**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**JOB TITLE:** Peer Support Specialist (VIC)  **EFFECTIVE DATE**: August 2019

**DEPARTMENT:** Independent Living  **REPORTS TO**: IL Program Manager

**STATUS:** part-time; 30 hours/week; non-exempt/hourly

**Position summary:**

Under the Veteran In Charge (VIC) program, IL Specialist will understand and model the Independent Living Philosophy. Specialist will provide Information & Referral (I&R) services for VIC; identify individual needs of active duty military, military families, and veterans; and make appropriate referrals both in person and on the phone. Specialist will provide individual advocacy services with and mentoring for these consumers and have knowledge of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, and Fair Housing Act. Specialist will enter all pertinent data into database. Specialist will work in partnership and communicate with colleagues, community agencies and resources in the VIC catchment area. Specialist will provide systemic advocacy within the disability community.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

* Baccalaureate Degree preferred or equivalent experience
* Experience and a desire to work with people with disabilities with the goal of empowering the consumer in order to promote independence
* Proficient with computer including, Word, Excel, and Outlook
* Demonstrate The IC’s core values of Inclusiveness, Flexibility, Person First, Accountability and Integrity
* Ability to travel within Colorado Springs and surrounding counties to meet with individuals, including accessing consumer homes, attending meetings, and presenting information
* Ability to work independently and as a team member
* Veteran preference and experience with VA preferred

**Essential Functions/Areas of Accountability:**

1. Ensure the philosophy, mission and goals of the independent living program are maintained.
2. Have a working knowledge of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and Fair Housing Act.
3. Work with Outreach in outlying areas to educate and facilitate meetings with staff and consumers for optimal goal development.
4. Assist active duty military, military family, and Veteran consumers by educating, modeling, and empowering. Provide individual advocacy services as requested.
5. Work with Veteran Coaches to ensure Veterans obtain access to services and supports in order to live independently in the community, increase self-advocacy skills, and improve quality of life. Conduct 6 month and annual satisfaction surveys of VIC consumers.
6. Support independent living goals of consumers by partnering with them as an equal and a peer. Facilitate peer support groups.
7. Provide Information and Referral (I&R) services for VIC. Meet with individuals, whether by phone, in person, or by email/web contact, in order to respond to their needs and requests for information. Collaborate with individuals in partnership with other IL staff and military/civilian community agencies to get those needs addressed.
8. Assist consumers to identify goals and develop Independent Living Plans (ILP). Set clear expectations, responsibilities and goals with consumers.
9. Complete all paperwork and documentation necessary to start a consumer service record or develop an ILP. In a timely manner, enter data into the database to meet State regulatory requirements.
10. Advocate, educate, and promote community awareness on military/veteran issues.
11. Participate in and share information on issues or areas in need of systems advocacy.
12. Attend weekly staff meetings and monthly All Staff meetings.
13. Maintain confidentiality as outlined in the employee handbook and work within the confines of HIPAA regulations.
14. Accept responsibility for personal and professional development and engage in and explore opportunities for position related training.
15. Perform other related duties and responsibilities as deemed necessary for the position.

**Skills and Abilities:**

* Personal experience with a disability and knowledge of the Independent living movement are desirable
* Excellent interpersonal skills
* Excellent communication skills, including public speaking
* Ability to write routine reports, assessments and related correspondence
* The capacity to empower individuals with disabilities to advocate for themselves

**Physical/Environmental Requirements:**

* Office environment requiring ongoing computer use and extended amount of time sitting.
* Ability to travel within Colorado Springs and surrounding counties to meet with individuals, including accessing consumer homes, attending meetings, and presenting information.
* To drive any vehicle in the course and scope of employment, an employee must maintain an acceptable Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) as determined by The IC’s liability insurance carrier.  IC employees will be subject to reasonable suspicion, post-incident, and bi-annual random MVR checks to determine driving acceptability.
* Reasonable accommodations may be made to empower the qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of this position.

This position may also require the performance of other duties as assigned.

**I have read and understand the above job description:**

**Signed** **Date**:

**EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY*:*** *The Independence Center is dedicated to the principles of equal employment opportunity.  We prohibit unlawful discrimination against applicants or employees on the basis of age 40 and over, race, sex, color, religion, national origin, disability, military status, genetic information, or any other status protected by applicable state or local law. Reasonable accommodations may be made to empower a qualified candidate with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job.*