



Job Description

Position: First Step Manager
Reports to: Senior Manager, Community & Reentry
Supervises: Reentry Case Managers (3)
Program Admin – Reentry (1)

BACKGROUND: Founded in 1976, Towards Employment is a non-profit leader in providing innovative solutions to move people out of poverty, into quality jobs and along a career pathway. Towards Employment has gained local and national recognition for achieving excellent outcomes through the hard work of its dedicated staff of 63 and a \$5.8 million annual budget. Towards Employment offers a continuum of support to low-income individuals preparing to enter the workforce or looking to advance from low-wage employment while also fulfilling the staffing needs of local employers.

OVERVIEW: Position is responsible for the development and management of First Step, an on-ramp to career pathway programming; direct supervision of a team of case managers, and leadership of the Case Management Functional team. Will coordinate case management services to address the “social determinants of work” for individuals who are identified as “not yet ready” to engage in workforce training. Will supervise reentry case managers, and coordinate with others across the agency on plan development and monitoring progress of First Step participants; will utilize additional tools for assessment and training to maximize understanding of participants’ starting point to craft the most appropriate plans. First Step Manager will coordinate with Training Services in preparing individuals to meet the entry requirements for Towards Employment’s traditional Career Readiness Training (CRT) or industry partnership programming, with an emphasis on math remediation, stable housing, financial literacy, and digital skill building. Identifying and building strong relationships with community partners is essential.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Key Areas of Responsibility

- Develop and manage First Step, with a goal of increasing the number of people entering and successfully completing TE Career pathway programming: work with program staff to provide necessary supports to address barriers, build skills and support stable home lives to prepare individuals for participation in the career pathway program, set up for success in further training and/or employment.

Lead the Case Management Functional Team: support a center of excellence that ensures the highest quality Case Management services across the organization: continuously review service delivery to ensure it is aligned with best practice, stay abreast of trends and new approaches, and identify and support areas of growth and training for staff. Work closely with program and other functional team leads to coordinate support and feedback.

- Program management: establish and communicate program goals, develop dashboard to monitor progress and promote shared accountability with case management functional team.

First Step and Reentry Case Management

- Develop standard First Step activities and procedures, taking into consideration any external and internal factors that might impact engagement in preworkshop activities.
- continuously review assessment and goal setting tools to ensure trauma informed care approach.
- Work with case managers on plan development with appropriate goals identified to address barriers and service needs prior to engagement in career readiness programming.
- Oversee administration of the Pre-Workshop Work Readiness assessment tool; ensure case managers are trained and understand scoring process, ensure appropriate placement of participants into First Step.
- Consult with Training Services Program Manager on First Step curriculum, session scheduling and delivery to ensure the services delivered. Foundational skills to be addressed will include (but are not limited to): Digital Literacy, Math Remediation, and Life Stability services focusing on housing, childcare, transportation, legal issues, and trauma informed care-based case management.
- Work closely with Community/Re-Entry, Out of School Youth, and Industry Partnership team members, communicating regularly with assigned case managers and/or other appropriate staff regarding participant challenges, behavior, achievements and abilities.
- Work with case managers to resolve participant challenges as they arise.
- Conduct case file reviews ensuring all documentation is included and is completed as required
- Conduct bi-weekly “Touch Base” meetings with case managers to provide guidance and direction on required tasks, helping to prioritize workload.
- Assist case managers in identifying and approving supportive services

Staff Management and Leadership

- Provides supervision and coaching to assigned program staff and carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization’s policies and procedures. Responsibilities include coaching, and training employees; planning, assigning, and directing work; appraising performance and assisting in the development of goals; rewarding and disciplining employees; addressing complaints and resolving problems.
- Monitor programming to ensure that activity levels and service quality lead to goal attainment; when necessary, develop strategies and work with team members to implement program enhancements to meet shared goals and outcomes or gain efficiency.
- Work with the Senior Managers and Director of Programs on relationship management with funding sources to ensure clear communication and successful partnership.
- Communicate regularly with staff on program and staff needs, organization news, changes, challenges, etc.
- Utilize company data and case management system (Commence) for monitoring workflow.
- Work with case managers to develop more structured partnerships with key community partner organizations for supportive service assistance in areas including (but not limited to) literacy, childcare, housing, treatment services, etc.

QUALIFICATIONS

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required.

- Minimum of a bachelor’s degree in Social Work or related technical field. Combination of experience and education will be considered.

- LSW required; LISW preferred.
- Knowledge of evidence-based trauma informed care response models preferred for application in program, service delivery to participants, and support of staff.
- Previous experience and passion for working with diverse and challenged populations including formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Demonstrated ability to work with people from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, racial, and educational backgrounds.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and attention to detail, strong organizational, time management and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to work in a flexible, collaborate work environment.
- Excellent relationship building and proven customer service skills with varied stakeholders.
- Team player with the ability to exercise good judgment in a rapidly changing – and sometimes stressful – environment.
- Commitment to Towards Employment mission and values.

Computer Skills

- Familiarity with Microsoft Office and Googles Platform desired. Proficient with computers, including Word, Excel, Power Point, Publisher, Outlook, and Internet. Experience and knowledgeable with electronic case management tracking systems (databases).

Work environment

Work is performed in an office setting and/or out in the field/virtual/remote.

Language Skills

Ability to write routine reports and correspondence. Ability to speak effectively before groups of participants or employees of organization.

Competencies

Success in this position also requires:

- **Continuous Improvement** – Committed to learning, development, assessment, and measurement to continuously improve.
- **Coaching Capacity** – Ability to provide guidance and to support the advancement of others.
- **Team Builder** – Leads others through collaboration, influence, and managerial strength.
- **Social Justice Advocate** – Passionate about promoting racial equity and inclusion at personal, organizational and systems level.
- **Growth Mindset** – Embraces a culture of continuous learning and a can-do attitude, readily adapts to change, is intellectually curious and a critical thinker.

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