



AmeriCorps Member Position Description

Member Position / Title:
Project Ishmael Program & Office Coordinator

of Member Slots in this Position:
1

Member Immediate Supervisor
Angela Davis

Name: Days / Hours of Service:
Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm
(+ some special events & outreach on specific evenings &/or weekends)

Member Immediate Supervisor Title:
Executive Director

Partner Organization Name:
Project Ishmael (of First Grace Community Alliance)

Address: 3401 Canal St **City:** New Orleans, LA **Zip Code:** 70119

Fax number: 504.515.0315 **Website:** www.ProjectIshmaelNOLA.org

Organization/Agency Mission and/or Goals:

Project Ishmael is a program of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit First Grace Community Alliance (FGCA). The mission of FGCA is to work with and for people in need, especially women and their children, by meeting food, housing, and other emergency needs, while simultaneously challenging systemic poverty in the greater New Orleans area.

FGCA meets housing needs by running Hagar's House, a sanctuary for women and their children and Project Ishmael, a small immigration legal program for children.

Program Mission and/or Goals:

The three specific goals of Project Ishmael are:

- 1) to help meet the immigration legal needs of children in New Orleans,
- 2) to meet the legal needs of the children and families who live in Hagar's House, and
- 3) to challenge the systems in our city and country that incarcerate, deport, and harass children based on immigration status, skin color, or language.

Community Need:

While there are model immigration legal resources in New Orleans— namely The Loyola Law Clinic, Catholic Charities, and The Family Justice Center, after meeting with all of these much needed resources, we learned that they overwhelmingly agree that there is a significant need for

more individuals and/or organizations to offer free or low cost immigration legal resources in New Orleans, especially for children.

While we do not have the exact numbers of children in New Orleans in need of immigration representation, we know that Project Ishmael alone has almost 200 children on our waiting list.

As New Orleans knows all too well, children and youth are often the most vulnerable in a society, and due to "their youth, their separation from a protective environment or person, and the hazardous journey on which they embark," unaccompanied immigrant children and youth—96% of whom are from Central America and Mexico—are especially vulnerable "to becoming victims of human trafficking, exploitation, and abuse." (Office of Refugee Resettlement, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/ucs/about>) Without free or affordable legal representation, children or their parents are often unaware of rights in this country and then forced to either return to life-threatening situations in their home countries or, if it is their parent who is deported, the child (who with legal help may have remained with a loving and capable parent) may be funneled into the U.S. foster care system. Many of these children and mothers have legal paths to relief and safety, but our city needs additional legal resources for them. This was our process and these are our reason for expanding to include a space like Project Ishmael.

Additionally, since the new 2017 executive orders regarding immigration and ongoing national policy changes, parents of young Project Ishmael clients have been in more need of more holistic supports and safety planning.

In Hagar's House and in our diverse community in Mid City and at our partner congregation First Grace United Methodist Church, many children and their families struggle with immigration concerns that threaten to separate families and due to the overwhelming need in our city, have not been able to access a lawyer. Mothers who have complicated immigration status worry constantly that they and their children may be torn apart—They may be sent back to their home country while their children will be placed in foster care, and they want to know how to keep their children safe. As one former Hagar's House resident explained to an entire congregation, because of her status as an immigrant, "I am afraid of going to jail every time that I bring my children to school."

A Serve Louisiana member will help coordinate resources for the whole family, as well as coordinate with partner organizations for Project Ishmael to host regular community resources fairs or events.

Member Position Summary:

A member at Project can expect 8 hours of service a day, Monday thru Friday hours of 8am-5pm (with a 1 hour lunch break), with a special events, trainings, volunteer recruitment, outreach events, or other meetings that will require some evening or weekend hours. (The member will know these in advance, and when a member serves different hours, we can and will flex the regular weekday hours that week.)

Flexibility is key as Project Ishmael is small and each day can be different. Being able to attend events some evenings and weekends is essential to the outreach and community relationship building portion of the position.

A day in the life of the Program Coordinator could include any of the following: volunteer and language access coordinating, office and technology coordinating, program outreach, and program and language access development.

1) Volunteer & Language Access Coordinating-

- The member will help to make sure that posts, emails, materials, meetings, documents, court hearings and most meetings are available to both English and Spanish speakers/readers. The member will do this by coordinating volunteers, interpreting and translating.
- The member will coordinate volunteers by: organizing a system, connecting with individuals and partner organizations (like the translation and interpreting programs at colleges), updating volunteers (at least monthly), thanking volunteers.
- The member will brainstorm and grow a system that allows volunteers to easily plug into Project Ishmael (with as little as necessarily admin overhead from the lawyer so as to help increase and not decrease capacity of Project Ishmael to take children's cases).
- The member will update a volunteer manual that lists all details that any volunteer would need to: 1) volunteer on a daily basis (answering phones, etc) or 2) plug into intake and community outreach events.
- (The above includes setting up not only a volunteer system of communication, but also helping to brainstorm and research and organize a way to plug in others to receive calls, while maintaining confidentiality and sharing only the information necessary with each volunteer, etc—Therefore, this overlaps with technology coordinating.)

2) Technology, Social Media & Office Coordinating

- The member will update social media accounts
- The member will take pictures at events and other places—or coordinate a volunteer to do so, (while always making sure to have explicit permission from those in the picture to share any picture).
- The member may help create and maintain systems to build the capacity of the office: including organizing client files or coordinating volunteers to do so, organizing office needs or coordinating volunteers to do so. Maintaining an organized and accessible (to all volunteers & mentor) resource filing cabinet (with resources in Spanish & English) o Organizing case files & maintaining updates each day (making sure online system and

paper-based files match perfectly and are updated within 1 business day of receiving new documents or information) o Foreseeing & taking initiative ahead of time to meet & maintain office needs, Helping coordinate mailing and copies for files or clients o Filing motions in juvenile, state or immigration courts (or delivering documents to ICE), some date entry; helping with newsletters 3x a year.

- The member will help maintain a physical space with neat and easily accessible resources for all
- The member will help with systems & manuals to update weekly case status, in a way that is least administratively burdensome for Project Ishmael—and easily plug in others.

3) Program Outreach & Community Awareness Coordinating

- The member will design and update throughout the year resource guides based on Project Ishmael needs—usually health, housing, human rights, education.
- The member will connect with partner organizations for coordinated outreach.
- The member will distribute holistic information to those who reach out to Project Ishmael, as well as at community events.
- The member will coordinate 2-4 outreach events and resource fairs hosted by Project Ishmael, in which the member invites partner organizations and people directly-impacted to share resources, information, and a meal. (Coordinating an event includes everything from making the manual and welcoming people to making sure the trash is emptied, chairs are set up and the food is enough.)
- The member may coordinate monthly legal orientation events at Project Ishmael and in partnership with other organizations.
- The member will write a short manual on how to implement these events so that a new volunteer can plug in and coordinate, if necessary.
- The member will be intentional about inviting families at Project Ishmael into volunteer and leadership roles.

4) Program Development Coordinating

- The member will create a plan for offering holistic support to parents and guardians of children at Project Ishmael, with a focus of keeping families safe and together in the face of the threat of parental detention or deportation.
- This includes everything from compiling resources for parents, organizing biannual (give or take) clinic days in which Project Ishmael partners with volunteer lawyers to work on provisional custody and power of attorney forms, know your rights resources, and compiling the work in a way that it can be easily updated and used by Project Ishmael staff or volunteers in the future.
- The member will help rally and compile the needed resources—both informational and financial—for this program.

Member Impact:

The member will be central to helping Project Ishmael meet one of its goals of creating healthy communities by preventing children from being sent to countries where their mental, physical, and emotional health—as well as their lives—are in danger. Project Ishmael works on the immigration cases of children and some parents with the focus of not only making systemic change in the longterm, but also of struggling for individual children to be able to live in safe, healthy homes. Most of our cases focus on finding legal pathways for children in deportation proceedings to stay with their parents or siblings in Louisiana, where they have food, family, and are able to focus on getting an education instead of resisting recruitment (or death) by the gangs in Central America.

The member will coordinate volunteers to help Project Ishmael do the above, help organize the law clinic, office and language access, generally help build the capacity of Project Ishmael, and be in charge of community outreach and education planning.

Essential Functions of Position:

Please see above member position summary.

As Project Ishmael is a very small program, the Serve Louisiana member will split their time between Volunteer and Language Access Coordinating, Technology and Office Coordinating, Outreach Coordinating, and Program Development.

The goals are that:

- The member will set up (or improve) systems in each of these categories that make the work sustainable and easy to plug in volunteers in as many places as possible
- The member will spend a significant portion of their time on outreach and developing a program component of Project Ishmael to support parents of children at Project Ishmael. (Meaning, connecting with existing resources in the city.)

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Must be bilingual in English/Spanish, meaning able to communicate with ease and clarity in writing and speaking in both languages. (Though, especially speaking and understanding both)
- Time management skills are necessary, as the member is often responsible for structuring their time in a way that gets big and small pictures things done each week.
- Paralegal or administrative/office coordination experience would also be very helpful.

Required Academic and Experience Qualifications:

None. Though, any work experience that requires time management and punctuality, any interpreting experience or training, or volunteer experience (as the volunteer or the volunteer coordinator) is a plus, direct experience with the immigration system is also helpful.

- Corps member candidates will undergo a federal and state background check and are checked against the National Sex Offender Registry. The AmeriCorps and Serve Louisiana guidelines dictate that a candidate can be disqualified for the following reasons:
- Murder conviction
 - They are registered on the sex offender registry
 - They provide a false statement in response to inquiry about criminal history (application or interview)
 - They refuse to undergo the background check

Please indicate here if your organization has any other restrictions or requirements that would deem a candidate not eligible to serve with your organization. Otherwise, please check this box:

X Our organization does not have any additional disqualifiers to become an AmeriCorps member.