



## College Retention Specialist JOB DESCRIPTION

**About RHI:** For 15 years, Red Hook Initiative (RHI) has nurtured young people in Red Hook, Brooklyn, to be inspired, resilient and healthy, and to envision themselves as co-creators of their lives, community and society. Dozens of participants in RHI programs have returned to RHI as staff, and have jump-started careers in youth development from there. RHI recently expanded its facility to increase its reach among youth in middle school through age 24, as well as its community building programs. The organization is rich with recognition - for excellence in nonprofit management, for serving as the epicenter of post-Hurricane Sandy relief, and for cutting edge approaches to bridge the digital divide.

**Reports to:** Young Adult Program Manager

**Summary/Description:** The College Retention Specialist supports young adults (18 to 24 years old) to achieve their educational goals beginning when they are in high school and are considering whether college is the right fit. Working closely with the Young Adult Program Manager s/he develops, manages, and facilitates the College Scholars and the Education Advocacy programs. This position provides a creative, compassionate, persistent person with the opportunity to be a part of a strong network of emotional support that helps Red Hook youth, many of whom are first-generation college students, focus on the path to graduation.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **College Scholars**

- Establish and maintain relationships with young adults enrolled in RHI's programs to ensure they are on track to graduate with a two or four year college degree.
- Foster connections between college students and their school community, and support students to navigate resources, including accessing financial aid and scholarships, tutoring, mental health, and other relevant resources toward achieving independence.
- Develop programs, activities, and new initiatives to keep college-bound and focused young adults connected with the RHI community.
- Create online community and develop a support system through social media.
- Collaborate with the Employment Coordinator to identify relevant work and internship opportunities for Scholars (summer internships, job shadowing within their field, mentoring, etc.)
- Work within NYC's Connections 2 Care project to identify and support college student's mental health needs using approaches such as motivational interviewing, mental health first aid, screenings and referrals, and psychoeducation; collaborate with Young Adult Social Worker to address them.
- Collaborate with high school staff to implement RHI's college readiness and awareness programming.

- Conduct workshops for parents and students on the transition to college.

### **Education Advocacy**

- Provide educational advocacy for young people and families (support youth to secure transcripts and meet with guidance counselors, provide referrals to educational testing, etc.)
- Coach young adults to re-engage with the educational system to meet their academic goals (re-enroll in college, transfer schools, etc.)
- Maintain accurate case notes and files detailing the progress of each advocacy case; keep RHI's program database (Salesforce) updated.
- Develop and maintain list of resources related to education and special education needs.
- Work with other staff at RHI to develop and implement action plans for young people with regard to school and education.
- Coordinate with the Employment Coordinator to assist young people to transition into an appropriate education or job development program.
- Conduct workshops or lead groups around issues relating to education and educational advocacy.
- Make phone calls and conduct outreach to participants as necessary.
- Complete monthly paperwork including reports on progress, evaluations, and databases.
- Meet with supervisor on a regular basis to review progress on overall program goals.

### **Skills, Knowledge and Abilities:**

- Strong verbal/written communication.
- Embraces a strengths-based approach to work with youth.
- Ability to work independently.
- Knowledge of New York City public education system, college application process, and college retention methods.
- Willingness to collaborate on projects and work with a team.
- Ability to research educational opportunities and guidelines.

### **Experience and Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's Degree
- Red Hook resident or prior involvement with the Red Hook community preferred.
- At least 2 years of experience with special education or the NYC Dept. of Education.
- At least 2 years working to prepare youth for college/working with first generation college students.
- At least 2 years of program management experience.
- At least 2 years of case management experience working with youth and families.
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) preferred

**To Apply:** To apply, please send resume, cover letter and salary requirements to [apply@rhicenter.org](mailto:apply@rhicenter.org) with "College Retention Specialist" in the subject line.