Program Assistant Job Description

Project: HIV & HCV Counseling, Testing, and Referral, And Tobacco Use Reduction Pilot Project
Position: Program Assistant
Reports To: HIV Program Director
Salary: TBD ($10–$12/hour)
Status: Full Time (35–40 hours/ wk)
Funding Source: MDCH

Mission
The mission of the Grand Rapids Red Project is to improve health, reduce risk and prevent HIV in the greater Grand Rapids metropolitan service area. More specifically we seek to provide access to the knowledge, tools, information and support that people need to stay healthy, and begin making any positive change in their own lives and in their communities. We accomplish our mission through providing direct client service delivery and advocacy through the Clean Works Comprehensive Harm Reduction Program, Bar and Community Outreach, the Positive Choices support group and Sisters with Status, Overdose Prevention and Response Training, and HIV and hepatitis C counseling, testing and referral.

Need
Significant strides have been made in the past two decades in the medical treatment and case management of HIV. People living with HIV are living longer healthier lives, and mortality has decreased. However, the number of people living with HIV in Kent County continues to increase, and prevention and early intervention remains a priority for The Grand Rapids Red Project. This project will provide prevention and HIV counseling, testing, and referral (CTR) services within the high risk populations of men who have sex with men (MSM) and people who inject drugs (IDU). This will be highly targeted HIV CTR, with the goal of providing prevention and testing services to high risk individuals, and facilitating entry into care for newly identified people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). The HIV Program Assistant will conduct outreach and testing events in the community on behalf of Red Project’s HIV CTR program. Lastly, new funding has been received to engage tobacco reduction activities for people living with HIV. The HIV Program Assistant will take the lead on providing one-on-one and/or group sessions under this program as well as promotion and outreach.

Responsibilities

- Assist in HIV/HCV CTR activities through testing at Bar Outreach events and Clean Works, and at Red Project offices (3–4 events/wk).
- Assist CTR Program Coordinator in recruiting volunteers for HIV CTR and tabling events from affected populations.
- Assist in identifying new testing locations.
- Assist in linking newly identified PLWHA to medical treatment and case management.
- Ensure all testing/outreach materials are well stocked and ready for outreach events.
- Network with community partners to increase the reach of Red Project services into high risk communities.
- Coordinate testing events as needed.
- Coordinate condom distribution in high risk communities.
- Coordinate monthly bar outreach events.
- Manage Ambassador referral program.
- Participate in staff, committee, board meetings, local events, and trainings as needed.
• Assist in necessary data entry.
• Promote testing events through social media and social network connections.
• Promote tobacco reduction program through social media and social network connections.
• Conduct one-on-one and group interventions emphasizing tobacco reduction among people living with HIV.
• Other duties as assigned by Program Manager.

Skills and Experience
• MDCH/HAPIS certified as an HIV tester/counselor. (Red Project can facilitate the certification process).
• Minimum of 1 year experience, and/or identifies as a member of an affected population.
• Extensive knowledge of HIV/HCV/STD infection, transmission, and prevention.
• Knowledge of local community resources and referrals related to HIV, health care, substance use, and basic needs.
• Ability to engage clients in a client centered manner and create effective referrals.
• Bilingual (English/Spanish) preferred.
• Excellent verbal and written communication skills with diverse groups and individuals, including strong interpersonal and organization skills.
• Demonstrate ability to work effectively with men and women of diverse races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, and drug use patterns, in a multicultural environment.
• Connected to MSM community networks in western Michigan, and the Grand Rapids area.
• Demonstrate ability to facilitate one-on-one and group interactions.
• Must be available to work nights and weekends as needed.

Critical Qualities
• Confidentiality—capable of maintaining the highest degree of confidentiality with regard to client and organizational information.
• Client Centered—capable of working with individuals to identify needs and priorities, and facilitate any positive change as a client defines that for themselves.
• Motivated—capable of taking the initiative and following a project through to completion.
• Organized—capable of prioritizing needs, goals and objectives. Capable of maintaining all required information/data for ease of access for staff and clients.
• Problem Solver—capable of thinking on the spot to resolve problem situations as they arise. Able to assess relevant information, identify a range of options, and make recommendations for resolution of problem situations.