Housing Advocacy Program Housing Advocate

Supervisor: Director of Housing Advocacy Program

Hours: 35 hours per week

Annual Salary: $23.07/hour

Status: Full time, Union Position

CAAS Mission
CAAS helps local families and individuals achieve financial security while working to eliminate the root causes of economic injustice.

Position Summary

The Community Action Agency of Somerville is recruiting for a full-time Housing Advocate to work as part of the Housing Advocacy Program. CAAS’ Housing Advocacy Program (HAP) provides a wide range of services to low-income individuals at risk of homelessness, including preventing evictions through advocacy with landlords and in district court and maximizing income by improving access to public benefits.

The position of Housing Advocate will be charged with working with Somerville residents at risk of displacement by providing legal support and determining eligibility then processing rental assistance applications to prevent eviction. With the support of Cambridge & Somerville Legal Services, Housing Advocates ensure that tenants are made aware of their rights when facing an eviction. Other responsibilities of the Housing Advocate include assisting those facing housing insecurity to apply for affordable housing and engage clients in housing search when awarded a Section 8 voucher.

Specific Duties

- Conduct client intake upon assignment of case.
- Maintain a caseload of up to 35-40 clients.
- Assist clients in identifying and pursuing housing options such as public housing and other subsidized options. The Housing Advocate will ensure the client properly completes the applications and confirms receipt of the application.
- Advocate for priority status (homeless, disability, DV) for subsidized housing.
- Explore options for housing other than subsidized housing within the private market with the assistance of start-up costs.
- Support clients in representing themselves and communicating with landlords, property managers, etc.
- Support clients during the eviction process by ensuring they understand their rights and provide assistance during the Answer & Discovery process as well as advocate on behalf of the client during the trial process.
- Determine eligibility for rental assistance and assist with completing the application which includes collecting documentation from both the client and the landlord/property manager and confirm payment received by the landlord.
- Present challenging cases to legal services and/or the team for additional support.
- Attend weekly supervision with legal services for ongoing legal advocacy training as well as weekly supervision with the Director of HAP and weekly team meetings.
- Ensure accurate date reporting in CAAS database, CAP60 as well as maintain the client file per standards.
- Maximize financial and supportive resources, and help clients address other barriers to stable housing such as referrals to job search programs or assistance with applying for SNAP.
• Work collaboratively with other community providers in the best interest of the client

Qualifications
• Must be able to create a client-focused relationship with clients
• Knowledge of a holistic approach to housing as a complex social issue
• Knowledge of systematic barriers facing clients served by CAAS
• Associates Degree or higher in Human Service, Social Work, or related field
• Ability to communicate in a second language highly preferred (Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese)
• Acceptable CORI required

Note
Hybrid work schedule available
All CAAS employees must be fully vaccinated and boosted
This position is a grant-funded position.

To Apply:
Interested candidates should send cover letters and resumes to: igrogan@caasomerville.org

CAAS values diversity in its workforce and candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds are encouraged to apply.