

# Housing Specialist

**Our Mission:** The Elizabeth Stone House (ESH) partners with adult and child survivors of domestic violence and related trauma - mental illness, housing instability and substance misuse - to achieve safety, stability, and overall wellbeing, thereby contributing to the strength, resiliency, and health of the community we serve.

**Position Summary:** The Housing Specialist provides a variety of office and field activities to promote, manage, and monitor participants' transition to permanent housing. Work involves orienting all eligible participants in ESH programs (including Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and the Strong Where You Are Community Programs), and providing housing search and supportive services to promote participants' self-sufficiency, integration into the community, and permanency in housing. The principal duties are performed both in-office and in the field and community where program participants reside. The Housing Specialist is supervised by the Directors of Family Programming and Community Programming.

This full-time position 36 hours per week, Monday-Friday, schedule to be determined by supervisor. Evening hours may be required; other hours are flexible.

## Primary Job Duties and Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with participants through regular contact and consistent engagement.
- Demonstrate commitment to developing and delivering trauma-informed services that incorporate current best-practice standards.
- Work as part of a multi-disciplinary team, within Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Community Programs.
- Assess housing barriers of individuals and families experiencing homelessness to determine housing and service needs.
- Develop a housing procurement, financial, and self-sufficiency plan with participants. This shall include an intake interview to determine participant's needs, goals, and eligibility.
- Provide mediation and advocacy with landlords on participants' behalf to develop a workable plan to obtain and or maintain housing.
- Assist participants in locating and securing housing of their choice.
- Create and maintain consistent communication channels, both verbal and written, between several parties (i.e. tenant, landlord, referral source, collaborating agencies, debtors and creditors).
- Serve as an ongoing liaison between property managers and participants as well as between participants and neighbors.

- Provide information and referral assistance regarding available support from appropriate social service agencies and/or community programs both within and outside of ESH.
- Assist in development of and encourage adherence to a personal budget through pro-active housing and budget counseling sessions; provide budget counseling and education to assist clients in establishing payments plans for bills and past debts and to assist clients in obtaining and maintaining their housing.
- Assist participants in development of a strength-based/solution-focused individualized goal and action plan that promotes permanent housing and self-sufficiency; develop an effective, timely referral network in order to ensure ongoing direction and support as needed.
- Identify participant strengths and barriers to stability and assist participants to reducing barriers and linking to resources and services.
- Provide pro-active follow-up home visits to ensure stability and further progress towards self-sufficiency; this includes support, advocacy, reducing isolation, listening, problem solving, and identification of resources to assist with reintegration of participants in the community.
- Apply knowledge of residential lease contracts to educate clients about their rights and responsibilities.
- Transport clients as deemed necessary. Transportation requirements should be limited to housing and job searches and occasional visit to relevant social service agencies.
- Maintain accurate and complete records in ETO database including daily recording of case notes, points of service, and efforts. Maintain appropriate paper files for program participants.
- Ensure adherence to all funding and programmatic obligations.
- Attend and participate in regular individual supervision, case reviews, and staff meetings. Attend and participate in ongoing professional development workshops and trainings.
- Represent ESH in meetings and functions with colleagues, collaborators, community members, funders, and donors.
- Complete other duties as needed to ensure that program participants are provided with trauma-informed, professional services in alignment with the mission of the Elizabeth Stone House and consistent with ethical, legal, organizational, and funder requirements.

### **Qualifications and Requirements:**

- Bachelor Degree in Human Services preferred, or three years of experience working in domestic violence service setting.
- Bilingual (Spanish/English) preferred.
- Excellent communication skills, particularly listening, mediation, and writing skills.
- Familiarity with resources in the Boston area.

- Knowledge and understanding of affordable housing resources, including but not limited to: public housing application process, housing lotteries, Section 8, HomeBase, RAFT.
- Knowledge or understanding of tenant's rights and responsibilities.
- Familiarity working with collateral agencies such as DTA, DCF, BPH.
- Understanding of barriers to housing, including shelter breaks, eviction history, CORI, debt remediation, incarceration.
- Detailed record keeping, budgeting, and mathematical skills; ability to produce required reports to federal, state, and local government agencies and funding sources.
- Demonstrated knowledge of community resources, social service agencies, and landlords.
- Proficiency with computers, including ability to use data entry software.
- Valid driver's license and a car.
- Commitment to implementing strengths-based, participant-centered approach.
- The ability to establish and set appropriate limits with participants.
- The ability to work collaboratively with other personnel and/or service providers or professionals.
- The capacity to maintain a role to empower clients and to intervene appropriately to meet service goals.
- Training and/or experience working with survivors of domestic violence. Experience working with survivors experiencing mental health and substance use challenges preferred.
- Ability to work collaboratively and effectively in an environment that is linguistically and culturally diverse, including non-English speaking families, LGBT participants, and all gender identifications.
- Ability to work as a part of a dynamic team and manage multiple, sometimes competing demands.
- Able to climb and descend stairs, to bend and lift up to 30 lbs.
- CORI background check is mandatory; CORI history will be reviewed and may not disqualify candidates.