

**PINE STREET INN
JOB DESCRIPTION**

POSITION:	Housing Search Specialist
DAYS/HOURS:	40 hours, Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., this schedule requires flexibility due to program needs; early mornings, weekends, holidays and evenings may be required
REPORTS TO:	Housing Search Supervisor
DEPARTMENT:	Coordinated Housing Solutions, OPHP
LOCATION:	PSI Shelters and Community locations; this position works on site. Remote work available dependent upon agreement with supervisor and PSI occupational health policies, but this position is not eligible for 100% remote work.

SUMMARY OF POSITION:

As Pine Street Inn expands its support services to the homeless individuals it serves, it provides affordable housing directly as a landlord to adult individuals. Pine Street Inn also works with homeless individuals to source market units and match its clients with available, independently-owned housing options, and employs Housing Search Specialists to source independent units.

The Housing Search Specialists (PMHSS) will work as part of a coordinated and integrated interagency team of housing search specialist across the Boston. The HSS will work assertively to identify the units necessary to meet the housing needs of this developing Housing system. The HSS will engage with sheltered and unsheltered targeted clients to reduce barriers to housing and housing supports utilizing actionable decisions and individual housing plans that will rapidly lead to safe, affordable housing with the supports necessary to sustain achieved housing.

The HSS will work with brokers, landlords, government agencies, and property management companies to cultivate, develop and maintain all types of housing options in and around Boston. Leveraging all available housing search resources and expanding the number of properties for the program. A virtual clearinghouse of available properties inside and around Boston will be established so that homeless individuals can be quickly matched to appropriate properties. The HSS will work in conjunction with the Housing Search & Placement Specialist Supervisor to build capacity for shared living and securing units outside of Boston. HSS will individually be responsible for securing a specific number of units leveraging all housing search resources and ensuring that we are not duplicating housing search efforts. The HSS will work within a Housing First framework. The HSS will use CAS system to ensure coordination across the homeless services system.

The HSS will work from, adopt, and enliven the following principles:

- Shelter is a temporary safety net, not a home.
- All people experiencing homelessness, regardless of their housing history and duration of homelessness, can achieve housing stability in permanent housing.
- Never warehouse or institutionalize our guests in our shelters
- Everyone is “housing ready.” Sobriety, compliance in treatment, or even a clean criminal history is not necessary to succeed in housing. Rather, homelessness programs and housing providers must be “consumer ready.”
- Leverage guests’ strengths, assets, and connections to move quickly out of shelters and to any other housing
- Employ an empowerment model
- Maximize guest choices and control over her/his stabilization based in a relational collaboration
- Create an atmosphere that is respectful of the guests’ need for safety, respect, and acceptance
- Emphasize the guests’ strengths, highlighting adaptations over symptoms and resilience over pathology
- Minimize the possibilities of re-traumatization
- Strive to be culturally competent and to understand each person in the context of his or her life experiences and cultural background
- Solicit guest input and involve guests in designing and evaluating services

QUALIFICATIONS

EDUCATION/TRAINING:

REQUIRED:

- Associates in a human services related field [may be substituted for High School diploma with at least three (3) years of equivalent experience in a social service setting]
- Valid Massachusetts Driver's License
- Experience in Housing search

PREFERRED:

- Certification, training, or formal education in counseling and/or case management or real estate and/or property management
- Bilingual – Spanish/English
- Experience in property development, real estate leasing, or real estate brokerage

KNOWLEDGE/EXPERIENCE:

REQUIRED:

- A minimum of two (2) years of experience in any of the following three areas:
 - Delivering services to a unsheltered population living in the streets often struggling with addiction and untreated or under-treated mental health concerns
 - Customer service and sales
 - Property development, property management, or real estate
- Strong computer and math skills - including familiarity with MS Word, Excel and the ability to learn and successfully use MIS & HMIS programs
- Experience navigating systems of housing and care for homeless individuals
- Working knowledge of human services systems, housing subsidy programs and homeless referral networks
- Experience maintaining consistent communication channels, both verbal and written, between several parties (i.e. tenant, property owner, referral source, collaborating agencies, debtors and creditors).
- Experience serving as an ongoing liaison between property managers and participants as well as between participants and program funders.

PREFERRED:

- Experience accessing local housing opportunities and subsidy programs for homeless individuals
- Practical experience in diversion, mediation, negotiation, motivational interviewing, trauma informed care, harm reduction, crisis prevention and intervention, household budgeting, rapid re-housing and service planning, recovery services – including mental health, substance use/abuse and traumatic brain injury
- Working Knowledge of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing
- Knowledge of residential lease contracts to educate clients of their rights and responsibilities.
- Experience speaking/presenting in front of medium to large size groups
- Experience providing mediation and advocacy with property owners on the client's behalf to develop a workable plan to obtain and or maintain housing.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES/SKILLS:

REQUIRED:

- Ability to stand for moderate periods of time, stretch, bend, lift and assist guests up and down stairs during difficult and/or emergency situations.
- Ability to respond safely and quickly in case of emergency situations
- Ability to sit for moderate periods of time at a desk in an office while interacting with clients and/or managing documentation and completing data entry
- Must be able to drive a PSI vehicle for work use

MENTAL ABILITIES/SKILLS:

REQUIRED:

- Excellent writing, documentation, math and computer skills
- Ability to establish good working relationships with internal and external program staff
- Strong decision-making, leadership ability and communication skills

- Exceptional customer service
- Ability to perform an array of difficult tasks at the same time
- Patience in working with guests with untreated emotional and/or physical health needs and active substance use/abuse/dependency behaviors
- Ability to work in intense emotionally charged situations
- Ability to help provide critical incident de-briefing

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Meet or exceed established program goals
- Secure a minimum of 40 appropriate properties in a 12 month period
- Uphold the minimum standards of landlord service, including quick response time to vacancies and tenancy issues
- Utilize an assessment tool for persons on the streets assisting with identifying the appropriate housing need.
- Act as a liaison between caseworkers, program participants, and the landlord, property manager, or broker during the housing identification process which includes but is not limited to the application assistance, inspections, coordinate prospective tenant viewings, and facilitating leasing appointments.
- Provide pro-active follow-up home visits to ensure stability and further progress towards self-sufficiency; this includes support, advocacy, reducing isolation, listening, problem solving, and identification of resources to assist with reintegration of participants in the community.
- Build mutually beneficial, professional relationships with landlords, property managers, and brokers use high integrity, strong initiative, and creativity to do so
- Operate within the policy and procedures of the Coordinated Housing Solutions program and Pine Street Inn
- Transport clients as deemed necessary. Transportation requirements should be limited to housing searches and occasional visit to relevant social service agencies.
- Work as a strong contributor to an interagency coordinated team
- Ambassador of Pine Street Inn
- Ensure quality data entry: accurate and timely data entry
- Input guest updates and other pertinent service information in the HMIS system. Use HMIS system to track guest access to services and outcomes
- Actively participate in Housing Search collaboration meetings
- Contribute Housing options to a virtual clearing house to be leveraged by the full continuum
- Coordinate and align with Boston's Coordinated Access System and Shelter Triage and Outreach Teams
- Perform other additional assignments or projects as requested/directed by supervisor
- Other duties as assigned in order to meet the needs of the organization during the COVID-19 pandemic or other public health or weather emergency.