BILINGUAL (ENGLISH/SPANISH) FAMILY SUPPORT SPECIALIST – CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH SPOA

The applicant must be the parent/primary caregiver of a youth experiencing behavioral health issues. The Family Support Specialist position is designed and funded to meet expanded State mandates regarding the Westchester County’s Single Point of Access (SPOA) for children with significant behavioral needs. The position also ensures the authentic representation of family voice and perspective throughout the SPOA process, including not only the needs of individual families, but also the administration and operation of the SPOA process itself, and larger systemic issues that affect families within Westchester County’s system of care.

Tasks related to meeting Westchester County’s SPOA responsibilities include: processing new SPOA referrals, gathering missing information, engaging families, completing CANS NY assessments, entering data, and following up to ensure the timely disposition of cases to SPOA programs, and when indicated, facilitating meetings with family and providers. The Family Support Specialist also assists the SPOA Coordinator to ensure that families, especially those whose needs cannot be met by a SPOA program, are linked and referred to appropriate services. Finally, the Family Support Specialist collaborates with the Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH) colleagues to address grievances of families, and help mediate conflicts that may arise with the Westchester County and/or SPOA programs.

Closely related to the Westchester County SPOA functions are those ensuring that family voice and choice is represented throughout the SPOA process. These functions include participating in SPOA committee meetings and contributing a family-oriented perspective to cases presented as well as the process itself; participation in the design and refinement of the SPOA process; collection of information from families regarding unmet child and adolescent behavioral health needs within the County; and outreach to the community at large regarding SPOA and DCMH’s role in promoting System of Care values and principles. Frequent liaison with Family Ties of Westchester is incorporated into this position to ensure that the “family voice” is authentically represented. As such, the Family Support Specialist attends Family Ties staff meetings, participates in Family Ties and System-of-Care events, and receives ongoing training and support from Family Ties.

Direct supervision is provided by the DCMH SPOA Coordinator, Michele Landry, with additional supervision related to Family Peer Support Services provided by Family Ties’ Executive Director Kerry Whelan-Megley. Applicant must be bilingual and a parent/primary caregiver of a youth experiencing behavioral health issues.

EXAMPLES OF WORK (For Illustrative Purposes Only):

- Serve as SPOA Family Support Specialist for Westchester County Children’s Mental Health Services.
- Assist SPOA Coordinator in reviewing and processing Children’s Mental Health SPOA applications.
• Provide outreach to families and referral source of SPOA applications to gather missing information and assess needs, goals and eligibility for SPOA.
• Engage families in order to assess their needs and when indicated, link them to appropriate mental health and other services.
• Conduct CANS NY assessment tool for SPOA referrals.
• Assist SPOA Coordinator in contacting other County, local and community agencies in order to engage their services on behalf of the child/family.
• Provide family voice and perspective at SPOA meetings, CSE meetings, and other administrative meetings.
• Contribute family voice and perspective to planning, paperwork and other aspects of SPOA process in accordance with System of Care values and principles.
• Partner with DCMH SPOA regarding grievances and mediation when conflicts arise.
• Provide technical assistance and resources for broader child-serving system on behalf of children with mental health needs.
• Communicate unmet needs identified by families to DCMH, for planning purposes.
• Participate in assigned child and family wraparound team meetings to assess needs of children with serious emotional challenges.
• Represent Family Ties at System of Care meetings and events to promote system of care values and principles.
• Attend Community Meetings and Committees to gather information on needs of children with mental health issues and systems issues and trends.
• Data entry and reports for Children’s Mental Health SPOA.
• Participate in Family Ties events and forums to promote Family Support and system of care.
• Participate in weekly DCMH Children’s Mental Health staff meetings.
• Participate in on-going Family Ties staff meetings and events.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND ATTRIBUTES:
Knowledge of children’s system and peer support; ability to work cooperatively with staff while also representing the voice of families; ability to engage families and advocate for their needs, strong interpersonal skills and ability to self-reflect regarding the interface of lived experience with those of clients and families, ability to read, write, speak, understand and communicate in English and Spanish sufficiently to perform the essential tasks of the position; ability to effectively use computer applications such as word processing, spreadsheet, calendar, e-mail and database software.

MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE: A High School Diploma (college degree preferred), lived experience as parent/primary caregiver of a youth experiencing behavioral health issues; experience working with parents, peer support.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:
• Applicant must have a car and possession of a valid license to operate a motor vehicle in New York State and must be willing to travel throughout Westchester County.
• All applicants must be cleared through the State Child Abuse Registry and Criminal Justice System.

Family Ties of Westchester is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We offer a generous benefits package with a professional and friendly working environment. If interested, please send a cover letter with your resume to: mala@westchestergov.com.