



connections
FOR THE HOMELESS

2121 Dewey Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201
847.475.7070

JOB DESCRIPTION

SYSTEM NAVIGATOR

FLSA Status: Non-Exempt

Summary of Position: The System Navigator provides mobile engagement, support and case management for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness or housing crisis, one-on-one community resource navigation, support in creating individualized goal plans, and assistance in helping reach those goals. The purpose of the System Navigator is to help homeless and at-risk youth increase independent living skills and prevent them from entering the homelessness services system if possible, or help them to rapidly exit the homeless system into the most safe and permanent arrangement available.

This position will primarily be conducted as a remote working position, visiting agencies within all of Suburban Cook County.

Specific Duties:

- Build knowledge of wide array of resources in the community to meet the holistic needs of clients.
- Provide targeted outreach to the communities in the region to identify and engage homeless youth who are couch surfing, squatting, or living on the streets, or other places not meant for human habitation.
- Collaborate regularly with other Youth Navigators and Outreach providers to ensure thorough coverage of the region, including any spots likely to be frequented by youth who are homeless or unstably housed.
- Engage strategically with community stakeholders, including at police departments, libraries, medical facilities, schools, parks, city and township offices, forest preserves, community centers and any other venues or personnel who might encounter or have knowledge of youth experiencing homelessness or sexual exploitation. Provide education about youth homelessness and about services available in the region

and ensure that youth experiencing homelessness have easy and fast access to our network of services and supports.

- Use Trauma-Informed and LGBTQI competent engagement techniques to build a rapport with youth encountered. Prioritize patient, gentle, persistent engagement with the most vulnerable and highest acuity youth.
- Quickly identify unaccompanied minors and engage and collaborate as needed with the Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services (CCBYS) system. Serve as a mandated reporter of child abuse and /or neglect.
- Offer basic needs and sundries (e.g. food, personal care items, clothing, first aid supplies, safer sex and other harm reduction supplies, etc.) to homeless youth who are encountered.
- Screen and assess clients for basic and other needs using a strengths-based model, and provide resources, referrals and linkages to other social service venues and agencies, including shelter and daytime support centers as requested and appropriate.
- Conduct safety planning and provide crisis intervention using Psychological/Mental Health First Aid, non-violent crisis intervention and other skills and strategies as needed.
- Be attuned to risk factors and signs of domestic violence, sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and provide safety planning and speedy linkage to specialized support services as needed.
- Employ Motivational Interviewing Skills and other evidence-based techniques with clients to achieve consensus on individualized goals, and practice and teach harm reduction and the Housing First/Shelter First model.
- Encourage and support safe, empowering, and appropriate alternatives to entering the homelessness services system if possible and help immediately secure safe and reliable shelter when needed.
- Collaborate with the Coordinated Entry team as needed to achieve transitional or permanent housing, complete relevant assessments, enter and share data, participate in case consultation, and vigorously safeguard client's confidentiality in all processes.

- Teach and model independent living skills, conflict resolution skills, and grounding and coping skills in age-appropriate ways to youth.
- Encourage and help young people secure opportunities for prosocial activity, recreation, relationship and community building and civic engagement.
- Coordinate services and resources for physical and behavioral health/wellness, and secure LGBTQIA+ supports and community as needed.
- Coordinate and provide access to educational and vocational training and supports.
- Coordinate service referrals with youth service providers, health care services, mental health, legal services, case management, and all other services as needed to ensure seamless delivery of service to clients.
- Work effectively with all systems involved in the client's life including child welfare system, CCBYS, juvenile justice, schools, and law enforcement.
- Attend ongoing training on best practices for street outreach, harm reduction, Housing First, trauma informed care, cultural competence, positive youth development, domestic violence, human trafficking, public benefits, and other applicable topics.
- Attend and participant in all required agency and regional meetings.
- Adhere to all reporting requirements.
- Adheres to the Code of Conduct and Core Values of Connections for the Homeless.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

The following qualifications are requirements for the position:

- Bachelor's degree required in social services or related field, or relevant professional and/or life experience.
- Awareness of issues of personal power and privilege, dedication to cultural humility, and demonstrated high value for diversity and inclusion in work team essential.

- Driver's license, eligible to be covered by Connections auto insurance policy, and access to personal vehicle. Travel throughout Cook County is required.
- Computer literacy, including knowledge of computer assessment tools, data base systems and windows environment. Proficiency in Excel, Outlook, and Word.
- Ability to keep appointments punctually, take initiative, be organized, and demonstrate accountability and follow-through.
- Openness to new ideas and skills, and commitment to learning through reading and with hands-on-training.
- Sound judgement, "street smarts," and ability to establish and maintain impeccable professional boundaries.

- Ability to express ideas clearly and concisely both orally and in writing.
- Ability to problem-solve and make decisions in chaotic and/or stressful situations.
- Strong interpersonal and direct communication skills.
- Possess a commitment to being anti-racist in your work
- Ability to advocate against adultism

The following qualifications are highly desirable:

- Bilingual Spanish and English fluency highly desirable.
- Lived experience of homelessness highly valued.

Other requirements:

- Must submit to a criminal background check and submit to or provide evidence of a recent test for tuberculosis

Reports to: Youth Programs Manager

August, 2020