

Help Wanted:

Hiring great staff at your
Domestic Violence Program,
Course A

December 2016

WASHINGTON STATE COALITION

WSCADV

AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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**Lesson 2: The Job
Description**

The Job Description

Addressing these key elements will help you hire great staff for the long term, instead of simply filling a vacancy.

This lesson will cover:

- 1) Compensation
- 2) Overview of the position and duties
- 3) Skills and experience
- 4) Mission and values



Key Elements of Job Descriptions

Compensation

Overview of
position and
duties

Skills and
experience

Mission &
Values

Key Elements for DV Advocate Job Descriptions

Living Wage &
Benefits

Survivor-Driven
Advocacy

Problem-solving
& Systems
Navigation

Anti-Oppression
& Social
Change

Compensation: Living Wage & Benefits

Do your best to offer a living wage and benefits package, including benefits that will be attractive to seasoned candidates, to meet the standard of living in your community. (Check out WSCADV's *Good Jobs* project online for survey info and more.)

However, compensation isn't only about money. You can reward folks in different ways: flexible schedules, family-friendly schedule, 35 hour work week, opportunities to lead a project and be creative. For example, "*We take pride in supporting each YWCA Clark County employee with the benefits and perks they need to maintain a healthy mind and body.*"

Overview of Position & Duties: Survivor-Driven Advocacy

Ask someone who doesn't work where you do to read your draft. Is it just a list of job tasks, or does it paint a picture of the overall purpose, impact, and scope of work? Writing this out (avoiding jargon) avoids confusion about expectations. This also sends a message that you're open to outside candidates and not just people in the know.

Your description should spell out survivor-driven advocacy and your organization's mission to support survivors to take the lead on what's best for them.

Skills & Experience: Problem-Solving & Systems Navigation

You're looking for people who can think on their feet, provide support, and take action, without dominating or telling others what to do.

Under your list of qualifications, include terms like “problem-solving,” “good listening and communication skills,” and “navigating community resources.”

Many people are looking for a job where they can think and act independently – this is a perk, don't be afraid to talk about it!

Mission & Values: Anti-Oppression & Social Change

Be transparent about your organizational values, norms (for example, strong expectations for teamwork).

Be upfront about your organization's commitment to social justice and social change (again, avoiding jargon).

Add a few words about the bright, exciting future of the agency, and the valuable role this job plays in the big picture.

Checklist for Job Descriptions

Before the hiring process begins, there is important prep work to do before you ever post the job opening.

- Does the job description talk about your mission and values?
- Do the duties reflect survivor-centered advocacy?
- Would someone who's not familiar with DV advocacy work be able to understand the job's purpose and scope?
- Is there a pay range?
- Are you giving enough time to get the word out (at least 3 weeks)?
Can you be flexible with the closing date?

If You're Hiring for an Existing Position

- Don't simply re-use old job descriptions; they almost always need updating. Check for changes in responsibilities and delete as needed.
- Have you gotten and digested feedback from employees who left the position? Did the job duties play a role? If so, talk this over with your management team before re-posting.
- What's new? What do you need to adjust or update?

The Future of Survivor-Driven Advocacy

DV advocacy has changed a lot in the past decade, but our job descriptions often haven't. Be sure to reflect, as needed:

- ❑ Language skills and deep familiarity with cultures reflecting your community and geographic area
- ❑ Mobile advocacy skills and comfort getting out into the community (not only in the office or shelter)
- ❑ Housing advocacy skills
- ❑ Understanding of addictions, mental health issues, incarceration, etc., and ability to navigate these systems
- ❑ Experience or desire to do social change or community organizing

Caution!

Sometimes our job descriptions exclude the very people we want to attract. Proceed with caution on requirements for:

- College degrees (DV advocacy is really about a profound ability to relate as a peer with others and nonjudgmentally support others)
- DV training (you can provide this, but requiring training can exclude people who don't have time to volunteer)
- DV advocacy experience (vs. transferable skills from other health or social services, customer service, and activism)

Take-Aways on Job Descriptions

- You are looking for a long term employee, not filling a gap.
- Some skills can be taught; not everyone who becomes a DV advocate needs a college degree.
- A few pennies per hour can make or break a hire. Be prepared to negotiate.
- Update the job description.
- Candidates want to know if they have a future in your agency. Be transparent and share your organization's exciting future!

Job Posting Fine Print

- Tell people how to apply (e.g., “Send cover letter, resume, and 3 references by 5:00 PM on ____ (date)”)
- Spell out the pay range!
- Encourage diverse candidates (e.g., “Survivors of domestic and sexual violence and people of color are encouraged to apply.”)



End of slides

Please return to the course
and check out the links.