

JOB Description
UNITY of Greater New Orleans
Assessment and Housing Problem Solving Specialist

TITLE: Assessment and Housing Problem Solving Specialist

TYPE OF POSITION: Full Time Employee (April 2023- January 2024)

DIRECT SUPERVISOR: Deputy Director

POSITION OVERVIEW

The Housing Problem Solving Specialist has a primary function to establish a robust Problem Solving Program in the CoC at multiple locations. The Specialist will provide direct services by engage constructively with people who are seeking emergency shelter by conducting “Housing Problem Solving” conversations to help participants to identify strengths and community resources to stabilize housing outside of the homeless response system as much as possible. The position has a key role to help the CoC achieve our goal to make the homeless experience brief, rare, and non-recurring.

PROBLEM SOLVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Implement policies and procedures that utilize best practices for the use of ERA2 funds for the prevention of homelessness in conjunction with Housing Problem Solving and housing stability case management.
- Oversee the implementation of client assistance funding to ensure equitable access for individuals at different coordinated entry access points within the allowable guidelines for the program.
- Obtain and utilize data from diversion program to make recommendations for flexible funding uses that would help reduce homelessness.

ASSISTANCE WITH INDIVIDUALS and FAMILIES

- Engage in Housing Problem Solving with individuals who contact UNITY directly through telephone, email, or walk-in at UNITY office locations.
- Respond to referrals from partner agencies and community members.
- Engage directly with people who are in a housing crisis to utilize a strengths-based and client centered approach to help families identify strengths, successes, and resources that they can use to develop plans to move towards a self-sufficiency and to retain/security permanent housing and avoid having to enter emergency shelter.
- Utilize community resources to link clients to self-sustaining sources of income, benefits, and other economic supports.
- Coordinate appropriate linkages to available mainstream services for behavioral and medical health needs that will aid housing stability.
- Provide landlord and/or family mediation interventions as diversion techniques as appropriate.
- Continually promote self-determination and self-sufficiency in interactions with clients.
- Assess personal safety and undertakes due diligence in maintaining personal safety with families that may be experiencing adverse life circumstance, trauma, and/or exceptional emotional response to homelessness or risk of homelessness.
- Ensure confidentiality of client information.
- Meet with individuals and families at the office or other service locations to conduct one-on-one problem solving conversations or assessments.
- Conduct follow-up calls 30 days after diversion to provide light-touch case management and referrals intended to assist with housing stability.

- Maintain paperwork and records of transactions of assessments and diversions in real time or as close as possible to assist timeliness of system response and provide data needed to identify and address risk factors for homelessness and address racial disparities.
- Complete all documentation in a timely and accurate manner, including phone logs, HMIS data entry, and weekly reports.
- Provide information to CoC regarding system gaps and resource needs that would more effectively assist families who are in a housing crisis.

COLLABORATION WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Establish and maintain positive, productive working relationships with shelters, housing programs, and community members.
- Maintain appropriate and professional relationships with partner agencies and community members.
- Serve as a local expert in diversion and problem solving to promote effectiveness throughout the homeless system.
- *Coordinate and communicate changes in mainstream benefits and community resources to assist other Housing Problem Solving Programs in the CoC.*
- Participate in CoC trainings.
- Assist the planning and conduct of trainings for partner agencies about coordinated entry.

SKILLS

- Must be solution focused and creative.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality in all aspects of the work environment.
- Compassionate team player who is detail-oriented and comfortable working on multiple tasks in a deadline-oriented environment.
- Conviction about the capacity of people to grow and change.
- Commitment to empowering others to solve their own problems.
- Ability to establish and set appropriate limits with persons served to help them gain skills and confidence.
- Self-motivated and dependable.
- Must be empathetic and caring.
- Ability to adapt to the needs of the organization and program requirements.
- Must be able to motivate and organize self to complete tasks.
- Must be able to work effectively with people who have experienced vulnerability, trauma, incarceration, substance use, compromised mental wellness or other conditions that have impacted housing stability.
- Self-starter who is interested in learning more about successful diversion methods and other interventions and innovations to end homelessness.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Familiar with community resources available for low-income households and families with children.
- Excellent communication skills in-person, on the phone, and through email.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Basic computer knowledge of MS Office, Google Docs/sheets, and ability to work with HMIS database.
- Ability to speak Spanish is helpful.
- Experience with community mediation is helpful.