



## College Retention Specialist JOB DESCRIPTION

**About RHI:** For 17 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. A key component of our approach to youth development and community building lies in the integration of socio-emotional support. Social work values and holistic practices are essential.

**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, they develop, manage, and facilitate the College Scholars Program (CS) and provide educational advocacy. This position provides a creative, compassionate, persistent person with the opportunity to be a part of a strong network of critical support that helps Red Hook youth, many of whom are first-generation college students, focus on the path to college graduation.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **Facilitate Access to College**

- Collaborate with high school staff to implement RHI's college access, awareness and readiness programming via event-planning and pre-college summer institute facilitation
- Conduct workshops for parents and students on college access and transition.

#### **Provide individual support toward college persistence**

- Establish relationships and outreach regularly to RHI young adults enrolled in college to ensure they are on track to graduate with a two or four-year degree.
- Foster connections between college students and the school community in order to support student navigation of resources, including accessing financial aid and scholarships, tutoring, mental health support, and other relevant resources toward achieving independence.
- Refer college scholars to Young Adult Social Workers to support mental health needs using approaches such as motivational interviewing, mental health first aid, screening referrals, case-conferencing, and group counseling.

#### **Create a community of peer support around a college-going culture**

- Develop services, activities, and new initiatives to keep college-bound and focused young adults connected with the RHI community.
- Create and maintain communication systems for college scholar mutual support and community-building via online and in-person methods

- Collaborate with the employment team to identify relevant work and internship opportunities for Scholars (summer internships, job shadowing within their field, mentoring, etc.)

### **Educational 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, matriculation, transfer schools, etc.)
- Maintain accurate service data entry and goal-tracking detailing the progress of each advocacy case; keep RHI's program database (Salesforce) updated.
- Plan and conduct workshops around issues relating to education and educational advocacy.

### **Administration**

- Generate regular reports in support of grant outcomes measurement and scholar key performance indicators including updates on progress, evaluations, and database entry.
- Coordinate RHI's College Retention Fund in collaboration with the program manager
- Network to maintain and grow RHI's list of partners related to academic and specialized educational needs.
- Collaborate with the other team members at RHI to implement participant-led action plans and transition into an appropriate education or job development program.

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

- Strong verbal/written communication.
- Embraces a strengths-based approach to work with youth.
- Ability to work and co-design programming independently.
- Knowledge of New York City public education system, college application process, and college retention methods.
- Ability to guide and co-plan with college facilitation consultants
- Experience with event-planning and willingness to collaborate on projects, and build team.
- Ability to research and develop educational opportunities and guidelines.

### **Experience and Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's Degree
- 2 years of experience in an academic environment (i.e. special education, NYC Dept. of Education, college access work).
- First-hand experience with youth programming and /or working with first-generation college students, preferred.
- 2 years of case management experience working with youth and families, preferred.
- Red Hook resident or prior involvement with the Red Hook community, preferred.
- 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.