Housing Specialist

St. Mary’s Center for Women and Children offers innovative and family-centered programs for women and children who have experienced trauma and are living in poverty. Placing families at the center of our efforts, St. Mary’s Center works in partnership with young women, many of them mothers, to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and achieve lasting, powerful change by building their emotional well-being, educational achievements and economic independence.

Located in Uphams Corner in Dorchester, Massachusetts, St. Mary’s Center supports 600 women and children annually with shelter, clinical and educational services, job training, employment placement, and search for affordable permanent housing.

We are seeking a **Housing Specialist** to assist families at Margaret's House experiencing homelessness, secure affordable, sustainable housing. *(This is a full-time, Salaried, Exempt position.)*

**FAMILY SERVICES**

- Serve as a positive role model following program guidelines for professional dress and behavior
- Maintain clear and respectful communication with staff, families, and community partners
- Consistently maintains professional, legal boundaries and ethical standards (Federal, State, and Agency)
- Actively engage families in active search for permanent affordable housing
- Plan, develop and implement group work curriculum designed to teach a range of independent living skills to families
- Provide individual services to support families as they plan for their transition to affordable, permanent housing
- Assess and re-assess families to develop the most effective and comprehensive housing plan to determine barriers and capacity to move as quickly as possible into permanent, affordable housing
- Uses basic counseling skills of active listening, empathy, reflection and validation to develop children and families capacities to function
- Build strong relationships and establish positive communication with families based on respect and understanding of their needs
- Ensure that families’ needs are met in a timely fashion and in an ethical manner
- refer and advocate for families in the areas of health, mental health, education, housing, childcare, vocation, legal and family services within timeframe that best meets family’s needs and best practice standards
- Establish and maintain frequent and positive communication with families and proactively reach out to connect families with a range of community based supportive resources
Educate parents about their responsibilities and legal consequences to actions that could lead to eviction
Conduct educational/vocational assessment of parent to determine eligibility for services according to state and agency standards
Facilitate family self-sufficiency related groups, psycho-educational groups, therapeutic groups as assigned
Provide outreach services to ensure regular contact with families is maintain for 12 months to ensure families maintain stable, permanent housing

PROGRAM SERVICES
- Actively work with landlords to build positive working relationships that will lead to early warning and interventions
- Establish and maintain positive working relationships with utility companies to support families to remain stable in their own homes
- Mediate disputes between landlords and families to prevent destabilization
- Represent families in housing court to advocate for continued tenancy
- Knowledgeable of and complies with program specific policies and procedures and enforces rules and regulations
- Maintain accurate documentation, records and files in accordance with contract requirements and quality assurance standards
- Maintain safety, appearance, and cleanliness of the facility in compliance with health, fire, and safety regulations
- Build collaborations with community agencies that will support families success in permanent housing
- Promote positive program visibility and maintain positive working relationships with funding resources, collaterals, and other community agencies
- Provide crisis interventions utilizing agency protocols to mitigate behavioral issues that may put families or the program at risk
- Actively engage as member of team and provide support to program staff as needed
- Provides shift coverage as required
- Responsible for on-call and emergency coverage through the pager rotation, as assigned

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
- Attend and use supervision for professional growth
- Engage in self-evaluation to establish goals for professional development
- Regularly attend, actively participate, and present in various program and agency meetings and trainings

QUALITY ASSURANCE
- Actively engage families in offering information on the strengths and weaknesses of their housing plan and adjust plan whenever appropriate
- Complete and distribute monthly and/or quarterly reports as indicated by program timetables
- Track performance targets established and provide documentation of family’s progress as required by funding source and Agency in timely fashion
- Maintain time sheets, mileage logs, daily work schedules, requests for time off in accordance with Agency policy
- Participate in program events as assigned
- Identify and implement positive changes for the betterment of program
- Transport families in a safe and secure manner in matters related to service delivery as needed
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS/QUALIFICATIONS

Professional/Academic

- Bachelor’s degree in related human service field preferred, Associate’s required; or 3-5 years’ experience and knowledge of housing subsidies and homeless and housing issues
- Experience in case management and advocacy
- Experience working in groups

Necessary Skills/Abilities

- Strong mediation and negotiation skills
- Ability to handle a variety of assignment and have the flexibility to work some evenings if necessary.
- Patient, understanding, and supportive
- Ability to engage in collaborative relationship with multidisciplinary team
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Word processing and computer skills
- Excellent interpersonal and organizational skills
- Ability to prioritize and manage multiple tasks
- Maintain flexible schedule to meet program needs and attend required meetings
- Ability to work well under pressure
- Comfortable with receiving clear, direct feedback from supervisors and peers
- Appropriately interact with people from diverse socio-economic, racial and cultural backgrounds
- Maintains an attitude of fairness, openness, and respect and supports the development of cultural competency at St. Mary’s
- Remains open to different opinions and viewpoints and is willing to learn from them
- Respects and values all people’s voices, including children, families and colleagues
- Sense of humor
- Highly flexible and energetic
- Enjoys working with and motivating residents
- Valid MA driver's license required

Qualified applicants may submit a resume and cover letter via email attachments to jobs@stmaryscenterma.org.