



Central Iowa Shelter & Services Employment Opportunity

Position Title: Client Advocate

Classification: Full-Time (40 hours/week), Non-Exempt

Office Location: 1420 Mulberry Street, Des Moines, IA 50309

Reports to: Operations Manager

Position is open until filled. Interested candidates should submit a letter of interest to Janiece Alford at jalford@centraliowashelter.org.

Organization Overview:

Central Iowa Shelter & Services' mission is to provide low-barrier shelter, meals, and support services at no cost to adults experiencing homelessness and to facilitate their move toward self-sufficiency. Approximately 2,000 women and men experiencing homelessness have received emergency shelter and supportive services to help them move beyond homelessness each year.

CISS has served people experiencing homelessness in Des Moines since 1992. In September 2012, CISS opened its current facility. The facility grew from being 8,000 square feet and 96 beds to 42,000 square feet and 207 beds. It is equipped to provide expanded emergency shelter (150 beds); expanded transitional housing for Veterans (19 rooms); and Project Based Section 8 Voucher efficiency apartments (38 rooms). Along with expanded housing capacity, CISS is also home to an on-site health clinic, food pantry, clothing closet, classrooms, and a 30-foot growing dome.

All guests and residents are provided three daily meals, access to shower and laundry facilities, and a daily medical clinic as well as individualized case management, life skills instruction, and referrals to other community services. Programming continues to evolve to meet emerging homeless and community needs.

Position Overview:

The Client Advocate is a collaborative supporter and member of the Operations Team with the objective to support the mission of Central Iowa Shelter & Services and the clients served by assisting clients as they navigate homelessness and the various community resources available to them.

Specific duties include the completion of intakes, the connection of clients to case managers and service providers, and the assistance of clients with resources with a focus on income and housing. The schedule for this position covers five eight-hour days per week. Successful candidates must have ability to cover occasional holidays.

Duties/Responsibilities:

- Receive new clients, complete intake paperwork, create proper client files and orient new clients to CISS and its policies.
- Verify clients' homelessness and complete needs assessments.
- Assist clients with applications for housing, employment, and government benefits.
- Facilitate Service Block and provide appropriate information and referrals to clients seeking housing, employment, or community resources such as substance abuse or mental health support.
- Provide crisis intervention as needed, including determining when it is necessary to involve other staff, administration, or the authorities.
- Follow up with clients on progress toward their goals and complete exit paperwork with clients upon program completion.
- Consistently cover assigned shifts, working within the team and independently to complete all shift tasks.
- Perform general administrative functions such as noting within the communication log, answering the phone, and responding to in-person inquiries in a professional manner.
- Monitor the activities of clients to ensure the safety of clients, volunteers and staff.
- Enforce shelter policies and follow staff policies and procedures.
- Help volunteers with questions or issues when necessary.
- Maintain written and oral communication of incidents in accordance with policies.
- Attend staff meetings and participate in activities designated by the leadership team.
- Other duties as assigned by the leadership team.

Qualifications, Experience and Abilities:

- Good computer and database skills.
- Superior one-on-one interpersonal communication skills, including ability to foster confidence and trust, listen sensitively, and respond appropriately.
- Ability to establish and maintain professional boundaries in working with clients, volunteers and donors.
- This position will require a highly organized individual, with excellent follow up skills as well as the ability to overcome objections and obstacles in the pursuit of success.
- Must possess valid Iowa Driver's license as at times the successful candidate may drive a CISS vehicle.
- Positive attitude, self-motivation, organization, and resourcefulness while maintaining a reputation through proven action of being team and client oriented.

- Ability to work well under stressful conditions, negotiate different personalities, and work under competing priorities while managing a variety of tasks.
- Must be prompt, dependable, and able to work with minimum day-to-day supervision.
- Ability and willingness to perform light housekeeping and occasional lifting up to 30 pounds independently.

Preferred Qualifications:

- As a prerequisite, the successful candidate must believe in the core values of Central Iowa Shelter & Services and be driven by the mission of the organization.
- Minimum High School Diploma or GED required; Associates or bachelor's degree in human services preferred.
- Two years' experience working in Human Services working with one or more of the following: individuals experiencing homelessness, mental health related issues, substance abuse, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS related issues, and with those living in poverty preferred.
- Excellent written and verbal skills in the English language. Bilingual English-Spanish preferred.
- Knowledge of community resources in the Des Moines metro area.
- Ability to manage multiple projects with demanding and competing deadlines, superior organizational skills and the ability to maintain a quality work place in a diverse, fast paced, stressful and changing environment.
- Ability to work independently or in a team.
- Ability to negotiate different personalities and work under competing priorities.
- Ability to assess emergency situations and respond effectively.
- Demonstrated proficiency in using Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel and other applications as well as experience using and entering data into HMIS or other client databases.
- Must have the ability to obtain a ServicePoint license.
- National Career Readiness Certificate preferred.

Central Iowa Shelter & Services is an Equal Opportunity employer. Personnel are chosen on the basis of ability without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, marital status or sexual orientation in accordance with federal and state law. People who have experienced poverty or homelessness are encouraged to apply.