

Job Description – Employment Pathways Specialist

Location: Roca Springfield

FLSA Classification: Non-Exempt

Organizational Overview

Founded in Chelsea, Massachusetts in 1988, Roca’s mission is to move disengaged and disenfranchised young people out of violence and poverty. Working out of four Massachusetts sites in Chelsea, Boston, Lynn, and Springfield, Roca annually serves 800 young men from 19 communities heavily affected by generation-spanning poverty, gang violence, and criminality. This traumatized group of young people have come of age in the era of mass incarceration, where now generations of men in their communities have disproportionately shouldered the burden of “tough on crime” policies. Often compounding these effects is a lack of quality public education, vocational opportunities, and affordable housing in the communities served.

Roca’s theory of change is that young people, when re-engaged through positive and intensive relationships, can change their behaviors and develop life, education, and employment skills to disrupt the cycles of poverty and incarceration.

Designed for young men who are **not ready, willing, or able to engage in traditional work or programming**, Roca’s four-year Intervention Model begins with relentless outreach by paraprofessionals equipped with crisis intervention and cognitive restructuring tools, resulting in strong relationships with the highest-risk young men. Roca’s Model is an identified best practice for working with high-risk young adults.

Position Overview

Roca Springfield serves over 200 young men a year in different phases of the Roca model.

Employment components of the Roca model include:

- Transitional Employment
 - o Work crews for those young men able to participate
 - o Individual placement in short-term transitional job slots for young men with higher level skills
- Workforce readiness
 - o Combination of workshops, achievements such as resumes or identification, etc.
 - o Weekly feedback from Work Crew Supervisors and Youth Workers
 - o Learning about job possibilities (this is an area that needs to be developed)
- Pre-vocational skills
 - o Informal training in maintenance, cleaning, painting, culinary
 - o OSHA 10, Forklift Training
 - o Potentially other areas for development
- Job Placement
 - o The model has several pathways to job placement
 - Completion of transitional employment and then job placement
 - Completion of advanced transitional employment and then job placement
 - Rapid placement (See information below on model to be further developed) and
 - Rapid replacement
 - o Retention support
 - o Assistance in advancing in employment once someone has successfully retained work for over a year (later phase in the model)

This role will be the lead person responsible for job placement, rapid placement and replacement. Job placement, long-term retention and growth to employment with a living wage and beyond is a key goal of Roca’s intervention model for high risk young men. While this is a similar goal as many other organizations that work with young people, the starting point for the young men and women we serve is fundamentally different. When young men and young women start at Roca, they are fundamentally not ready, willing and able to work and/or participate consistently in education, training or employment. The program’s design is to help young people learn the skills they need to succeed in life, employment and education.

To meet the specific needs of the young people at Roca, their starting points in the organization, and address their barriers, Roca’s employment programming is based on stages of behavior change meeting young people where they are in terms of attendance, performance and attitude. The stages of change approach allows young people to practice skills until they succeed as opposed to creating yet another place of failure in their lives. The employment programming is further reinforced with an innovative cognitive behavior curriculum designed to teach young people the skills they need to think different in order to act different; thus allowing them choices and opportunities in their lives.

The rapid employment component of the work is under development. Borrowing from successful work with Veteran’s with mental health, substance abuse and challenging issues, Roca is seeking to develop this model with very high risk young men who are not able to participate in transitional employment and who are not “work ready”. The Employment Pathways Specialist will work with Transitional Employment Coordinator and several other Roca staff to review the data on the Veteran’s Model, define the parallel to Roca young men, outline a prototype, and implement using data. Each quarter for the first few years, a team will review data and work on continuous improvement.

At Roca we believe that there is “no progress without a job.” Employment is one of the most critical factors keeping our proven-risk males out of jail, enabling a livelihood of success.

This position will report to the Program Manager and work strategically with Chief Advancement Officer and Employment Team. In addition, this position will need to work closely with Youth Workers and other program staff as appropriate to move young men through the benchmarks toward long term employment placement.

Responsibilities

- Understand, practice and promote the vision, mission, and values of the organization.

| Bottom Line Responsibilities | Expectations and Deliverables |
|------------------------------|--|
| Workforce Readiness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track participants as they move through the Roca model and work with team to ensure they are meeting all appropriate workforce readiness benchmarks and are ready to be placed in employment by 21 months from enrollment. • Coach participants, on a one-on-one basis and in small groups, in workforce readiness. • Assist in implementing workforce readiness classes, employment programming and/or techniques to develop soft skills for high risk young people as assigned |
| Rapid Placements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and ensure all appropriate participants complete pre-placement requirements for rapid placement. This includes all level 3 participants and some level 4 participants as determined by the program team. |

| Bottom Line Responsibilities | Expectations and Deliverables |
|---------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for overall management of Rapid Placement processes for all eligible participants including: initial placement meeting; placement vetting; application process, placement, and the replacement process. • Provide employment based coaching to rapid placement positions, providing support and feedback to retain placements and/or coaching as participant's transition between placements. This will include the delivery of CBT and workforce readiness coaching as appropriate. • Work closely with management and youth workers to track participant progress as they move through the rapid placement process and place them in long-term employment. • Work closely with the TEP Coordinator and the Chief Advancement Officer to strategically identify and build employer database of appropriate rapid placement employment opportunities for eligible participants. |
| Job Development and Replacement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct all research necessary to develop an adequate pool of jobs for young people seeking employment and/or reaching job readiness benchmarks. • Develop a pool of appropriate job openings including those appropriate for both individual placements and larger scale employers seeking multiple employees. This will include cold calling employers and developing strong employer relationships. • Review candidate list and perform appropriate job matching activities. • Follow up with participants and employers regarding job placement activities. • Follow up with youth workers regarding participant retention and need for replacements. • Work with participants who require replacement in a new position, seeing to achieve replacement within 30 days. |
| General Responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) data base through data entry of all work with participants on a daily/weekly basis, completion of assessments and all other tools as required for evaluation purposes • Utilize ETO reports and data to track participant progress and own performance in moving young people through change process and achieving expected performance indicator targets • Actively participate in the safety of the space for all participants through building coverage and communication across the organization • Other tasks as assigned |

Qualifications

The very nature of Roca's work requires an individual of great commitment and energy to the mission. Roca seeks a highly driven individual who is good fit both personally and professionally for the culture of Roca. In addition, the ideal candidate for this position will be a trustworthy decision-maker. He/she will have a sense of humor, feel passionate and committed to direct work with high-risk youth, and demonstrate interest in coaching and supporting coworkers.

Roca expects candidates to have the following skills:

- BA preferred/Equivalent experience accepted--Minimum of three years of direct service work with high risk young people
- Understanding and experience working with street involved high-risk young people.
- Capacity for creative problem-solving, conflict resolution, violence prevention
- Strong written and oral communication skills.
- Capacity to think and act intentionally and strategically to help young people change behaviors
- Creative problem-solving and thinking

- Excellent at organizing, managing and completing multiple complex projects and tasks simultaneously with thoroughness, accuracy, timeliness and good humor.
- Self-motivation, initiative, sound judgment, and commitment to ongoing learning are essential
- Ability to work as a part of a team.

Requirements for the position:

- Travel around the service area
- Computer Literate
- Valid MA Driver's License and current Driving Record
- Willingness and ability to work outside of normal business hours, and Holidays and/or weekends as needed.
- Working with diverse cultures
- Excellent attendance and high energy