

Job Title: Housing Counselor/Advocate

**YWCA Hanover
Job Description**

Job Title: Housing Counselor/Advocate

Revision Date: 2023

Full time **Part time**

Hours of Work:

Shift:

Department Name: Safe Home

Department Number:

Reports To:

To be completed by the Human Resources Department:

FLSA Status: Exempt Non-Exempt

Classification:

Grade Level:

POSITION SUMMARY

YWCA Safe Home is a program that serves victims of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking and aims to empower program participants to achieve their self-defined goals. The Housing Counselor/Advocate works directly with clients who are in a state of housing instability due to their victimization. Duties include, but are not limited to, providing a variety of office and field activities to manage and monitor on-going service needs. Work involves orienting all eligible participants to Safe Home's programs, including housing programs, and providing housing search and supportive services to promote participants self-sufficiency, permanency in housing, in a safe, stable environment. The Housing Counselor/Advocate is required to meet regularly (no less than monthly) with the program participants to monitor, advocate, and intervene on the formalized service plan. The Housing Counselor/Advocate works collaboratively with Safe Home staff and must be able to contribute and work well in a group setting. The Housing Counselor/Advocate is a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse as defined by PA Child Protective Services Law.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Human Services, or a related field preferred or a minimum of two years related experience. A combination of education and experience may be considered.
2. Must have knowledge of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and other serious crimes and their impact on victims.
3. Must pass criminal background and child abuse background checks.
4. Must have valid Driver's License and have access to reliable transportation.
5. Must travel in inclement weather, as needed.
6. Must observe safety and security procedures.
7. Must be willing to accommodate participants' schedules, which may require weekend and evening hours in order to meet and work with participants in a mobile advocacy model.
8. May be required to report to work in either Safe Home's Hanover or Gettysburg office.
9. Must be well organized and adaptable to changes in daily schedules and the work environment.
10. Proficient in the use of Microsoft Office products, including Excel, Word, Outlook, and PowerPoint.
11. Must attend all program mandated professional development events, including meeting all continuing education requirements.
12. Must have demonstrated ability to counsel individuals in crisis and counsel and communicate with traumatized individuals.
13. Must be familiar with community resources and knowledgeable about options available to victims and survivors of domestic violence.
14. Successful completion of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) training as well as training specific to Safe Home's housing programs, upon hire.
15. Must have demonstrated ability to work in a professional, respectful, and diverse workplace environment.
16. Must maintain professional working relationships with people of differing backgrounds, ages, maturity, abilities, races, colors, creeds, genders, ancestry, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, and experiences.
17. Ability to establish and set appropriate limits with persons served to help them gain skills and confidence.
18. Must be able to show respect and sensitivity for cultural differences. Treats people with respect; works with integrity and ethically; upholds organizational values.
19. Must be an effective written and verbal communicator, and able to draft documents in a clear and concise manner free of grammatical or other mistakes.
20. Requires ability to maintain confidentiality, and to make appropriate decisions in crisis situations.
21. Must be able to keep necessary documentation, both written and computerized as required case notes, safety/goal plans, referrals, time entry, mileage, and expenses.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Assess housing barriers of individuals and families experiencing housing instability to determine housing and service needs.
2. Develop a housing procurement, financial, and self-sufficiency case management plan by working collaboratively with participants and other social services agencies as appropriate.
3. Assist participants in locating and securing housing of their choice.
4. Intervene at the client level to provide or coordinate the delivery of direct services to participants and their families.
5. Screen participants during the intake process to ensure they meet eligibility requirements and will benefit from services provided in the program.
6. Support the development of an individual plan collaboratively with participant that includes appropriate goals, objectives, and timeframes.
7. Provide intensive case management services to assist program participants in reaching goals outlined in service plan.
8. Conduct inspections of participants' prospective housing to ensure basic habitability and safety needs.
9. Advocate for resources to meet the need for services and ensure that services are delivered while maintaining sensitivity to participant's concerns.
10. Help participants prepare to exit the program by planning with other service providers as appropriate and help provide follow-up services as needed.
11. Complete follow-up contact with previous program participants.
12. Transport participants as deemed necessary for housing searches, visits to relevant social service agencies, and other appointments as related to their victimization.
13. Intervene at systems level to support existing services and to expand and improve access to needed services.
14. Maintain knowledge of resource availability and service costs.
15. Identify gaps in service or systems within or outside of the agency with the support of the Housing Coordinator.
16. Professionally conduct services, ensuring strict confidentiality of participants.
17. Attend all events, meetings, committees/task force meetings, and community events as deemed appropriate by Supervisors, Assistant Director, Program Director, and/or Executive Director.
18. Responsibly and timely complete check/petty cash requests after verifying eligibility, manages check disbursements, and securely distributes program funds.
19. Responsible for maintaining accurate and complete records of hotline calls, in person options counseling, legal proceedings, referrals, emergency housing, transportation, meetings, training sessions, and speaking engagements.
20. Complete and maintain required documentation, both in Efforts to Outcome (ETO) software and paper files.

ESSENTIAL PHYSICAL AND MENTAL JOB REQUIREMENTS

The following items apply to the essential job functions of the job title listed above. This list is used as a guide only and is not an exhaustive or comprehensive list.

1. Following Directions

- Full Understanding of Both Written and Verbal Instructions Required
- Understanding of Verbal Instructions Only Required
- Understanding of Written Instructions Only Required

2. Communication - English

- Excellent Verbal Communication Skills Necessary
- Basic Verbal Communication Skills Necessary
- Limited or No Verbal Communication Skills Necessary

3. Functional Reading - English

- Fluent Reading
- Recognition of Signs/Symbols
- Simple Reading
- No Reading Skills Required

4. Hearing

- Ability to Hear Required
- Limited Hearing
- Hearing Not Required

5. Seeing

- 20/20 Vision with Corrective Eyewear
- Limited Vision
- Vision Not Required

6. Functional Math

- Complex Computational Skills (Accounting and Financial Skills)
- Simple Computational Skills (Add, Subtract, Multiply, Divide, Percentages)
- Simple Counting Skills
- No Mathematical Skills Needed

7. Time

- Must Tell Time to the Minute
- Must Recognize Specific Times (Arrival, Departure, Breaks, Lunch)

8. Orientation (Familiarity with Surroundings)

- Several Blocks From Building
- Building Only
- Work Area
- Room Only

9. Mobility Skills

- Mobility Within the Building

- Mobility Within a Four-Block Radius
- Driving Required

10. Sitting

- 75% - 100%
- 50% - 75%
- 25% - 50%
- Less than 25%

11. Standing

- 75% - 100%
- 50% - 75%
- 25% - 50%
- Less than 25%

12. Bending

- Knees and Waist
- Waist Only
- Knees Only
- No Bending Required

13. Lifting

- Greater than 30 lbs.
- 10 - 30 lbs.
- Less than 10 lbs.
- No Lifting Required

14. Reaching

- Greater than 6 Feet
- 2 - 6 Feet
- Less than 2 Feet
- Reaching Required

15. Reasoning Ability

- Must be able to maintain composure under stressful and/or emotional situations

16. Work Environment

- Must be able to maintain composure under stressful and/or emotional situations
- The noise level in this work environment is: **Moderate**

The work environment characteristics described within are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities as described within the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to perform the essential functions of this position.

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