**AmeriCorps Member Position Description**

**Member Position / Title: # of Member Slots in this Position:**

Program Specialist 1

**Member Immediate Supervisor Name: Days / Hours of Service:**

Tekoah Boatner Mon-Fri 8:30am-5pm (flexible)

**Member Immediate Supervisor Title: Email Address:**

Executive Director tboatner@youthoasis.org

**Partner Organization Name:**

Youth Oasis

**Address:** 260 S. Acadian Thwy. **City:** Baton Rouge, LA **Zip Code:** 70806

**Phone number:** (225)343-6300 **Fax number:** (225)343-6303 **Website:** youthoasis.org

**Organization/Agency Mission and/or Goals:**

Our Mission:

Youth Oasis provides emergency and transitional housing, care, support and advocacy for vulnerable youth in the Baton Rouge area who have been pushed to the margins. Fully and proudly inclusive, we’re Louisiana’s first LGBT-affirming shelter for youth

Our Vision:

A Louisiana that cares for, supports and affirms all youth, nurturing their growth into responsible, resilient citizens.

What We Stand For:

Diversity

We’re here for youth and young adults, no matter their race, orientation or identity. Because a category or label should never define the care and opportunities they deserve.

Opportunity

Our youth come to us from situations where their inherent worth is questioned, unconditional love taken away, and basic opportunities withheld. We work to return wholeness by providing a safe space, educational opportunities, mental health services, skills training, and unconditional compassion.

Resiliency

“Able to spring back after being compressed” – it’s what we strive for when caring for youth. It’s never, “Look at those poor children,” but always, “Look at all of the potential they possess.”

**Program Mission and/or Goals:**

Youth Oasis was founded as Baton Rouge Alliance for Transitional Living in 1997 by members of local social service agencies and universities who saw the need for a transitional living program for young adults aging out of foster care. In 2002, a basic emergency shelter was added to provide support to at-risk youth ages 10-17. The organization became known as Youth Oasis in 2003 and officially changed its name in 2011. In 2016, the transitional living program was expanded to include services unique to the LGBTQ+ community and branded “Diversity House”. Today, Youth Oasis remains true to its foundation of breaking the cycle of homelessness in our community and state by operating a Non-Medical Group Homer as well as therapeutic foster care, transitional housing for young adults, and a transitional living program for youth aging out of care.

**Community Need:**

Youth Oasis annually serves an average of 100 youth, but this is only 1.5% of Louisiana’s youth that live apart from their families because of abuse or neglect. When a child enters the foster system, their placement must be able to provide the loving, committed, and skilled care the child needs, working effectively with the system to achieve the best possible permanency option for that child. Policies and practices should be based on child development research, information, and tools. It is critical now to change the expectations and support of foster families and other caregivers to affect the way the system treats children and families within it. Studies show that young people leaving foster care at 18 years old before being connected to a permanent family through adoption, returning home to parents or having a relative take custody of them, have very poor outcomes compared to their peers. These youth have increased incidences of homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system and lower educational achievement. Currently, Youth Oasis is expanding services to better fit the needs of the community and population we serve. Youth Oasis houses two residential programs for youth in state custody, is restructuring the Transitional Housing program for young adults experiencing homelessness, and will begin operating a Therapeutic Foster Care Program. The development of a Therapeutic Foster Care program will allow Youth Oasis to provide additional supportive services to youth in care by increasing the agency's ability to provide youth-in-care the opportunity to live in "family" home settings rather than in congregate care. The Transitional Housing program for young adults experiencing homelessness aims to provide vulnerable young adults the opportunity to stabilize and heal so that they can build the necessary skills and resources needed to transition to self-sufficiency in the community.

**Member Position Summary:**

Program Specialist

The Program Specialist is responsible for developing the Transitional Housing Program. This includes developing or revising policies and procedures for a program addressing homelessness for the 18-24 population. The Program Specialist will also provide program support to other Youth Oasis programs as needed.

The Program Specialist will develop a program infrastructure that incorporates principles of Housing First, Trauma-informed care and Positive Youth Development to help young adults recover from or avoid homelessness. The successful Program Specialist understands that a healthy program facilitates linkages between direct service and administrative teams to enhance the effectiveness of the program.

To perform the job successfully, the individual should demonstrate the following skills:

* Leadership: Demonstrate the ability to motivate, persuade, and excite others through culturally responsive communications..
* Program Development: : The ability to read and translate federal and state program guidelines into policy and procedure for consumers, employees and stakeholders..
* Problem Solving & Decision Making: Approach problems and decisions methodically; isolate causes from symptoms; commit to action; demonstrate sound judgment.
* Relationship Building: Recognize the importance of relationships; devote energy to cultivating relationships.
* Organize & Planning: develop a well-organized work plan, adhere to timelines, document and communicate progress. Plan and organize so that work is accomplished effectively; maximize use of available time.
* Communicativeness: Actively seek and share information; create an open and accessible environment that encourages flow of information.
* Integrity: Must be honest and take responsibility for actions.
* Change Agility: Able to embrace needed change; able to provide and implement feedback

**Necessary Training or Training Plan to be implemented prior to Member Placement:**

Required 40-hour new hire training on agency rules, position-specific tasks, and best practices.

Agency will provide ongoing in-kind training through one-on-one supervision and weekly leadership development meetings. An additional 20-40 hours of professional development training will be provided as available.

**Member Impact:**

An AmeriCorps member serving in Youth Oasis’s THP Program Specialist position will have the ability to make a significant impact on the development and provision of services to young people experiencing homelessness in the Baton Rouge Area. The Program Specialist will increase the agency's capacity to offer services to a neglected population while supporting the Executive Director and Administrative team in developing policies and processes that are essential in the successful growth of the agency. The Serve Louisiana member that fills this position will have the opportunity to build an understanding about Non-profit structure, governance and operation as well as develop an in-depth knowledge about how federal and state policies affect the provision of services to high need populations.

**Essential Functions of Position:**

Policy Development:

o Create policies that incorporate Federal, State and local guidance regarding homeless service provision to the 18-24 year old population;

Programs:

o Create procedures for staff members of the Transitional Housing program. This includes, but is not limited to: intake, referral and discharge procedures.

o Create procedures for residents in the program. o Coordinate with staff members to develop procedures that support primary staff through the use of mentors, volunteers and other community stakeholders.

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 50 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, and depth perception. While performing these job duties, the employee is regularly required to listen to others and provide verbal feedback. The employee is required to frequently sit for extended periods of time, stand, walk, climb, or balance.

**Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

* Proficient with Word, Excel, and general office machines;
* Must be 21 years of age or older;
* Proof of Louisiana State Driver’s License, auto insurance; and
* Must pass background checks.
* Required within first 30 days of employment:
  + CPR/First Aid certification required;
  + Must have a negative TB test; and
  + Full understanding of the CPS reporting requirements.

**Required Academic and Experience Qualifications:**

* Bachelor’s Degree;
* Three years’ experience with one of the following: Program Management, Compliance, Youth services, Residential services