



Food • Shelter • Dignity • Hope

**Job Description: Family Shelter Advocate**

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Fulltime - Nonexempt

Supervisor: Director of Stabilization Services

Salary Level: \$20.30/hour

Date: August 2024

Prepared by: Erich Lutz

Approved by: Executive Director

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**OVERVIEW:** Chum is a non-profit 501 (C)3 organization that serves about 8,000 low-income, homeless, hungry, isolated, and otherwise marginalized community members each year. More than 40 faith-based congregations in Duluth are part of Chum and support our core mission: people of faith working together to provide basic necessities, foster stable lives, and organize for a just and compassionate community.

Chum operates an Emergency Shelter, Family Shelter, a Drop-in Center with a Health and Wellness Clinic, a Winter Warming Center, and Food Shelf. It also offers Street Outreach, and supportive services for seniors living at the St. Francis Apartments and families at the Steve O'Neil Apartments who were previously homeless. Chum's advocacy focuses on policy and systems changes to help improve the lives of people who turn to Chum for services. Chum also provides leadership to Stepping On Up (a collaboration of service agencies) that is working to change Duluth's response to homelessness. We are committed to providing services in a manner that is informed by historic and contemporary forms of marginalization (such as racism, homophobia, and patriarchy) and relevant to the current context of increasing mental illness and substance misuse.

**SUMMARY:** The Family Advocate provides case management, information, referral, and direct assistance to help families stabilize. The goal of the position is to minimize shelter stays for families with children and to have them return to or obtain stable housing appropriate for their situation.

### **ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Conduct screenings and schedule intake with families/heads of households to secure shelter, food, permanent housing, medical care, social services, emergency services, income, support services and other basic necessities.
- Complete shelter intake forms to determine and document eligibility, review program rules and expectations, and assess barriers to obtaining safe and affordable permanent housing.
- In conjunction with families and individuals, develop an Individualized Service Plan to establish goals and action steps toward stabilization, independent living, and self-sufficiency; Assist families in identifying and accessing services necessary to reach their goals in the areas of housing, education, income, security, and quality of life.
- Assist households to obtain benefits they are, or may be, eligible for such as MFIP, medical assistance, general assistance, food support, child care/respice, etc.
- Connect families, to Families in Transition (F.I.T) members, and school social workers to facilitate enrollment for school-aged children and youth. If applicable schedule reoccurring meetings with County social workers, AHRMS workers, public health nurses, etc.
- Provide families with opportunities for self-empowerment, encouraging them to connect with resources in the community.

- Provide case management, advocacy, and support for families impacted by homelessness, domestic violence, mental health, addiction, and other barriers.
- Attend appointments with clients when necessary and help them navigate and complete paperwork/applications.
- Support families and individuals in examining the impacts of current and past trauma and stress on family life while working to build on current personal assets, creating a hopeful future.
- Provide crisis intervention as needed or when requested by property management for program participants; address disputes or differences between residents and property management; assist in household disputes and conflict resolution between residents.
- When applicable, participate in inter-agency teams/meetings in Duluth and St. Louis County to streamline processes and improve outcomes for families experiencing homelessness.
- Ensure that Program recordkeeping and reporting systems (HMIS) are accurately maintained following federal, state, and local requirements; Maintain appropriate client files by completing weekly case notes, updating client goal plans, and submitting program-related reporting as required.
- Work closely with Steve O'Neil Family Coaches, Early Childhood Education Program Staff, Youth Program Coordinator, Property Manager, and other community agencies.
- Schedule or upkeep regular maintenance within the Family Shelter (smoke alarms, dryer ducts, appliance repair, plumbing etc.)
- Work with the Director/other stabilization services staff to turn over units in a timely manner and prep units for incoming families. Schedule regular cleaning as needed.
- Develop healthy and helpful relationships with families and individuals while maintaining professional boundaries.
- Attend weekly staff meetings, regular trainings, or other meetings as assigned.
- Collaborate with potential housing programs by helping to facilitate tenant screening and obtaining documents required for entry and assist families moving into housing with obtaining funding such as first month's rent and deposit. (ESG, FHPAP, EA).
- Provide public speaking, outreach, and education about Chum and family shelter as appropriate.
- Participate in relevant community meetings and continuing education opportunities.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the Housing First, Trauma-Informed and Harm Reduction philosophies.
- Ability to pass a criminal background check.
- Demonstrated ability to work as a member of an integrated and diverse team; ability to work independently.
- Ability to maintain a flexible work schedule including occasional evenings and weekends.
- Other duties as may be assigned.

## **QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS:**

***Education And/ Or Experience:*** Bachelor's degree (B.A.) or equivalent from a four-year college or university in Social Work or related field; or equivalent combination of education and relevant experience in case management, working with persons and families who may have low incomes, have experienced homelessness, chemical dependence, mentally illness, or incarceration. Knowledge or willingness to learn HMIS. Knowledge of public and private community services and resources. Ability to work through the faith communities and utilize resources. Skills in individual and community advocacy. **People with lived experience of homelessness and people of color are strongly encouraged to apply.**

**Language Skills:** Ability to read, analyze, and interpret professional periodicals and governmental regulations. Ability to write reports and general business correspondence. Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from individuals, groups of clients, and the general public.

**Mathematical Skills:** Ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide in all units of measure, using whole numbers, common fractions, and decimals. Ability to compute rate, ratio, and percent and to draw and interpret graphs.

**Technological Skills:** Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

**Reasoning Ability:** Ability to solve practical problems and deal with a variety of concrete variables in situations where only limited standardization exists. Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.

**Certificates, Licenses, Registrations:** Certified in First Aid and CPR and trained in navigating the HMIS system. Valid Driver's License required.

**Other Skills and Abilities:** Self-motivation, mediation/negotiation, compassion, and listening skills. Must be flexible, adaptable, and resourceful.

**PHYSICAL DEMANDS:** The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions:

- While performing the duties of this job, the employee is required to talk, hear, stand, walk and sit. The employee is occasionally required to: use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects, tools, or controls; reach with hands and arms; stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl; and taste or smell.
- The employee must frequently lift and move up to 25 pounds and occasionally lift and move up to 50 pounds. Specific vision abilities this job requires include close vision and the ability to adjust focus.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT:** The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions:

- While performing the duties of this job, the employee may need to travel to various Chum locations.
- The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate to occasionally noisy.

#### **APPLICATION DEADLINE:**

Please send a cover letter and resume by e-mail to [chum@chumduluth.org](mailto:chum@chumduluth.org) with “**Family Shelter Advocate**” in the subject line. Resumes will be reviewed as received and the position will be open until filled.

**CHUM is committed to a diverse workforce. BIPOC individuals and people with lived experience of homelessness are strongly encouraged to apply.**