



## **Employment and Education Counselor**

### **Background**

Founded in 1988, Bridge Communities (Bridge) is DuPage County's largest provider of transitional housing and supportive services for homeless families. At present, Bridge owns and operates twenty-six apartment buildings in 7 DuPage villages, with 154 total apartments. Bridge's headquarter office is in downtown Glen Ellyn. Bridge serves about 120 homeless families annually, with Program staff providing intake and referral, case management, employment coaching, children's services, nutrition counseling, donated vehicles, mental health payments, and more in a two-generation model working to break the cycle of poverty.

Bridge has a unique business model with faith-based and community-based organizations providing both financial support and volunteer mentors for families. Bridge also has two Fortune 50 companies as program partners, providing the financial support and mentors for families. Bridge has a history of collaborations with employers, public schools, medical and behavioral health, legal services, local and county government, and recreational service partners to provide holistic scope of support to families with warm reception. A strong fundraising and resource development team that has created diversity of funding streams and high donor retention. In Fiscal Year 2023, Bridge had a \$5 million operating budget, \$14 million in net assets, with \$3.5 million endowment and 28 employees.

### **Job Summary**

Through skills assessment, resume development, interview preparation, education coaching and planning, and other career transition activities, the Employment & Education Counselor strives to develop and prepare clients for success with both short and long term goals resulting in increased earnings, benefits, marketability and job stability. We work one-on-one with clients who are either under-employed or unemployed, providing guidance throughout the job search, success during on-boarding transition, and on-going support with job retention and career development. For clients desiring further education, we provide assistance throughout the process of selecting a program, registering for classes, and securing financial aid/scholarships.

The EAE Counselor is a 40-hour per week, salaried exempt position. Generally this position works Monday-Friday, normal business hours, but some nights and weekends are required. This position qualifies for all Bridge Communities offered benefits, including health and disability insurance, generous

paid time off, 403(b) retirement matching, et al. They will work remotely most of the time but will be required to attend meetings at the organization's headquarters in Glen Ellyn regularly, as well attend client meetings in person at various Bridge locations.

### **Responsibilities (40 hours)**

#### **Coaching: 40%**

1. Develop trust-based relationships with individual adult Bridge clients, using the principles of Trauma Informed Care, so they are willing to be counseled on all aspects of the job search process and educational planning. Job search activities may include, but are not limited to, aptitudes, skills and values assessments, development of marketing materials, interview preparation, and networking assistance. Adult education activities may include, but are not limited to, academic and career path assessments, identification and research into appropriate educational programs, college site visits, and exploring ways to pay for school, including scholarship assistance. We also coach on how to successfully manage work, school and family schedules.

#### **Training: 15%**

2. Facilitate Job Readiness classes and other training or presentations as needed.

#### **Internal Relationships: 20%**

3. Consistently communicate and collaborate with Case Managers, Program Partners and Mentors regarding client plans and progress. Partner with teams and Case Managers to support clients in completing employment and education goals.
4. Attend Staff Meetings & other staff events to remain engaged and connected to Bridge Family.

#### **External Relationships: 15%**

5. Network and cultivate individual relationships within the community, as well as with local employers and organizations.
6. Participate on West Suburban Jobs Council as member and on committees as needed.
7. Recruit and onboard employment volunteers to keep them engaged, and update and maintain volunteer database.

#### **Administrative: 10%**

8. Participate and complete special projects as assigned.

### **Core Competencies**

1. **Service to Mission:** Champion unwavering dedication to fulfill our purpose and goals.
  - a. Align all activities, decisions, and initiatives with our mission and values, ensuring that every action contributes to the goal of client self-sufficiency that BC seeks to achieve.

- b. Foster a sense of purpose & unity among staff, volunteers, and stakeholders, driving us to work collectively to bring about positive change in families' lives.
- 2. **Stewardship:** Build trust, embody ethical practices, and act as good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.
  - a. Demonstrate responsibility and transparency towards our stakeholders.
  - b. Manage resources effectively, make informed decisions, and report results accurately.
  - c. Hold ourselves accountable to our donors, beneficiaries, board members, volunteers, and the broader community.
- 3. **Leadership:** Foster our vision and values while promoting equity, belonging, innovation, and growth.
  - a. Guide, inspire, and empower individuals to work collaboratively towards achieving Bridge Communities' mission and objectives.
  - b. Prioritize the development of staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders, fostering a shared sense of purpose and commitment.
- 4. **Innovation:** Explore new ideas, seek creative solutions and adapt to changing circumstances.
  - a. Explore new methods and approaches to address organizational challenges and improve the effectiveness of programs and services.
  - b. Go beyond traditional strategies, leveraging technology, partnerships, and evolving practices to better serve our beneficiaries.
- 5. **Collaboration:** Communicate effectively, share resources & knowledge, and seek feedback & diverse perspectives to amplify our impact.
  - a. Work harmoniously with internal and external stakeholders to achieve common goals and amplify the impact of Bridge Communities' efforts.

#### **Performance Expectations**

As an Employment and Education Counselor, it is expected this position demonstrates commitment in achieving agency strategic initiatives and departmental goals. The Employment and Education Counselor is responsible for successfully coaching Bridge clients through their employment and/or educational journey by establishing productive relationships with clients, mentors, case managers, & outside agencies.

This position will also help establish and further relationships with partner agencies through consistent positive communication and interactions. It is also expected someone in this role will facilitate and develop curriculum related to employment and/or educational knowledge as needed on a regular basis.

The individual is expected to adhere to the highest ethical standards in, convey a professional and positive image and attitude regarding Bridge, demonstrate commitment to professional growth and development, and demonstrate commitment to strengthening Bridge Communities' policies and practices as they relate to equity and belonging.

## **Qualifications**

- 1) Education and Experience
  - a) Bachelor's degree in human resources management or related discipline.
  - b) 2+ years' experience in HR and/or Career Transition.
  - c) Expertise with coaching individuals in career transition, specifically in resume development, networking, and interviewing.
- 2) Skills and Knowledge
  - a) Strong knowledge of hiring processes.
  - b) Familiarity with MS Office suite, including Outlook, Word, Excel, & Powerpoint.
  - c) Open to development of skills and knowledge
  - d) Willingness to be flexible and adaptable to change
  - e) While performing duties of this position, employee will be required, on occasion, to lift up to 25 pounds. The ability to stand on your feet for extended periods of time may be needed.
  - f) Valid Illinois Driver's License and the ability to travel locally.
  - g) Fluent in speaking & reading/writing Spanish is preferred but not required.

Bridge Communities is an equal opportunity employer. It is our policy to grant equal employment opportunity to all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, age, national origin, sex, religion, pregnancy, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, military or veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws. This policy pertains to all personnel actions including, but not limited to recruitment, evaluation, selection, promotion, compensation, and termination.

This job description does not list all duties of the job. You may be asked by supervisors to perform other duties. You will be evaluated, in part, based upon your performance of the tasks listed in this job description. Your employer has the right to revise this job description at any time. The job description is not a contract for employment, and either you or the employer may terminate employment at any time, for any reason.

## **To Apply:**

- Browse our website [www.bridgecommunities.org](http://www.bridgecommunities.org) to learn more about Bridge Communities.
- Compose a cover letter – one-page maximum – to clearly state your case for your candidacy.  
**Resumes submitted without a cover letter will not be considered.**
- Email your cover letter and resume to [jodi.fegter@bridgecommunities.org](mailto:jodi.fegter@bridgecommunities.org)
- Candidates whose backgrounds are a strong fit with our requirements and have followed the explicit instructions can expect contact within 10 business days of application deadline. No follow-up phone calls or emails please. Application deadline is March 15th.
- Please do not supply references at this time. No phone inquiries or follow-up, please.
- Annual salary starting at \$52,000, dependent on education, experience, and demonstrated skills, with potential sign-on bonus of up to \$2,000 for demonstrated Spanish fluency

*Bridge Communities is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, client families, volunteers, and vendors. Bridge Communities does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring, and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services.*

*Bridge Communities will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or applicant on the bases of the above-mentioned protections.*

*Reasonable accommodation will be provided as needed to enable qualified applicants with a disability to participate in the pre-employment process.*