



Seekhaven

Shelter Victim Advocate

Shelter Department

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| Status: | Non-exempt, Full-Time, Year-Round |
| Supervisor: | Shelter Manager |
| Age Requirement: | 18 Years Minimum |

Updated February 28, 2024

Description of Position:

The Shelter Victim Advocate's primary role is to support shelter residents in identifying their needs, creating safety plans, and accomplishing their self-identified safety and security objectives. During the work week, you will offer crisis counseling, transportation assistance, legal and medical advocacy, and life skills training to shelter residents. You will also guide these clients in implementing action plans and safety strategies, aiding them in transitioning to a long-term and stable living arrangement. Upholding a high standard of professionalism, ethics, and confidentiality is crucial. Additionally, you will be responsible for fulfilling any other duties assigned by the Shelter Manager.

Expectations and Responsibilities:

As an essential team member in our organization, the Shelter Advocate will report directly to the shelter manager and play a vital role in assisting survivors in rebuilding their lives. By collaborating with different departments within Seekhaven, the Shelter Advocate will contribute to the central objective of fostering self-empowerment and aiding in the recovery of our shelter residents. This position requires dedicated engagement with shelter residents to provide comprehensive support and guidance.

The Shelter Victim Advocate is responsible for the following functional areas and associated duties including, but not limited to:

Essential Functions:

- Accurately input data for reporting purposes.
- Proactively identifying shelter maintenance needs and upholding cleanliness standards autonomously and efficiently under limited supervision.
- Uphold safety standards to maintain a secure environment at the shelter.
- Notify the Shelter Manager of any necessary building or grounds repairs.
- Possess strong communication skills for conflict resolution, problem-solving, and managing crises effectively.
- Demonstrate excellent ability to assess situations and intervene with appropriate and effective measures.
- Interpret a variety of instructions provided in different formats.
- Foster positive relationships with individuals of diverse ages, ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds, beliefs, and lifestyles.
- Read, interpret, and communicate effectively regarding safety rules, procedure manuals, and regulations.
- Respond promptly and professionally to inquiries or complaints from clients, regulatory agencies, and community members.
- Demonstrate active listening skills to grasp and comprehend information and ideas presented verbally.

Client/Social Services:

- Operating the 24-hour crisis hotline requires a high level of professionalism and the ability to navigate a diverse range of calls with sensitivity and expertise. This includes,
 - Assessing clients for shelter admission
 - Providing assurance and support during times of crisis
 - Providing resources
 - and demonstrating empathy and understanding towards individuals in distress.Maintaining composure and professionalism while handling these calls is crucial in ensuring that clients receive the assistance, guidance, and resources they urgently need.
- Responding to urgent crisis situations and addressing client needs promptly and comprehensively.
- Offering support to shelter residents in navigating and resolving adversity they may face.
- Collaborating in allocating resident responsibilities and managing chores systematically.
- Carefully documenting all client activities and overnight stays.
- Ensuring completion of all necessary client forms.

- Formulating safety plans, conducting danger and lethality assessments (LAP), and fulfilling comprehensive client needs assessments for each shelter admission.
- Conducting thorough exit interviews with departing clients to address any remaining concerns or needs.
- Making appropriate referrals to other Seekhaven services when necessary for client support.
- Sharing pertinent client information with the Shelter Manager daily and with the rest of the shelter team on weekends for cohesive care coordination.
- Providing knowledgeable support on evidence-based concepts and practices for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.
- Maintaining victim confidentiality in compliance with state and federal laws.
- Guiding clients through the Crime Victims Reparations (CVR) application process.
- Responding empathetically to residents during crisis interventions, in a trauma informed manner, and providing necessary support.
- Referring individuals to appropriate community resources, counseling services, and coordinating with legal and medical processes for seamless transitions to safe housing.
- Assisting residents in setting goals, navigating steps toward achieving them, including housing applications.
- Offering support and advocacy throughout judicial and criminal justice proceedings, liaising with law enforcement and community organizations as needed.
- Providing client transportation as required.
- Attend forensic exams.
- Demonstrating effective communication and interpersonal skills in high-stress situations, ensuring compliance with organizational standards and legal requirements.
- Offering landlord intervention and advocacy for residents in the process of relocating.
- Identifying monetary needs and coordinating financial assistance with the Transition Specialist or other Advocates.
- Referring residents in need of housing assistance to the Transition Specialist.

Collaboration:

- Collaborate closely with various departments to ensure clients receive adequate services and support, fostering effective communication within the organization.
- Engage with external organizations in the community to enhance services and leverage additional resources for clients in need.
- Participate in training initiatives to promote professional development, knowledge sharing, and improved service delivery practices.
- Attend and participate in regularly scheduled team, case management and staff meetings.
- Some travel and occasional weekend days and evenings may be required.

Grant & Contract compliance:

- Strictly adhere to confidentiality standards and mandated reporting requirements.
- Ensure accurate completion and ongoing maintenance of all necessary paperwork and Apricot entries.
- Maintain a high level of organization to guarantee compliance with grant and contract regulations.

Required Skills and Background:

- Bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university in social sciences or related field; or 2 years relevant work experience
- Strong computer skills in Excel, Word, Internet, G-Suite; QuickBooks experience preferred
- Must have experience working with highly vulnerable populations including but not limited to those with substance abuse issues, mental health concerns, and chronic illnesses.
- Must pass a criminal background check.
- Must be at Least 18 years of age.
- Have a valid Driver's License.
- Demonstrate professionalism by balancing both the quantity and quality of work.

Training:

- Completion of a 40-hour Core Advocacy Training within one year of employment.
- Completion of a 40-hour Sexual Assault Counselor Training within one year of employment.
- Participation in a minimum of 16 hours of domestic violence and Sexual Violence training annually for continued education.
- Acquisition and maintenance of CPR and First Aid Certification and Food Handlers
- Willingness to undergo any additional training as required by Seekhaven.

Physical Demands

- Must be able to lift up to 25 pounds
- Must be able to work in a high paced environment with many constant distractions, including a shared office space
- Must be able to drive a vehicle to provide mobile advocacy services.
- Must be able to move across Seekhaven's campus continuously as well as travel to off-site locations, when needed.

Emotional Demands:

- Capability to professionally manage oneself when hearing disclosures of various forms of abuse and crisis situations including physical and sexual violence, emotional and economic abuse, child abuse, drug use, suicidality and more.
- Ability to provide compassion, validation, and support to clients in crisis.

- Proficiency in establishing and maintaining emotional boundaries with clients, ensuring professional, client-led relationships consistent with agency standards.
- Capacity to practice self-care and utilize supportive resources provided by the agency or elsewhere.
- Skill in regulating oneself when giving and receiving constructive criticism, as well as being adaptable to fulfill Seekhaven's mission, foster a healthy work environment, and aid victims of abuse and violence.