

PREVENTION FIRST

Mental Health Engagement Specialist

POSITION SUMMARY

This position will advance Prevention First's mental health and youth engagement initiatives through training, technical assistance, resource development, and statewide collaboration. This position builds partnerships, supports youth leadership, and promotes evidence-informed practices that strengthen communities across Illinois.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Facilitates Mental Health First Aid training (Youth, Teen, and Adult) and other evidence-informed mental health training curricula via classroom, virtual, and blended learning formats for diverse audiences in different community areas, schools, and organizations throughout the state; prepares for training; coordinates logistics; conducts follow-up with participants for feedback; delivers workshops and presentations.
- Conducts process evaluation for all assigned trainings and events, including a review of participant evaluations and completion of a training report.
- Develops resources on youth development and engagement topics and mental health topics, including stigma, suicide, wellness, intervention, and postvention strategies.
- Assists in the development and execution of strategic social media initiatives that will enhance the growth of youth-focused initiatives, including those of the Mental Health Training & TA (MHTTA) Team and the Youth Prevention Resource Center (YPRC); creates unique content that promotes audience interaction with an understanding of the online community and target audience; develops and contributes to website content.
- Works with the Youth Advisory Board with a focus on youth engagement, mental health, and wellness; facilitates board member calls and subcommittee meetings; serves as an advisor to the Board during public events.
- Works with the MHTTA Team and YPRC Administrator to develop and conduct needs assessments to identify professional development needs, including training and technical assistance, of community organizations, law enforcement, first responders, schools, and other stakeholder groups.
- Builds relationships with community organizations, law enforcement, schools, and stakeholders across Illinois to cultivate partnerships to strategize, plan, and collaborate efforts that enhance youth development training and mental health training opportunities.
- Works with the Director of Resource Centers to identify growth opportunities for Prevention First related to mental health and wellness training and other initiatives; oversees the planning and implementation of special projects as assigned.

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- Demonstrates a commitment to valuing diversity and contributing to an inclusive working and learning environment.
- Monitors new literature and trends in the mental health and youth engagement fields; provides feedback on current practices, new initiatives, and collaborations; attends relevant conference opportunities.
- Represents the department and/or Prevention First on various internal, regional, and statewide committees, with various organizations, and at conferences; attends all internal staff meetings, organizational retreats, and planning meetings.
- Responds to field inquiries regarding resources, networking, and training opportunities.
- Performs related administrative tasks; assists with the development and administration of department budgets; monitors expenditures for compliance with approved budget and to ensure adequate resources; obtains and processes related invoices; prepares various reports and documents, including activity logs, travel vouchers, and marketing materials

POSITION QUALIFICATIONS

Bachelor's degree in Education, Community Health Services, Social Work, or a related field with a minimum of three years of related professional experience involving the coordination of special projects, budgetary accountability, professional prevention field work and interactions with youth groups; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job. Background checks are required for all staff who have direct contact with minors involved in youth-serving programs. Must be able to successfully complete QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training and other evidence-informed curricula. Certified Youth or Adult Mental Health First Aid Instructor preferred. Candidates who are not currently certified instructors but have completed MHFA training and demonstrate a commitment to obtain instructor certification within 90 days of hire (or as soon as training is available) will also be considered.

DESIRED SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Facilitative Leadership Skills – Ability to bring about an outcome (such as learning) in large groups, small groups, and one-on-one scenarios; able to promote collaboration and coordination across programs and services.
- Goal Oriented - Ability to focus on a goal and obtain a pre-determined result.
- Interpersonal - Ability to get along well with a variety of personalities and individuals; ability to build inclusive partnerships that bring together a diverse array of stakeholders to engage in authentic collaboration.
- Creative - Ability to produce new concepts, ideas, and innovative solutions.
- Excellent Communication Skills – Ability to organize and convey ideas clearly in writing and verbally.
- Critical Thinking – Ability to analyze and evaluate an issue in order to form a judgment.

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ABOUT PREVENTION FIRST

Prevention First is a nonprofit and the leading organization for knowledge-building and the dissemination of evidence-based prevention strategies. Our mission is to equip communities with resources and support to build pathways that prevent substance misuse and promote safety and lasting well-being for all through training, education, and partnerships. Since 1980, Prevention First has provided training, technical assistance, and resource materials to thousands of schools, community groups, parents, and youth. We specialize in building the capacity of practitioners to build and sustain effective community coalitions to prevent substance abuse, develop comprehensive strategic prevention plans, and select and implement appropriate evidence-based prevention strategies. We are funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services and offer our services throughout the state.

We offer an exceptional benefits package to our full-time employees (80% and above):

- Paid Time Off Accrual System (eligible day 1)
- Paid holidays
- Medical, dental & vision
- 401(k) plan (eligible after 90 days, vested after 1 year)

This is a full-time, FLSA-exempt position, reporting to the Director of Resource Centers. We have locations in both Chicago and Springfield. The starting salary is \$58,250.

Prevention First is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We're committed to having an inclusive and transparent environment where every voice is heard and acknowledged. We are dedicated to equality and believe deeply in diversity of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, national origin, and all the other unique characteristics that make us different.

APPLICATION

We strongly encourage people from underrepresented groups to apply. Please e-mail your cover letter and resume to humanresources@prevention.org.