



Towards Employment

Position: Peer Support Specialist – RiSE Jail Program
Reports to: Project Coordinator, Reentry Services
Supervises: None

About Us

Founded in 1976, Towards Employment is a non-profit leader in providing innovative solutions to move people out of poverty and into quality jobs. Towards Employment has gained local and national recognition for achieving excellent outcomes through the hard work of its dedicated staff of 50+ and a \$5.0+ million annual budget – and we are growing! 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. For more information on the organization, please visit www.towardsemployment.org.

Overview

The Peer Support Specialist will work with individuals serving out their sentence within the county justice system and will engage in direct work with participants' pre and post release. The Peer Support Specialist will provide ongoing support to participants for their substance abuse and or mental health challenges. The main types of direct work will be advocacy, connecting to resources, experiential sharing, building community, relationship building, and group facilitation including support meetings, skill building/mentoring/goal setting, and socialization/self-esteem building. The Peer Support Specialist will provide services throughout the participant's reentry programming experience with Towards Employment.

Essential Functions

Overall, this position will:

- Develop rapport with team and the county justice system personnel and determine engagement process for inmates housed at county facilities.
- Provide service overview and orientation either individually or in groups.
- Provide input and assist participant with reentry success plan to include engagement in support activities.
- Provide information and referral to community resources to help participants address barriers that could affect their ability to maintain their sobriety, which can include but not limited to treatment services or counseling.
- Meet at least bi-weekly to gauge progress, more frequently as needed and warranted.
- Work closely with other team members, communicating regularly with reentry services team members, attending training and team meetings, etc.

Support Others

- Use lived experience with addiction to alcohol and/or drugs to provide one-to-one strengths-based support to peers in recovery, empowering them to make healthier choices on a day-to-day basis
- Mentor the participant and provide ongoing support to participants challenged by substance abuse and or mental health. Maintain regular contact through phone calls, emails, in person and offsite visits.

Make Referrals

- Provide knowledge of area resources that may aid participant in ongoing recovery, including but not limited to transportation, treatment providers, and sober support systems.
- Exercise discretion when engaging with participants and know when to refer to medical professionals. Referrals to professionals will be made when a participant poses a threat to themselves or others, or simply needs additional medical help.

Help Participants Set Goals

- Support participants' transition into society easier by working with the participant to craft strategies for coping and achieving their goals.
- Establish incremental goals with the participant that will support their sobriety and or mental health wellness.
- Review the goals with the participant at regular touchpoints and adjust as needed.

Educate the Community

- Help the participants to learn more about their illnesses and how to manage them safely and effectively through sharing of experiences, resource material, meetings and educational workshops.
- Educate individuals in the community, such as team members and employers, accomplished through but not limited to one on one discussions and group presentations.

Job Readiness Support

- Work with facilitation staff and staffing specialist to communicate existing barriers and barrier resolution plans for each current workshop participant.
- Meet one-on-one with participants in last week of job readiness training to incorporate sobriety / mental health goals into their employment or continuing education goal portion of their Career Map.

Retention and follow up assistance

- Provide back up for team on retention case management for participants at specified intervals to assist in the continued prevention and elimination of barriers related to work/life balance, time management, substance use/relapse, criminal activity, housing issues.
- Continue to provide information and referral access to community resources to help participants address identified barriers which may hinder successful employment.

Data Entry and Other Duties

- Maintain accurate participant files and records according to program guidelines.
- Input all case notes and service requests within 48 hours of service delivery.
- Conduct duties as assigned by Project Coordinator Reentry Services or Director of Programs.

Qualifications

Success in this position typically requires:

- Experience with substance abuse and or mental health challenges. Personal experience required.
- Experience in Peer Recovery Services, Social Service, Customer Service or Non-Profit environment preferred.
- Minimum three years clean recovery from substance abuse and or mental health.
- Passionate about helping individuals to obtain and maintain sobriety and or strong mental health.
- Knowledge and/or experience and working with adults with barriers to employment; particularly individuals with criminal backgrounds required
- Working knowledge of different pathways to recovery and social systems including evidence-based practices
- Understands problems analysis, decision-analysis, evaluate interventions, and contingency plans
- Ability to be an active listener by asking questions and reflecting on what is being said
- Excellent relationship building and customer service skills to keep participants engaged in services.
- Good written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong organizational, time management and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to work independently, be flexible and dependable, and demonstrate initiative and creativity.
- The ability to travel between criminal justice facilities and Towards Employment, to coordinate services for participants, attend relevant meetings and provide follow-up.
- Must have proficiency with computers including Microsoft Office Products: Word, Power Point, Outlook, and Internet.
- Commitment to Towards Employment mission and core values.

Work Environment

- Work is performed within both an office setting and a government operated facility. Some travel required.

Physical Demands

- Must be able to remain in a stationary position 50%.
- Must be able to travel independently to county jail facilities sites, meetings 50%.