



Housing Support Specialist

OVERVIEW

The Housing Support Specialist (HSS) position works with low-income individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to find and maintain safe and appropriate housing in the north Durham townships of Uxbridge, Scugog and Brock. The Housing Support Specialist position provides housing stabilization services through financial aid programs, referrals to community resources and connection to government and non-profit programs; assists households to maintain their current tenancies and assists people who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to secure transitional to permanent housing.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Housing Support and Homelessness Prevention

- Intake of clients on a walk-in and appointment basis
- Meet with clients and landlords in the community
- Advocate on a client's behalf with OW, ODSP, other social agencies, local hostels and shelters
- Assist clients in finding permanent or temporary housing (i.e. referrals to shelters)
- Advocate/negotiate/mediate with landlord on client's behalf
- Assist with applications for Housing Stability Program, LEAP funding and other financial security programs
- Provide information on the *Residential Tenancies Act*, Rental Tribunal process and the eviction process
- Accompany clients to the Landlord Tenant Board hearings if required
- Connect clients to resources in other cities when they are preparing to relocate
- Complete housing searches for clients who require housing
- Assist clients with applications for the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)
- Assist clients with applications for replacement ID
- Complete Durham Region By-Name List referrals and associated risk assessments (VI-SPDAT)
- Conduct SPDAT risk assessments to assess complex cases
- Participate in and coordinate multi-disciplinary interventions
- Assist with and supervise clients with shower, laundry, kitchen and resource center needs
- Provide transportation in personal vehicle to clients for medical, grocery and viewings as needed if comfortable

Client Services, Case Management and Documentation

- Ensure services & treatment are delivered from a strength-based framework and customized to meet individualized needs of clients
- Provide crisis intervention linkages, referrals through consultation to ensure client support and housing stabilization
- Foster and maintain ongoing relationships with clients, service providers, and identified resources
- Maintain up-to-date case notes, progress reports and client files with clear rationale for methods and intervention used, and statistical documentation in accordance with the program requirements
- Complete and maintain accurate statistical and narrative reports on all clients
- Maintain a system to track and report all performance indicators for North House programs
- Ensure that all client data is entered accurately and within 48 hours into the HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System) database
- Ensure client consents are up-to-date at all times, and provide informed consent in relation to services and supports
- Guide and support student placements and learning plans including student shadowing of client appointments and services
- Distribute, report on, and provide Harm Reduction education and supplies to clients and walk-ins as needed
- Maintain client files with all relevant information required by the program guidelines and Durham Region Service Standards

Community Relations and Outreach

- Attend all team meetings, weekly debriefing sessions, case conferencing and participate as a full member of the team
- Attend and represent North House on community committees and in community meetings as required
- Follow the policies and procedures to ensure that all services are consistent with North House's mission and mandate
- Set and complete performance goals related to the organizational strategic plan yearly
- Liaise with community partners by:
 - informing community agencies about North House and its programs
 - facilitating referrals and meetings with agencies
 - advocating for low-income households
 - obtaining community support for non-traditional initiatives and programs
 - attending and participating in community planning events and activities

SKILLS

- Social Services Worker diploma from an accredited College or University (BSW or SSW from an accredited College or University)
- Member in good standing of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW) or must be able to obtain membership within the first three months of employment
- Minimum of 3 years recent experience in the area of housing placement and or social work
- Experience working within a non-profit and/or social services environment
- Experience providing support services to individuals facing challenges surrounding their homelessness, including, but not limited to; mental health, family violence and/or addictions
- Strong knowledge of needs, experiences and community services for the homeless population
- Knowledge and understanding of social housing, the *Residential Tenancy Act* and eviction prevention strategies
- Experience working with at-risk or homeless individuals
- Knowledge of current housing market and trends, vacancy rates, and rental prices
- Ability and experience assessing client needs, and ability to assist clients to develop strategies for achieving their goals while problem-solving barriers
- Well-developed interpersonal, and relationship building skills; as well as ability to establish rapport and excellent communication (written and oral) with clients, team members, and Executive Director
- Experience and ability to appropriately respond to crisis situations; combined with strong de-escalation, conflict resolution and problem-solving skills
- Ability to work effectively within a team setting
- Driver's license and access to vehicle required
- Ability to work sensitively and effectively with people from various life situations and backgrounds
- Demonstrated excellent administrative and organizational skills; strong computer skills, specifically Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint is an asset
- Previous experience using and data entry into HIFIS is an asset
- A current police vulnerable sector check is required

WORKING CONDITIONS

- Sits at a desk, as well as stands and walks daily, in order to perform the duties of the job
- Concentration, attentiveness and creativity required daily to attend meetings, develop Client Care Plans, teach life skills, manage a caseload, prepare documents, listen to clients, etc.
- Works in office and work field environments
- Exposure to abusive/irate clients, distractions, interruptions and deadlines
- Possible exposure to substances and/or needles, pests, and biohazards (PPE provided)
- Interacts with clients, staff, visitors and staff from other organizations
- Able to lift items as heavy as 25 lbs
- Manual dexterity required to use desktop computer and peripherals
- Must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19
- A current police vulnerable sector check is required

LOCATION

The North House main office is in Uxbridge. Due to North House's service delivery requirements, the incumbent will be required to work and travel throughout Durham Region, primary in the north Durham area. Office setting with occasional travel to events or client and agency meetings within the Durham Region catchment area.

COMPENSATION AND HOURS

This is a full-time position in-office with regular hours of work are 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday; however, occasional evenings and weekends may be required. Salary \$52-55K/year based on experience. Extended health care including dental and vision care. Ten paid personal days plus three weeks vacation.

Proof of COVID-19 vaccination is a requirement of all North House staff except for those with an approved medical or human rights exemption.

If you are ready to embark on this journey with us and join in on the continued growth and success of this organization, this may be the opportunity for you!

Please note that submissions will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, and therefore early submission is encouraged. Please send your resume to careers@northhouse.ca. Only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.