



Housing Advocate

Background: The Second Step (TSS) fosters the safety, stability, and well-being of survivors of domestic violence. Our residential and community-based programs build on the strengths, needs, and values of the individuals and families we serve. In partnership with survivors and in collaboration with the community, we lay a foundation for a future free from abuse and full of possibility.

Primary Objective: Providing comprehensive housing related case management & advocacy services to survivors of domestic violence, within an agency framework that is trauma-informed, strength-based, relational, and empowering.

Responsibilities

1. Housing Advocacy

Provide housing search, advocacy and case management services to client families, including help with budgeting and obtaining financial resources for housing-related expenses. Liaise and advocate with the housing authority and other agencies as needed to ensure clients attain permanent housing.

In service of TSS program participants, oversee the use and leveraging of flex funds, and partner with our existing Steps to Justice legal services program to assist with eviction prevention/ housing stabilization, working closely with landlords, management companies, housing authorities, and other systems to identify and secure housing for homeless and/ or housing-insecure clients.

2. Needs-Based Advocacy

Develop housing-related service plans with clients based on their individual needs and self-identified goals. Identify barriers and challenges that may be impeding the client's ability to move forward with their housing and financial goals. Assist clients with identifying potential resources, both internally and externally, which may better equip them to accomplish their goals.

3. Community-Building

In collaboration with other program staff, create a nurturing, supportive environment that facilitates the development of resilience to move beyond the trauma that clients have experienced. This involves a mindful use of self in setting healthy expectations and implementing policies, practices, and systems that sustain the safety and well-being of all

TSS clients. Co-facilitate groups and meetings on a variety of housing-related topics, and communicate well across programs to ensure supportive wraparound services.

Eventually, partner with TSS colleagues to negotiate the re-establishment of a fair housing committee in Newton with community stakeholders, such as the Mayor's Office, Newton Housing Authority, etc.

4. Multi-Agency Collaboration

As part of the Newton community, collaboration with local agencies, schools, business, and organizations will be necessary in order to ensure smooth transitions for clients experiencing a housing crisis. TSS has developed partnerships with Metro-West CAN-DO, Newton Housing Authority, Family-to-Family, FamilyACCESS Services, etc. Additionally, TSS has begun conversations with local roundtables and nonprofits for furniture and household good donations to support our clients who are moving into new units.

5. Documentation & Reports

Keep case management records current, input outcomes data accurately and consistently, track services delivered in the TSS Empower DB database, submit routine reports for funding agencies (together with the Director of Residential Programs), assist with grant writing and correspond with internal and external contacts as required.

6. Trainings

Provide housing-related trainings to incoming staff, board members, external agency representatives, etc. Attend trainings approved by the Director of Community Programs to stay abreast of changes to fair housing law, public housing, housing-related funding, etc.

Other Responsibilities

- Attend and actively participate in weekly team meetings and agency-wide staff meetings.
- Represent TSS at community events and forums as needed (determined in consultations with the Director of Community Programs).
- Assist other advocates and directors in coordinating special events, including IMAGINE programming, holiday celebrations for TSS program participants, summer retreats and cookouts, and other special events for residential and community clients as needed. Together with other TSS advocates and staff, provide support for annual backpack drive and holiday gift drive.
- Supervision of volunteers, interns and/or support staff as identified by Director of Community Programs.

Qualifications:

Candidates should have 2-3 years of experience working with survivors of domestic violence and/or homeless families and individuals in residential and/or community-based programs. Knowledge of issues related to domestic violence, trauma, mental health, and addiction – with a particular emphasis on how these issues impact families – is essential. Knowledge of issues

related to child development and parenting is also valuable. While a Master's degree is preferred, we also consider relevant life experience and employment background to be valuable assets.

Additional qualifications include:

- Experience with public housing and appeals process.
- Strong crisis management, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrated ability to learn and master new skills and materials.
- Ability to manage competing priorities simultaneously and precisely.
- Proficiency with computers and technology (including Microsoft Office products, databases, and social media).
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong organizational skills, including the ability to work calmly under pressure.
- Bi-lingual (English/Spanish) preferred.
- Enthusiasm about working collaboratively and effectively in an environment that is linguistically and culturally diverse.

Hours: Full-time (40 hours/week), with a combination of days & evenings to be determined together with the Director of Community Programs. This is an exempt position, and flexibility in scheduling is important. On-site clinical supervision is provided weekly. TSS offers a competitive salary and benefits package to full-time employees.

A successful candidate will be committed to serving families that are determined to move beyond domestic violence, will be flexible and adaptable, and will demonstrate resiliency in the face of challenge, as well as other skills that we work hard to foster with our clients. A driver's license is required in order to drive agency vehicles.

Equal opportunity: The Second Step encourages multi-cultural & multi-lingual diversity in all of its programs. Minorities, multi-lingual candidates, survivors of domestic & sexual violence, and LGBTQ/T candidates are strongly encouraged to apply. The Second Step, Inc. is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer.