

Central County Community Outreach Specialists Individual Contractor Description 3-25-24 (for web)

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), in collaboration with the George B. Crane Memorial Center, seeks up to five temporary, individual contractors to serve as Community Outreach Specialists. The specialists focus on reducing personal and systemic substance use-related risks for three priority communities in Pittsfield: BIPOC community members, Spanish-speakers, and young adults (18-25) not engaged in full-time college.

The specialists first learn more about the unique needs and interests of these communities, their self-perceived risks from substance use, where they tend to gather, and how they prefer to receive information. They then develop and implement replicable strategies to help these community members protect themselves and each other from substance-related harms and provide linkage to services. Each specialist will come out of the program with an increased capacity to lead systemic changes originating from their respective communities.

- Ideal specialists are socially confident individuals who feel comfortable conversing with a wide range of their fellow community members.
- A background in community engagement and the Pittsfield community is preferred
- Prior experience in the harm reduction, treatment and / or recovery field is encouraged, but not required and can be learned during onboarding.
- The opportunity is open to anyone who self-identifies as coming from at least one of the three communities of focus. Priority is given to individuals who feel confident in their recovery from Substance Use Disorder, as well as to fully fluent speakers of Spanish and English.
- The specialist will be part of a team who work as individuals, in pairs/ small groups and/or as a full team. Activities may include, but are not limited to:
 - Flyer/ table at public events and resource fairs
 - Trainings in churches, bars, restaurants, and other places people gather
 - Hold individual and small group conversations

The first two months will focus on training and developing a group action plan, followed by a six-month implementation period, then a one-month wrap-up. The specialists will provide regular reporting, along with the success and challenges of their efforts, to share with the other specialists and the Coordinator from the George B. Crane Memorial Center in monthly in-person meetings (81 Linden Street, Pittsfield).

The duration of the specialist role will be from approximately mid-April 2024 through mid-January 2025 (approximately nine months). Compensation is \$320 per month, up to \$2880 total. Estimated time requirement is 10-12 hours/month, though actual hours per month may vary.

The role involves flexibility and is intended to be compatible with existing employment, and much of the work can be done on evenings and weekends. That said, there may be occasional meetings or events that occur during weekday hours. This initiative focuses on community members who may be at lower or moderate risk for substance misuse; specialists are not expected to engage with higher-risk individuals nor engage in activities that may place them at unreasonable risk for harm.

If you have questions or would like to apply, please submit a brief paragraph or two on why you are interested and your background/ experience to Andy Ottoson at aottoson@berkshireplanning.org and Kellie Meisl at thegbcmc1@gmail.com. Resumes and additional support materials are accepted but not required. No phone calls or in-person visits, please.