



FRIENDS
of the FAMILY
Take Back Tomorrow. Today.

Employee Job Description

Housing Support Specialist (VSS)
Cedar Rapids Outreach Office

Program: Outreach

Reports to: Outreach Services Manager

Status: Part-Time, Non-Exempt

Direct Reports:

None

Job Summary:

Provides housing and emergency sheltering services to individuals/families who are experiencing housing instability or homelessness as a result of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or human trafficking.

Agency Functions

- Exhibit a belief in non-violence and a willingness to advocate on behalf of populations affected by homelessness and violence in a non-discriminating manner.
- Support and drive FOF's mission and vision.
- Uphold the belief that quality client services are the top priority.
- Agree to work in alignment with the agency's core values.
- Maintain a working knowledge of laws, codes, funding requirements, and services standards that impact the programs you work within.
- Maintain confidentiality of clients as defined by Iowa Code and state coalitions.
- Assist in developing and coordinating victim services to reach under-served groups within the FOF service area, including but not limited to elderly, disabled, immigrant, LGBTQ, and isolated people.
- Establish working relationships with area professionals, service providers and the community at-large while promoting a positive reputation of FOF. Assist the agency in providing public education and training
- Maintain up to date familiarity and compliance with agency policy and procedures in order to exercise good judgment in various situations.
- Maintain accurate data and submit reports, including statistical data, as required.
- Promote a healthy work environment.
- Attend FOF staff and program meetings as scheduled.
- Perform other work assignments as requested/needed.
- Participate in agency needs assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, and grant writing as coordinated by the Outreach Service Manager, Director of Operations, or Executive Director.
- Assist in on-going coordination and management of the donations given to FOF from community persons and ensure timely distribution to any FOF participants.
- Manage time and schedule independently.

Housing Support Specialist Functions

Housing Support & Advocacy

- Facilitate and coordinate a Housing First, Rapid Rehousing program in assigned area to support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in identifying and navigating housing options and resources in the communities in which they wish to reside in or relocate to.
- Maintain necessary training identified by FOF. This includes maintaining an up to date Advanced Domestic Violence Advocate Certification.
- Encompass and provide trauma informed, survivor driven, mobile advocacy, and provide practical temporary financial assistance, which increases safety and stabilization in the survivor's identified housing placement
- Assess housing barriers of victims of DV/SA/HT and their families, who are facing homelessness to determine housing and service needs and develop a housing plan with survivors seeking housing support.

- Assist in development of and encourage adherence to a personal budget through proactive housing and budget counseling sessions. Verify monthly income. Provide budget counseling and education to assist participants in establishing payment plans for bills and past debts.
- Meet with program participants weekly and take an active role to link to resources and services, ensure stability and progress, provide support and advocacy, reduce isolation, listen, and problem solve.
- Complete housing inspections and submit recommendation for housing placement approval to the Outreach Services Manager and the Executive Director.
- Develop and maintain local partnerships with landlords and housing programs to assist in quick access to safe affordable housing.
- Provide mediation and advocacy with landlords on the participant's behalf to develop a workable plan to obtain and/or maintain housing. Serve as an ongoing liaison between property managers/landlords and participants.
- Utilize creative techniques, including the use of technology, to communicate with clients who are housed throughout the region.
- Apply knowledge of landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities to educate participants of their rights and responsibilities.
- Document meeting case notes, maintain client files and other appropriate documentation of services per CVAD or ESG audit requirements. Paperwork must be completed and in the files within 7 days of contact. This includes, but is not limited to intake, discharge, and follow-up paperwork and documentation.

Sheltering Services & Advocacy

- Assisting team with providing emergency sheltering services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault utilizing a standard assessment tool to identify emergency need. Emergency sheltering services include but are not limited to:
 - Safe Room located at Waypoint's Madge Phillips Center in Cedar Rapids, IA
 - Friend's House in Waverly, IA
 - Scattered hotel/motel voucher program
 - Scattered volunteer-run Safe Homes
- Coordinate the purchase of bus tickets and other emergency needs for sheltered clients to relocate to their area of choice and safety.
- Complete appropriate documentation to facilitate and implement emergency shelter and housing options for clients in Northeast Iowa.

Victim/Survivor Advocacy

- Exhibits an in-depth understanding of the intersection between domestic violence and homelessness
- Provide services with an understand that a person's intersection of identities affects their access to services and risk experiencing domestic violence/sexual assault/human trafficking.
- Create and maintain consistent communication channels, both verbal and written, between several parties (i.e. participant, landlord, referral sources, collaborating agencies, etc.)
- Provide information and referral assistance regarding available support from appropriate social service agencies and/or community programs.
- Assist participants in development of a strength-based/solution-focused individualized goal and action plan that promotes safe, permanent housing and self-sufficiency.
- Develop an effective, timely referral network in order to ensure ongoing direction and support as needed.
- Transport participants as deemed necessary. Transportation requirements should be limited to emergency shelter, housing, and occasional needs directly relating to the client's DV/SA.
- Utilize creative techniques, including the use of technology, to communicate with clients who are housed across the region.

Community Engagement & Outreach

- Answer questions of potential participants and/or community organizations interested in more information about the rapid rehousing program/emergency shelter program.
- Collect and report program data, including but not limited to program success and follow-up tracking, data required by funders, etc.
- Understand and adapt to service changes in the field at the local, state, or national level.
- Represent FOF at community and other program development meetings as requested.

Position Qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree in social work, psychology, related field **OR** combination of equivalent education and experience.
- Previous experience in the following preferred: victim services, crisis intervention,
- Must demonstrate ability to organize, prioritize and plan work to meet deadlines; behavior management techniques, confidentiality and observation/recording techniques.
- Ability to complete mandatory training to qualify as a victim advocate within 30 days of employment.

- Ability to travel throughout the 14- county service area to provide in-person advocacy services and to other locations within the state as necessary for training purposes.
- Ability to pass state, federal, and child abuse background checks.

Employee Signature:

I have reviewed and understand all the information contained in this job description and I am physically able to perform the duties.

I acknowledge that the contents of this job description are not to be construed, in part or in whole, as a guarantee of employment. I understand that Iowa is an at-will employer, and therefore, my employment is at the will of myself, the employee, and Friends of the Family.

Signature

Date