

COVID-19 Emergency Support Staff

Organizational Overview

Connections for the Homeless is a rapidly growing homeless services agency powered by our vision of ending homelessness in north suburban Cook County. Headquartered in Evanston, Illinois, Connections began over 35 years ago as a shelter run entirely by volunteers and has expanded to serve more than 1,500 participants every year through eviction prevention, shelter and housing services. Employing our core values of equity and inclusion, community, transparency, generosity of spirit, and resilience, we work in partnership with our supporters and the people we serve to achieve our mission of serving and catalyzing our community to end homelessness, one person at a time.

Position Overview

The COVID 19 Emergency Support Staff member will provide frontline and back-up support to both current and temporary Connections for the Homeless programs to ensure adequate staffing is available and a safe environment is provided for all participants. At this time, Connections for the Homeless is staffing several shelter-in-place sites so that individuals and families without COVID 19 symptoms who are experiencing homelessness and have nowhere else to go can be in a safe place for the duration of the crisis, or until they need a higher level of care.

The shelter-in-place sites include two local hotels and an emergency shelter in MacLeish Hall at the Lake Street Church, intended for people who have not yet been placed in hotel rooms or whom we cannot place in hotel rooms for various reasons. We have moved people from our year-round transitional shelter, Hilda's Place, to hotel rooms for the duration of the crisis.

*This position is a temporary position to provide support through the duration of the current crisis with possibility to turn into a permanent position, if needed.

Reports to: Director of Community Programs and Director of Housing

Position Responsibilities

General Duties

- Able and willing to verbally de-escalate situations with and between participants
- Maintains a clean environment in the emergency shelter and during drop-in services
- Assists participants with accessing basic needs including clothes, food, hygiene products etc.
- Communicates with case managers to ensure participants' needs are prioritized and met
- Ensures the safety and security of residents by completing security & safety checks, and helping the residents adhere to general shelter rules
- May offer very limited case management services and communicates with case managers and the health program staff to assess needs largely around housing, mental health and physical health
- May be asked to enter appropriate data, relevant to service provided, into county-wide database (HMIS)



FLSA Status: Non-Exempt

Specific Duties

- Provide overnight or daytime staffing to the MacLeish Hall shelter or at one of several hotels in Evanston being used by Connections for the Homeless to provide shelter. Staff can sleep during shifts at some of the locations.
- Receive meal drop-offs (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and distribute meals to rooms/residents.
- Gather trash and dishes from residents after meals and load the dishwasher (at some sites).
- Coordinate laundry services at hotel sites
- Receive drop-offs of toiletries and distribute them to rooms/residents.
- Check in with residents periodically during the shift to make sure they don't need anything.
- Take requests from residents for clothing and other items and communicate them to appropriate Connections case managers.
- Monitor that residents maintain safe social distancing procedures if they are not in their rooms.
- Coordinate any hotel or facilities requests that occur during the shift with Connections staff as needed.

Requirements and Desired Skills

- High school diploma or equivalent required
- Prefer 1 year of successful experience serving the homeless, mentally challenged, or substance abusive adult population, preferably in a residential setting
- Self-starter with the ability to multi-task and think creatively
- Must be able to pass a criminal background check
- Must submit to, or provide evidence of a recent test for tuberculosis