

Position Title: Family Support Specialist
Reports To: Shelter Director

Hours: 24 hrs./week

Position Summary

The Family Support Specialist provides supervision and support to parents and children residing at the Project Hope shelter. The FSS will work in the late afternoon and evening hours, when the shelter is at its busiest and he/she will offer guidance to families and assist with the structure of the shelter during these hours. There are currently 11 families - mothers and children – living in the shelter.

The schedule will be 24 hours per week - Monday–Thursday from 4:00-8:00PM. Some flexibility may be required due to family availability.

Agency & Program Background

Project Hope works in partnership with families so they can move up and out of poverty. We do this by being a catalyst for change in the lives of families and in the systems that keep them poor; developing and providing family support solutions for homelessness and poverty; and advocating for just public policies that strengthen families.

Located in Boston's Dudley Street neighborhood, Project Hope is at the forefront of efforts in the city to move families beyond homelessness and poverty. It was founded in 1981 by the Little Sisters of the Assumption who first settled in the Dudley area in 1947 to live and work with the neighborhood families. In the 1980s when family homelessness became a crisis in Boston and the state, the Sisters opened their doors and welcomed families to stay with them, and Project Hope was launched. Once best known as a family shelter, today Project Hope offers an array of services to assist families – especially low-income single mothers – in gaining the resources and skills to overcome their impoverished circumstances.

In 2006, Project Hope opened an attractive Community Building on Dudley Street – the first LEED Silver certified, earth-friendly building in Roxbury – to serve as its headquarters and a neighborhood center for job training, adult education, housing counseling, community empowerment, and more. Just a few blocks away, the original site remains home to the family shelter and child care center.

Responsibilities

- Administer Stages and Ages evaluations for children entering the shelter.
- Prepare entrance and exit care packages for children in shelter.
- Provide a constant presence to families residing in the shelter and ensure that all needs are met.
- Help to make the shelter a family-friendly and child-focused environment.
- Support parents with positive parenting skills by partnering with shelter residents, building trust, modeling good interactions, etc.

- Connect and interact with children at their level, assist with homework if needed, and build trusting relationships.
- Be present and supportive during mealtime and assist with the structure during this time.
- Interact with residents throughout the shift, check in with families and monitor the shelter space at regular intervals.
- Ensure that all residents are abiding by shelter rules, enforce the rules if violated, and respond appropriately to any concerns or crises.
- Answer the front door and phone as needed. Greet visitors and callers in a courteous and professional manner.
- Plan culturally sensitive seasonal activities for children and families with support of Family Resource staff.
- Organize monthly activities for shelter families.
- Meet regularly with other shelter staff to coordinate services for families. Share information regarding children and families' strengths and needs. Work together to address any developmental issues of children. Create a plan to address these issues. Attend case conferences with families as necessary.
- Additional relevant responsibilities may be assigned by supervisor as needed.
- Document all relevant information, observations, or concerns about children or parents to share with other staff.
- Submit documentation on children and families to be included in ETO and in monthly case reviews.
- Maintain an accurate log of the activities in the house

Qualifications:

- Significant experience working with children and families.
- Experience working with children in a classroom or daycare setting.
- Experience with and/or knowledge about work with families who have experienced homelessness.
- Knowledge in early childhood development is preferred.
- Ability to work well in a team setting.
- Ability to relate well to children and adults.
- Excellent communication skills, especially in talking with parents about any concerns regarding their children.
- Must possess creativity and an energetic and passionate approach to be able to engage with children and families.
- Bi-lingual (Spanish, Portuguese, Creole) preferred.

Education Requirements:

- High School Diploma or equivalent required
- Bachelor's Degree or some college coursework in the field of Early Childhood and/or Human Services preferred
- Certificate in Child Development

Contact:

- Please submit cover letter and resume to Peggy Comfrey, HR Manager: pcomfrey@prohope.org