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Shelter Workforce Preparation

City and County officials have adopted a resolution to aggressively seek solutions and end street homelessness by November of 2021. In order to accomplish this goal, the city and county will need to increase shelter capacity by at least 2400 beds. With an already stressed homeless service workforce system, Valeo has created a paid skill development program designed to recruit, train, and prepare a workforce to deploy to work in the critical shelter system.

**Training Program:**

Valeo’s Shelter Workforce Preparation program is exceptional within the field of human services due to our supportive framework of peer and case managers. The program seeks a non-traditional workforce, those who are recently in recovery from homelessness themselves. We leverage lived experience by empowering their keen ability to relate to the population we serve, preparing them for careers in the Human and Social Services field. The 90-day program provides 60 days of in-classroom instruction (20 hrs/wk) followed by a 30-day staffing placement to provide real-life on-the-job (OJT) training.

The in-classroom training is provided by a certified mental health counselor with significant direct service experience, knowledge, and training expertise. The curriculum consists of the following foundational topics:

* Self-Care and Wellness
  + Work Stamina
  + Therapeutic Skills (DBT)
  + Holistic Health
* Basic Principles of Safety
  + Verbal De-Escalation
  + Creating Good Boundaries and Ethics
    - Behavioral Health 101
  + Substance Use: Understanding Addiction
* Foundations of Care
  + Trauma-Informed Care
    - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
    - The Recovery Model
  + Motivational Interviewing
  + Harm Reduction
* Case Management
  + Roles, Functions and Activities of Case Managers
  + Goal Setting
  + Advocacy vs Self-Advocacy, Empowerment and Activation

We will provide a $200 per week stipend to participants during the first 60 days to assist with financial obligations. By providing stipends for participants as they dedicate time to skill development, we honor their time and incentivize continued participation, allowing them to begin to envision a life of independence.

Following the 60-day training, program participants are then provided with a final 30-day on-the-job (OJT) training staffing placement at a community shelter, with the end goal of being trained and hired by the operator. The initial 30-day OJT staffing placement is program funded with the host site not responsible for any of the wages paid until the 30-day OJT period ends and they choose to offer the participant permanent employment. This design element enables the shelter operator to lower staffing costs by reducing their ongoing reliance on temporary staffing placements by creating a much faster training/onboarding pathway.

The program design was informed and built with a participatory lens as we learned from our existing shelter workforce operations and by the experiences and inputs of participants, context experts, and existing program workers, managers, and directors.

Fully funded, the 1-yr program will provide approx. 60-80 new shelter employees who are professionally trained and ready to make a significant impact on the shelter operations landscape — a notable consideration given the projected increase in available shelter bed capacity planned for Pierce County that will create strong demand for competent and peer-informed shelter workers with the lived experience and training that makes them uniquely qualified to help shelter residents move toward housing and other supportive services.