the normative legal acts and methodological documents regulating the formation of employment contracts. The participants of the section of personnel service employees presented their experience of concluding employment contracts in state institutions of social protection of the population.

A special place in the work of the section of personnel service employees was given to the application of professional standards, which was especially relevant in 2019 in connection with the completion of the implementation period for plans of organizing the application of professional standards on 01.01.2020. The expanded meeting of the section of personnel service employees dedicated to this issue considered the issues of determining the need for training of employees of state institutions of social protection of the population in connection with the application of professional standards and the possibility of training of the personnel for state institutions of social protection of the population, as well as procedural issues related with the introduction of changes in the personnel documentation of state institutions of social protection of the population in application of professional standards.

The meeting of the section of personnel service employees on the protection of personal data was attended by the deputy head of the department for the protection of the rights of subjects of personal data and supervision in the field of information technology of the Roskomnadzor Administration for the North-West Federal District. Such a meeting was necessary for employees of personnel services, since they had an opportunity to discuss complex issues of protecting the personal data of employees of state institutions of social protection of the population.

In 2019 the participants of the section developed the "Employment" Methodological Recommendations for employees of personnel services. The members of the section took part in the discussion of the draft Methodological Recommendations on the formation of personal files of employees of public institutions under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Social Policy of St. Petersburg.

At the expanded meeting of the section of personnel service employees at the end of the year a survey was conducted which demonstrated that 87.5% of the section members were satisfied with the topics of the seminars held within the section of personnel service employees.

In 2020, many changes are expected in the normative legal acts regulating the issues of personnel work, the period of introduction of electronic work books begins, which means that the personnel service employees have a lot of work to do in applying innovations in practice; accordingly, the section of personnel service employees will be in demand.

Organization of the work of the section of specialists in labor norming and remuneration

The activities of the section of specialists in labor norming and remuneration are structurally carried out under the direction of the head of the section and under the supervision of the supervisor from the Committee on Social Policy of St. Petersburg. The activities of the section are organized in such a way as to obtain the most useful result. It should be focused and stimulate participants to provide reliable information to form effective solutions.

The work of the section was initially based on informal interaction: when the discussion is not strictly regulated and the level of involvement of the participants does not affect the assessment of the effectiveness of their work in the institution. This reduces psychological inertia and creates favorable conditions for information sharing.

The topics of the work of the section of the specialists in labor norming and remuneration are selected so as to touch upon really significant, so far unresolved issues in the area of the section's activities. In 2019, for example, the following topics were selected:

- substantiation of inclusion of the work performed by the institution into the state assignment (to date, there is no procedure of substantiating the inclusion of the work, and most assistance provided to an indefinite circle of persons [work] is carried out by institutions without adequate funding);
- formation of guidelines for determining the number of staff members of institutions such as the Center for the Promotion of Family Education (hereinafter referred to as the CPFE).

In 2019, the formation of methodological recommendations for determining the number of employees in institutions such as CPFE was the topic that demanded the most active work of the section members. Work on this document began in June 2019. The Section met every month; thus seven meetings were held by the end of the year. Each meeting was attended by ten to twenty-five participants representing an average of nine institutions each time. This composition turned out to be necessary and sufficient for productive work on the chosen topic. The participants provided unique information about the specifics of the organization of work in institutions of the CPFE type. Valuable comments were also received from the invited representative of the Committee on Social Policy of St. Petersburg directly supervising the work of the CPFE. The result of the work of the section of specialists on labor norming and remuneration was the draft Methodological Recommendations for the staffing of institutions such as the Center for the Promotion of Family Education. Two institutions were selected to test this project.

The problem-oriented approach to organizing the work of the section of specialists in labor norming and remuneration proved to be successful due to the following elements: the choice of a specific goal significant for the functioning of institutions and the identification of a specific form of the work result (Methodological recommendations), informal, but at the same time regular nature of meetings of the section participants, attraction of experts capable of making a significant contribution to the final result of the section's work on the selected topic.

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THEORETICAL AND APPLIED LAW

2020. No. 1

Director of Publishing and Printing Center
E. Yu. KNYAZEY

Editor I. K. SHMARKO

Proofreaders E. A. LYSUNETS

Layout by S. I. SHIROKAYA

FOUNDER

Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA)

PUBLISHER

The North-West Institute of Management, Branch of Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA)

Certificate of registration of mass media
ЭЛ № ФС 77-77212 dated November 8, 2019.

*The editorial point of view may not coincide with the opinion of the authors of the articles.
When reprinting, a link to the journal "Theoretical and Applied Law" is required.*

ADDRESS OF EDITORIAL OFFICE:

199004, V. O., 8-ya liniya, d. 61, St. Petersburg.
Tel: (812) 335-94-72, 335-42-10. E-mail: shmarko-ik@ranepa.ru

Signed for publication on March 17, 2020.
Minimum system requirements — a CD-ROM device and software for reading pdf files.
Website of journal <https://www.taljournal.ru>
The data volume is 1.8 MB.
Mintage (number of media) 60 pcs.

The layout was prepared by the Publishing and Printing Center of the North-West Institute of Management of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration
199004, V. O., 8-ya liniya, d. 61, St. Petersburg.
Tel. (812) 335-94-97