

Karen Honan

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RE: Discharge Worker

I have reviewed the posting for the position of Discharge Worker, and I feel with my 20+ years of experience in the areas of customer service, social services, event organizing, and economic/community development, I have the necessary skills and knowledge and could make a valuable contribution to Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services.

Throughout my work experience I have developed the following skills which are highlighted as requirements for this position:

- As the Indigenous People's Court (IPC) Case Worker for the Indigenous Friendship Centre I was involved with working with First Nations youth and adults and the court system to help maneuver through the program and develop culturally appropriate healing plans.
- I participated in ceremonies and activities and further developed my understanding of the Seven Grandfather Teachings.
- Participated on the Friendship Centres pandemic task force and used my knowledge of community services and resources to assist clients.
- Liaised with other justice program staff, judges, crown attorneys and community agencies to provide opportunities for clients to access programs and service to meet their needs.
- Worked closely with Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the community to support the IPC program.
- Working and living in First Nation communities, I understand their political structure, the workings of the First Nations administration and their cultural protocols which have helped me to build many community links throughout Northwestern Ontario.
- Many years of experience in working in First Nation communities and seeing firsthand the issues that are faced daily.
- Working for Indigenous government in social services and community development, I have firsthand knowledge of the issues facing Indigenous Communities and their governance and consultation processes.
- Certified as a Restorative Justice Facilitator (2020).
- Edu-Therapy Grief and Loss Counsellor training (2019)
- My strong background in both economic development and social services allow me the skills to manoeuvre through the social assistance and rent geared to income housing systems.
- Through several of my positions, I have had the opportunity to develop strategies and implement the resulting processes to achieve the required results under the mandate of the organization.
- As the supervisor for the Homemakers Program through the Ministry of Health, I have assessed client needs and provided hours of service and designated types of services based on the assessment.
- Have completed orientation with new staff and volunteers in all the supervisory roles I have held. Ensuring that compliance and needs are balanced for both safety and the best possible results. Provided training and have been responsible for the creation and presentation of training materials for staff and volunteers.
- As the Supervisor Intake, I was responsible for approvals under three separate and distinct program areas. These included Rent Geared to Income Housing, Housing Security Funding and Discretionary Benefits under Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Programs. This allowed me to use my judgement and ability to analyze situations.
- I am very conscientious and am constantly monitoring the use of resources and looking for ways to streamline or use lean principles to achieve the greatest performance using minimal resources.
- With the various positions I have held, there has been restructuring and the need to manage change. Dealing with these areas has helped me to strengthen my skills on how I deal with change.

- The decisions I made in three different programs as the Supervisor Intake put me in the position to make decisions beyond the established guidelines, defend decisions and deal with complaints both internally and externally. This has helped me in developing my exceptional negotiating, persuading and customer service skills.
- I was the first point of contact for the MPP and MP offices who required clarification on decisions or time frames for decisions. Developed a very good working relationship with all the staff at all levels.
- I have knowledge of case management and have used case management practices in most of my past work experience. Client services were greatly enhanced by use of proper case management processes.
- Learning and dealing with new legislation and computer systems. Working within the realms of the social services delivery system I had to learn the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program legislation, work with the newly implemented software commonly known as SAMS and guide staff and clients through the processes involved.
- Knowledge of database programs and the Microsoft suite.
- I supervised in the Rent Geared to Income Housing program and I monitored the waitlist including dealing with repayment agreements and interpreting both the Housing Services Act and local policies. Learned the Yardi software with no formal training.
- As part of a management team, I have had the opportunity to participate in strategic planning, contingency planning, and operational planning. We held regular meetings within our own division and our organization to review deficiencies and to look at best practices.
- In all my work experience, I have had to create presentations, spreadsheets to capture statistics and reports for management and stakeholders. I am very organized, and I can analyze complex data to include in my work.
- I possess strong influencing skills and am very good at presenting a case based on the merits and facts. I have had to do this with funding applications, housing decisions, and dealing with our clients on a face-to-face basis. Presenting options when we can not provide the required assistance is one of my strengths based on my years of work and life experiences.
- Within my work experiences, I have had the opportunity to be involved in identifying new ideas, opportunities, and partnerships.
- Participated with distinguished representation on various advisory committees and in working groups to elevate service delivery to meet client needs and achieve strategic partner agreements.
- Integrity and honesty are both qualities I pride myself in. I use these principles in effective decision making, analyzing situations, and solving problems as well as staff relations.
- Understand why trust and credibility play a significant role in the development and delivery of programs and services to populations who have significant barriers. Provision of alternative solutions and 'thinking outside of the box' for problem solving was an area I excelled in while supervising at DSSAB.
- Significant experience working with service providers and community resources to create partnerships which address and meet the needs of the clients.
- The work demands in the areas I worked in and in all the positions I have held are high pressure and involve meeting changing deadlines, setting priorities, and working overtime.
- Work well as a member of a team and independently with minimal supervision.
- Travelling for business has been part of my positions. I have a valid driver's licence and a vehicle.

I would enjoy an opportunity to meet and further discuss my qualifications for this position. Should you wish to schedule a time, I can be reached by calling my cell at 807-630-4674.

Sincerely

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Summary

Dedicated Manager who interacts effectively with management and staff. Provides excellent customer service support to cases and situations focusing on detail. Results driven and organized. Reliable and have a talent for developing relationships based on mutual respect and trust.

Highlights

- Culturally Sensitive
- Excellent Interpersonal Skills
- Self-starter
- Creative
- Skilled Multi-tasker
- Fast Learner
- Deadline-driven
- Strong Communicator
- Valid Ontario Driver's Licence
- Event Planning and Logistics
- Sharp Problem Solver
- Strong Organizational Skills
- Active Listening Skills
- Seasoned in Conflict Resolution
- Energetic Work Attitude
- Customer Service Expert
- Team Manager
- Meticulous Attention to Detail
- Persuasive

Accomplishments

Used lean management techniques to streamline processes in the housing intake department to help reduce the application processing times which gave more accurate application numbers on the waitlist for clean statistical reporting. Developed unbiased processes to review all applications for both housing and social programs. Supported staff to allow them to make gains on application backlogs and reduce workplace stress. Managing and organizing an annual Native Hockey Tournament including scheduling and budgeting. Develop comprehensive reports and presentations for stakeholder, boards and management using computer software.

Experience

Indigenous People's Case Worker

July 2019 – May 2020

Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre – Thunder Bay, ON

- Providing client support for the IPC Program and processes
- Liaising with the Judges, Lawyers and Crown Attorneys
- Liaising with outside agencies to provide support for the clientele
- Preparing quarterly and annual information and funding reports for the Board and the Ministry of the Attorney General
- Monitoring program budgets and ensuring spending is within the guidelines
- Liaising and scheduling Elders and Knowledge Keepers for court and training
- Facilitating Grief and Loss programming for community participation
- Participating on the various internal committees (JHSC, Bingo, Volunteer, outreach, and Covid-19 Task Force)
- Planning and organizing training workshops

General Manager – Gift Shops

August 2017 – October 2018

Auxiliary to St. Joseph's Care Group – Thunder Bay, ON

- Organizing and opening the new store
- Purchasing and monitoring stock
- Monthly reporting on sales, stock, and bank deposits

- Supervising Volunteer Staff

Supervisor, Intake

December 2011 – January 2017

Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board – Thunder Bay, ON

- Lead my team through monitoring workloads and assigning work
- Reviewing applications and make final funding decisions
- Review housing applications and make housing priority eligibility decisions
- Review and modify work procedures
- Provide backup for supervisors and managers
- Deal with union/management issues under the collective agreement terms
- Provide input on annual budget submissions for my supervision areas
- Provide input at the management level on programs and services
- Liaising with community agencies, MPs and MPPs
- Provide reports, statistical information, and explanations

Manager, Small Business Entrepreneur Centre

February 2007 - December 2011

Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission – Thunder Bay, ON

- Prepare and submit the annual business plan for funding under the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
- Coordinate Summer Company Program
- Liaising and promoting the Centre in Thunder Bay and the service area
- Organize, facilitate, and evaluate workshops locally and throughout the service area
- Representing the Centre on committees
- Project managing the Innovative Project of the year award winning Northwestern Ontario Immigration Portal
- Monitoring budgets for compliance, preparing successful funding applications
- Preparing monthly stat reports for Ministries
- Liaising with First Nation communities, creating working relationships to address their small business development needs
- Supervise staff in a unionized environment

Information Officer

November 2005 – February 2007

Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission – Thunder Bay, ON

- Provide research and support for City initiatives and community stakeholders
- Maintain the City of Thunder Bay's business section of the website

Caseworker Assistant/Finance Clerk

September 2003 – November 2005

City of Thunder Bay Ontario Works Division – Thunder Bay, ON

- Interviewed and processed applications for assistance – determined eligibility
- Screened applicants over the phone
- Transferred files, performed interprovincial enquiries, verified shelter information
- Entered overpayments and Eligibility Review Officer's data
- Processed payments for funerals, arrears, emergency situations, health care, and special payments

Social Services Administrator

December 1997 – September 2003

Red Rock Indian Band/Pays Plat First Nation/Gull Bay First Nation – Nipigon/Pays Plat/Gull Bay, ON

- Administered and supervised the Ontario Works and Homemaker's programs
- Conducted client interviews, determine eligibility, verified information
- Liaising with Federal and Provincial governments, community partners and members
- Completing funding applications, and statistical reports

Social Services Administrator/Community Development Officer

July 1996 – December 1997

Anishinabek Nation Management Group – Gull Bay, ON

- Assessed community needs, provide recommendations on areas of opportunities and improvements
- Prepare training plans, funding proposals, assist with hiring, monitoring, and evaluating programs/projects

Service Coordinator/Employment Counsellor

September 1990 – May 1996

North of Superior Association for Community Living – Marathon, ON

- Advocated for clients and their families
- Liaised with community employers to provide candidates for positions, designs programs and training plans
- On-site job coaching and mentoring
- Performed assessments of behaviour, independent functioning, and vocational skills

Education

University of Waterloo/Economic Developers Association of Canada 2010 Successful Completion of Year 1 and Year 2 In-class Program

Final paper required for the completion of the entire program

Bachelor of Administration Degree, Business, 2004 Lakehead University – Thunder Bay, ON

Developmental Services Worker Certificate, Social Services, 1993 Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology – Thunder Bay, ON

Developmental Services Worker Diploma, Social Services, 1995 Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology – Thunder Bay, ON 1 credit short of completion

Business Administration (3 year) Diploma, Business 1982 Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology – North Bay, ON

Professional Development

- Pathways to Leadership – City of Thunder Bay
- Management Certification
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
- Customer Service Excellence
- Effective Communications
- Mental Health in the Workplace
- Mental Health First Aider
- First Aid and CPR
- Safe Food Handling
- Edu-Therapy Grief and Loss Counsellor
- Restorative Justice Facilitator Training
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
- AODA Customer Service Training
- Crisis Intervention Training
- Occupational Health and Safety Training for Workers and Supervisors
- W.H.M.I.S.
- Workplace Violence and Harassment Training

Volunteer Experience

- Fundraising Committee ProKids (2019)
- Board of Directors ProKids (2020)

References

Serena Essex
Director of Operations
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