



Housing Matters Outreach Specialist

Definition

Housing Matters is looking for individuals eager to make a difference and willing to enthusiastically commit to joining our vision that homelessness in Santa Cruz County should be rare, brief and non-recurring.

Housing Matters runs a variety of Housing First Programs to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness with immediate and long term housing needs. Programs include emergency shelters, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing and housing navigation case management. Each of our programs demonstrate a trauma-informed and harm reduction approach to service delivery and support all participants on their way to stable, healthy lives.

Distinguishing Characteristics

The Outreach Specialist will be able to utilize trauma informed care to communicate with clients, remain patient, non judgemental and understanding, and be able to carry a calm disposition in a hectic environment. The ideal candidate has experience working with vulnerable populations and is passionate about assisting individuals with their transition out of homelessness and into permanent housing.

Typical Job Duties

- Provide first point of contact and engagement for households experiencing homelessness.
- Build supportive rapport through recurring contacts with households experiencing homelessness before they enter housing programs.
- Assess new clients through the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) and HMIS Standardized Intake.
- Enter intake and assessment data into HMIS.
- Accept each household for who they are and where they are, and then provide options, information and choices that allow for stimulating change.
- Work with households as they begin to think about housing options.
- Work with households on problem solving to access immediate housing and shelter options.
- Facilitate client assistance funding to move eligible households into permanent housing in Santa Cruz County as well as other locations.

- Coordinate with shelter staff to support entry into shelter from the street when immediate housing is not available.
- Meet all administrative requirements including record-keeping, HMIS, staff meetings, etc.
- Maintain confidentiality and treat participants with dignity and respect at all times.
- Set up client records according to Housing Matters policies and procedures.
- Provide coordination and smooth transitions to housing programs.
- Coordinate with other outreach programs for group outreach and events.
- Review program data monthly and report back to the appropriate Program Manager with statistical highlights, found anomalies, recent trends, etc...
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Employment Standards

Thorough knowledge of:

- Social casework objectives, principles, methods, and caseload management and organization.
- Principles of human behavior and development and psychological defense mechanisms.
- Reactions to stress.
- Social and economic factors that lead to homelessness for individuals and households.
- Community health, welfare, social, and legal support systems, and other resources available to clients.
- Interviewing and record keeping techniques, including the documentation of all actions and contacts in case files.
- Policies, and administrative procedures of Housing Matters supportive services programs.

Working knowledge of:

- The policies and administrative procedures of Housing Matters supportive services programs.
- Techniques used to locate and determine client benefit eligibility.
- Some knowledge of the principles and techniques of supervision and training.

Ability to:

- Perform the most complex and specialized assessment services and develop specialized case work with considerable independence.
- Deal with crisis situations.
- De-escalate situations with hostile, aggressive and abusive persons.
- Communicate and relate effectively with clients, who may be emotionally or mentally differently abled, medically differently abled, elderly, substance abusers, victims of domestic violence or fiduciary abuse.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with others, including clients, family members and others who may be under distress or duress.
- Locate, develop, and use community and agency resources for the benefit of clients and advocate for services on behalf of clients.
- Prioritize and respond to demands of workload in a prompt and efficient manner.

- Recognize and analyze problems, gather relevant information, establish facts, draw valid conclusions, respond to case details promptly, and communicate clearly and concisely both orally and in writing.
- Maintain current and accurate records.
- Demonstrated sensitivity to, and knowledge of, the needs of homeless individuals.
- Communicate effectively and respectfully with people coming from diverse backgrounds, lifestyles, and racial and cultural groups.

Qualifications and Experience

Qualifications are typically met through:

- Bachelor's Degree in Social Services or a related field
OR
- A minimum of one year of experience performing social service casework services comparable to a Case Manager I at Housing Matters in an exceptional manner exceeding all standards and abilities,

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

- Possession of a valid California Class C Driver's License or must be able to provide suitable transportation which is approved by the organization.

Hours and Pay

This is a full time, hourly, benefited, non-exempt position starting at \$23.50/hour. Occasional evenings and weekends required. Health Insurance and PTO benefits begin after a 30-day introductory