



Housing Specialist, My First Place

ABOUT THE JOB

My First Place is an education and employment program developed nearly two decades ago by First Place for Youth. Envisioning a future where the disparities between foster care-involved youth and their non-foster peers have been eliminated, the My First Place program is expanding to communities across the country, starting with HopeWell's implementation in Boston. Through My First Place, youth receive stable, safe and affordable housing, community-based case management, and individualized education and employment support. A team of staff including a Youth Advocate, an Education and Employment Specialist, and a Housing Specialist, support a youth in working towards healthy living, education, employment, and housing goals set by the youth. HopeWell began serving youth through My First Place in February of 2018 and the program is steadily expanding. This is an exciting opportunity to join a growing and engaged team to serve transition age youth comprehensively.

The Housing Specialist is a dynamic, collaborative and results-oriented service provider who will secure and maintain a well-managed portfolio of scattered site units throughout the community in order to support 18-22-year-old transition-age youth in developing good tenancy skills on their path to independence. This position requires a professional whose passion for HopeWell's mission is matched with excellent communication, collaboration, and organizational skills, and a proven track record of successfully providing housing services.

The Housing Specialist is responsible for developing and managing relationships with landlords, acting as a primary point of contact and partnering with the Program Director and Youth Advocates when landlords have concerns or youth are in violation of housing agreements. The Housing Specialist is responsible for daily property management functions for new, current, and exiting apartments, including managing all lease terms and keys, overseeing furnishing and cleaning processes as apartments come on and off line, processing work orders, conducting inspections, and maintaining up to date documentation of all work. The Specialist also sources and secures new units on an ongoing basis.

Successful Housing Specialists understand how to balance programmatic and youth developmental needs with landlord wishes and concerns, using active listening and conflict management strategies to communicate effectively with all relevant parties and develop effective strategies to address issues. Housing Specialists must be comfortable working independently and directly with both landlords and youth in the program and able to respond collaboratively to tenancy challenges that arise.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Develop and maintain an inventory of appropriate units for program participants by networking with landlords, renter's associations, property management businesses and permanent housing providers.
- Develop and manage relationships with landlords, acting as a primary point of contact and collaborating closely with the Program Director and Youth Advocates when landlords have concerns or youth are in violation of housing agreements.
- Review and track all leases. Ensure all lease terms meet city/state housing regulations and agency guidelines. Communicate lease terms to staff and youth and track for compliance.



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- Oversee and coordinate all logistics involved in move/relocation/unit turnover activities and repairs/maintenance. Source and maintain vendor relationships as needed to complete these activities.
- Conduct all relevant inspections and ensure properties are physically maintained and meet habitability and safety standards in accordance with housing regulations and agency guidelines.
- Maintain, document, and track key inventory.
- Adhere to all fair housing, ADA, landlord/tenant and program laws and regulations.
- Complete documentation including but not limited to leases, notices, work orders, inspections, and key logs.
- Other duties as assigned. My First Place™ is being newly launched in Springfield, and as such, the program implementation process will be subjected to a continuous cycle of analysis and assessment as it launches. As we learn more about how to best support youth needs in Springfield, the roles and responsibilities of various team members will likely adapt and change as the program is launched and evolves.

QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will possess:

- Bachelor's degree or a combination of education and experience that demonstrates a capacity to secure and manage housing in a supportive housing program.
- Two years of experience working in affordable housing and/or residential property management setting.
- Working knowledge of landlord-tenant, fair housing, and ADA laws with the ability to comprehend regulatory and legal agreements, contracts and housing industry publications. Subsidized housing regulation experience desired. Experience working with resident service providers preferred.
- Working knowledge of work order systems and basic apartment maintenance.
- Ability to organize and manage processes and facilitate schedules and logistics.
- Excellent customer service skills.
- High level of personal accountability for the quality and impact of work.
- Excellent communication skills, professional demeanor, sound judgment, and strong organizational skills.
- A high level of professionalism in work and interpersonal interactions with both internal and external contacts.
- Strongly prefer a candidate that will have a demonstrated understanding of and competence in serving culturally diverse populations.
- Willingness to work collaboratively, but with the capacity to work independently.
- Computer skills sufficient to perform essential functions.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Daily access to an automobile is required.
- A valid MA State Driver's License.
- Clearing of background checks as required by state and federal law.
- Remain current in all DCF required trainings.

WORKPLACE CULTURE AND BENEFITS



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HopeWell has an unparalleled work culture, with an emphasis on diversity, belonging, inclusion, equity, and holistic wellness. At HopeWell, each team member is called to uphold and live daily the values of empathy, strength, learning, and integrity. HopeWell is an environment where we laugh and smile while handling serious, life-changing work.

HopeWell offers a comprehensive total rewards package that values employee wellness, work-life balance, and continuous learning. Benefits include *student loan pay-down assistance*, tuition reimbursement, funding for professional development, as well as a full suite of healthcare benefits, and generous paid-time-off.

To apply, please submit an application:

[Housing Specialist, My First Place Application](#)