JOB DESCRIPTION

DEPARTMENT: Community Services & Asset Development
POSITION: Resource Advocate
LOCATION: Greenfield, Northampton, Orange and Ware/Remote work from home
STATUS: Non-Exempt
SUPERVISOR: Community Resources & Advocacy Coordinator

POSITION SUMMARY:
The Resource Advocate has two primary responsibilities: answering the information & referral phone line and screening callers for benefit programs, scheduling appointments, making connections to other community resources and educating callers about programs and public benefit systems; and meeting with individuals and families, following a strengths-based, evidenced-based model, to provide in-depth screening, application assistance, advocacy, education, and budget assessment. Resource Advocates connect and enroll low-income households in programs such as SNAP, MassHealth/Connector Care, and financial assistance for utilities and rent arrears. Remote work from home may be required.

ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS:
• High School or HS Equivalency
• Five years’ experience in Human Service or related field or applicable work experience working with individuals and families that have low incomes.
• Knowledge of Franklin, Hampshire & N. Quabbin region agencies and resources preferred.
• Bi-lingual Spanish preferred.
• Additional education may be substituted for related experience or additional related experience may be substituted for education

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES:
1. Answer the Community Resources & Advocacy phone line and provide comprehensive benefits screening, information, referrals, advocacy, and schedule appointments as for our program as appropriate.
2. Use the program approved phone and referral data system to record and track phone and walk-in interactions with potential customers and to research and track referrals.
3. Provide resource updates to the manager of the database when new information is available.
4. Follow program guidelines for the use of all required database systems including but not limited to, Cap 60, SharePoint and iCarol.

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5. Meet with clients at various locations to do in-depth assessments of need using a strengths-based, evidenced-based model.
6. Help clients increase and stabilize their income by assisting with applications for benefits such as, SNAP, Health Insurance, and applications for financial assistance offered through Community Action or other community partners.
7. Reviewing and educating households about their budgets, developing plans of action to improve stability, modeling advocacy skills, increasing their knowledge of benefit systems, including subsidized housing and other programs identified in their plans of action, and making connections to resources.
8. Provide follow-up services to clients who receive application and advocacy assistance in accordance with program guidelines.
9. Maintain high level of customer service following Community Action’s established Customer Service Standards and all applicable guidelines set forth by the program.
10. Maintain organized participant case files in accordance with program guidelines.
11. Ensure that all client files and applications meet grant eligibility and reporting requirements and review with Supervisor for approval.
12. Ensure required data and reporting completed in an accurate and timely manner in accordance with program guidelines.
13. Become knowledgeable and remain current with the regulations and requirements of all applicable program funders.
14. Maintain knowledge on the availability and guidelines for resources offered in the Community Action service area. This includes resources offered by Community Action and state benefit programs such as, SNAP, RAFT, LIHEAP and DTA, and a broad range of information about housing including but not limited to, eviction process, resources such as legal assistance, area housing authorities and possible eligibility for housing assistance programs.
15. Assist individuals in obtaining utility arrearage payment arrangements, low-income rates and shut off protections. Assist individuals in obtaining LIHEAP benefits.
16. Obtain and maintain skills and knowledge to become a Certified Application Counselor for the Massachusetts Health Connector/MassHealth and assist residents with applications, plan education, health insurance literacy, and enrollment into health insurance and provide advocacy, mentoring and case management services.
17. Work as a team with program staff to support, enhance, and promote communication and consistency in the delivery of services.
18. Collaborate with other social service agencies, participate in community coalition meetings, and conduct outreach in the community to promote the Community Resources & Advocacy program.
19. When schedule requires remote work, expected to be available for meetings, calls, responding to emails, and conducting regular duties.
20. Required to travel regularly throughout the service area, to all Community Action sites and service locations, and occasionally out of the service area, including covering various office locations (Greenfield, Northampton, Orange and Ware) and travel to various community partner locations to provide CR&A services, as assigned.
21. Attend all required staff meetings, supervision, training and contractual meetings.
22. Attend mandatory agency trainings and other relevant trainings.
23. Comply with agency and funders’ paperwork requirements and procedures.
24. Participate in professional development activities and team meetings.
25. Maintain strictest confidentiality.
26. Perform related work as required.

This does not cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee. Other duties, responsibilities and activities may change or be assigned at any time with or without notice.

SKILLS REQUIRED:
- Excellent listening skills and ability to demonstrate patience and a non-judgmental attitude when dealing with people experiencing crises.
- Ability to work effectively with program participants, including advocating for them, developing and managing household budgets, and working with participants to achieve goals.
- Sensitivity to cultural and socioeconomic diversity and the needs of individuals with low incomes.
- Understanding of poverty and its impact on individuals and families.
- Proficient computer skills including using a mouse, email, typing, Microsoft Office applications, database programs, calendars
- Ability to learn quickly new software.
- Excellent customer service skills.
- Excellent verbal (in-person and phone) and written communication skills.
- Excellent listening and interpersonal skills.
- Excellent organization skills with attention to detail, ability to multi-task and ability to maintain accurate and organized participant case files.
- Ability to perform basic math computations.
- Understanding data capture and tracking methods.
- Demonstrated ability to work both independently and as a team and complete assignments in a timely manner.
- Demonstrated ability to build positive relationships with participants, community members and organizations.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT:
The physical demands and work environment described below is representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.
- Requires sitting for long periods of time.
- Working in an office environment.
- Some bending and stretching required.
- Extensive use of telephone required.
- Manual dexterity required for use of calculator and computer keyboard.
- Must be able to lift 20-30 lbs.
- Specific vision abilities required by this job include vision, color vision, and the ability to adjust focus.
- The work environment includes indoor office environments or comparable spaces and community spaces, with occasional exposure to outdoor weather when traveling to outreach or meeting sites or when participating in special outdoor events. The noise level varies by sites and meetings.
AA/EOE/ADA

Employment is contingent upon successful completion of Criminal Offender Record check (C.O.R.I.) prior to hire and every three years. Evidence of a good driving record and ability to be covered under Community Action's non-owned and hired vehicle policy.

______________________________________________________
EMPLOYEE NAME (PRINT)

______________________________________________________
EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

___________________________
DATE