



Job Description – Employment and Education Counselor

Background

Founded in 1988, Bridge Communities (Bridge) is DuPage County's largest provider of transitional housing and supportive services for homeless families. At present, Bridge owns and operates 24 apartment buildings in 7 DuPage villages, with 154 total apartments. Bridge's headquarter office is in downtown Glen Ellyn. Bridge serves about 120 homeless families annually, with Program staff providing intake and referral, case management, employment coaching, children's services, nutrition counseling, donated vehicles, mental health payments, and more in a two-generation model working to break the cycle of poverty.

Bridge has a unique business model with faith-based and community-based organizations providing both financial support and volunteer mentors for families. Bridge has recently had two Fortune 500 companies as program partners, providing the financial support and mentors for families. Bridge has a history of collaborations with employers, public schools, medical and behavioral health, legal services, local and county government, and recreational service partners to provide holistic scope of support to families with warm reception. A strong fundraising and resource development team that has created diversity of funding streams and high donor retention. In FY20, Bridge had \$4.6 million operating budget, \$13 million in net assets, with \$2.5 million endowment and 28 FTE staff.

Employment and Adult Education services are a vital aspect of our client families' success in our program, as evidenced by the findings of our data & evaluation function. This critical service to Bridge families has been reinforced through the global COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on the job market. At the peak, Bridge client unemployment was at 43% and currently client unemployment is within normal pre-pandemic range.

Employment and Adult Education Mission Statement:

Through skills assessment, resume development, interview preparation, **education coaching and planning**, and other career transition activities, the employment and adult education team strives to develop and prepare clients for success with both short- and long-term goals resulting in increased earnings, benefits, marketability and job stability. We work one-on-one with clients who are either under-employed or unemployed, providing guidance throughout the job search, success during on-boarding transition, and on-going support with job retention and career development. For clients desiring further education, we provide assistance throughout the process of selecting a program, registering for classes, and securing financial aid/scholarships.

Employment and Education Counselor Job Description and Responsibilities (40 hours)

1. **Develop trust-based relationships with individual adult Bridge clients, using the principles of Trauma Informed Care, so they are willing to be counseled on all aspects of the job search process and educational planning.** Job search activities may include, but are not limited to, **aptitudes, skills and values assessments**, development of marketing materials, interview preparation, and networking assistance. **Adult education activities may include, but are not**

limited to, academic and career path assessments, identification and research into appropriate educational programs, college site visits, and exploring ways to pay for school, including scholarship assistance. We also coach on how to successfully manage work, school and family schedules.

2. Consistently communicate **and collaborate** with Case Managers, Program Partners and Mentors regarding client **plans** and progress. Partner with teams and Case Managers to **support** clients in completing employment **and education** goals.
3. **Facilitate Job Readiness classes** and other training or presentations as needed.
4. Network and cultivate **individual** relationships within the community, **as well as** with local employers and organizations.
5. Participate on West Suburban Jobs Council as member **and on committees as needed.**
6. Attend Staff Meetings & other staff events to remain engaged and connected to Bridge Family.
7. Recruit and onboard employment volunteers **to keep them engaged**, and update and maintain volunteer database.
8. Participate and complete special projects as assigned.

Required Competencies

1. Active listening skills, as well as strong verbal and written skills;
2. Ability to empathize, encourage and hold clients accountable;
3. Ability to collaborate with clients, mentor teams, case managers and other staff;
4. Desire to build relationships with DuPage County businesses and community volunteers;
5. Strength in public speaking and engaging audiences;
6. Ability to be patient and maintain composure and humor in times of stress.

Qualifications / Background:

1. Bachelor's Degree in Human Resources Management or related discipline.
2. 2+ years' experience in HR and/or Career Transition.
3. Expertise with coaching individuals in career transition, specifically in resume development, networking, and interviewing.
4. Strong knowledge of hiring processes.
5. Familiarity with MS Office suite, including Outlook, Word, Excel, & Powerpoint.
6. Open to development of skills and knowledge
7. Willingness to be flexible and adaptable to change
8. While performing duties of this position, employee will be required, on occasion, to lift up to 25 pounds. Ability to stand on feet for extended periods of time may be needed.
9. Valid Illinois Driver's License and the ability to travel locally.

To Apply

- Browse our website www.bridgecommunities.org to learn more about Bridge Communities.
- Compose a cover letter – one-page maximum – to clearly explain the case for your candidacy. Please tell us in the letter how you learned of the opening.
- Email cover letter and resume to resumes@bridgecommunities.org
- Candidates whose backgrounds are a strong fit with our requirements can expect contact within five business days of application. No follow up phone calls or emails please.
- Please do NOT supply references at this time.
- Our goal is to have the hiring process complete in September 2021, and a start of employment by mid-October 2021.

Bridge Communities is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, client families, volunteers, and vendors. Bridge Communities does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services.

Bridge Communities will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or applicant on the bases of the above mentioned protections.

Reasonable accommodation will be provided as needed to enable qualified applicants with a disability to participate in the pre-employment process.

Job Type: Full-time

Pay: Up to \$55,000.00 per year