

## UNITED WAY 211 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

United Way 211 provides comprehensive 24-hour information and referral phone line in the areas of Dane, Columbia, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, and Rock Counties. 211 is the number to both to get and give help. United Way 211 offers free, confidential assistance from trained community information and referral specialists. People call to get information on a wide range of area resources or assistance with basic life needs and personal issues. Typical call topics include: food, shelter, financial and legal help, parenting and child care, elder care, alcohol and other drug abuse, mental health, recreation, crisis intervention, employment and education, domestic violence, volunteer opportunities, child abuse and neglect, health care, and disability. United Way 211 works closely with many of the social service agencies in the service area and maintains a database of over 1,500 agencies. The internship program successfully integrates the knowledge and skills of previous social work, human services delivery system courses offering learning experience of professional practice while providing direct information and referral to area residents applying the ethics and values of social work. It is also a great opportunity to learn about the available resources in the service area and find possible service gaps and unmet needs.

### JOB DESCRIPTION

In an average week, we would expect the student to work 16-20 hours doing 211 phone coverage, volunteer support, resource work, and attending to United Way staff meetings and other meetings with partner agencies and service fairs representing United Way 211.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- United Way 211 guidelines, policies, and procedures
- Comprehensive view of the services provided by public and nonprofit agencies and programs in the service area
- Effective research of available resources
- Skills contacting area service providers to perform agency update
- Proficiency in using and updating 211 resource database
- Work with diverse population
- Insight into the needs (met and unmet) of residents living in the service area
- Interviewing
- Active listening
- Problem assessment
- Problem analysis

- Problem solving
- Crisis intervention
- Supervision of volunteer staff

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Assist with the maintenance of community resource information in the United Way 211 database through formal/informal updates, research, outreach, and data classification
- Work with team members to identify and recommend areas for improvement to ensure quality service provision to the community
- Assist team with identification of unmet needs in the community
- Staff the 211 lines and connect callers with resources
- Respond to callers in a supportive, empathetic manner is critical
- Provide support for volunteer staff during their call shift

## **POSITION REQUIREMENTS**

- Experience working with or demonstrated understanding of social services
- Strong communicator with people of diverse backgrounds and situations
- Comfortable conveying empathy as well as resources over the phone
- Strong written, presentation and public speaking skills
- Strong proven computer experience including Microsoft Word, Microsoft Outlook, and Internet navigation is highly desirable
- Detail oriented
- Multi-tasking
- Must have proven ability to work both independently and as part of a team
- Appreciation and understanding of value of volunteer involvement in program provision
- Regular and reliable attendance

## **TRAINING PROVIDED BY UNITED WAY 211**

### **I. Information and Referral Specialist Training - 30 hours**

#### **Training Goals:**

- Understand and demonstrate complete customer service in responding to inquiries for information and referral by using the principles of active listening and assessment skills
- Demonstrate proficiency in managing crisis calls including suicidal, homicidal, child abuse and domestic violence related calls
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately advocate for callers if necessary
- Demonstrate and maintain proficiency in effectively using Call Center database software, computer hardware and telephone equipment
- Fully understand and demonstrate acceptable level of call handling performance
- Show mastery of problem-solving skills
- Understand United Way 211 policies and procedures as described in the Operations Manual

## **II. Resource Specialist Training - 25 hours**

### **Training Goals:**

- Understanding on how to navigate the resource database and effectively make short term updates as well as formal updates
- Complete updates through entering information in the database from an agency's online submission
- Obtain an overview understanding on taxonomy and indexing
- Review the resource management policies and practices to maintain a level of standard
- Demonstrate at least a basic understanding of social services in the community
- Feel confident to contact agencies to perform updates over the phone and via email

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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