



WE MAKE FLORIDA HAPPEN

CELEBRATING STATE WORKERS AND THE VITAL SERVICES WE PROVIDE TO THE PUBLIC



SHERON MICKENS

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JOB TITLE: ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY II/HEARING SPECIALIST

AGENCY: DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

DEPARTMENT: ACCESS

START DATE: 1993

I represent my department in hearings to determine the fairness of determinations of eligibility for essential approvals for food assistance, medical and emergency cash for Florida residents in desperate need of assistance to help them in their daily lives.

We hear a wide range of stories from regular citizens trying to provide for their families. We hear of loss of employment or a decrease of employment, loss of child support or increases in need. I love the satisfaction I feel when I am able to help someone. A child is able to eat, a sick person is able to go to the doctor, a child gets into day care or someone who needs to get into a nursing home is able to do so.

We are challenged by being understaffed. When there is a crisis like COVID-19 or Hurricane Ian, the caseload increases and it becomes even more of a challenge. We work overtime and weekends to try to assist because the need does not stop. It's hard to retain employees because of the high workload and the low salaries.

We need to retain workers by making the jobs more attractive. When I graduated college, working for the state was desirable, but we are no longer a competitive employer and there is a revolving door of people leaving. We need to increase starting pay, but we also need to compensate veteran workers who have knowledge of policy, skills and know-how to excel in our work.

Reaching a fair contract with regular raises and flexibility in working conditions for safety and efficiency would be a great step towards addressing some of the problems which discourage workers and increase the exodus from state employment.

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