

YouthLink Job Opening: **COMMUNITY YOUTH SPECIALIST**

Help bring the downtown community together to support at-risk youth and guide them to stable futures!



About YouthLink and the Downtown 100 Youth Initiative

YouthLink is a recognized leader in the Twin Cities and beyond for our work to build pathways of opportunity for homeless youth. Our youth-focused team provides innovative, evidence-based services that guide youth on a holistic level toward futures of education, employment, health and wellness, and housing stability. Since 2011, YouthLink has been home to the Youth Opportunity Center (YOC), a first-of-its-kind collaborative center where over 30 community partners make vital resources available onsite to provide efficient and effective interventions and strategies for youth in crisis.

Beginning in 2013, YouthLink became a partner in the Downtown 100 Initiative, a collaborative effort with the Downtown Improvement District, Minneapolis Police Department, Minneapolis City Attorney's Office, and other key downtown partners designed to reduce criminal activity and improve outcomes for young people in the downtown area with most frequent usage of the criminal justice and adult homeless shelter systems.

Our Mission

At YouthLink, our mission is to support and empower young people on their journey to self-reliance.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Community Youth Specialist plays a vital role in the ground-breaking Downtown 100 Youth Initiative, a program that brings the court system and supportive services together to make positive changes for youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This position works in a highly collaborative environment to identify youth, alter sentences, and track efforts to reduce arrests. The Specialist regularly represents YouthLink and advocates for youth with partners in the Downtown 100 Youth Initiative. As a transition coach, this position connects youth identified on the Downtown 100 list to longer-term services designed to improve safety, decrease involvement in the criminal justice system, and establish stable housing.

Key responsibilities include:

- Actively working with 40 young people per year, including a mix of current and former Downtown 100-identified youth and young people accessing the YouthLink drop-in center;
- Building trusting relationships with young people to appropriately assess strengths and service needs;
- Developing and documenting goal plans, making appropriate internal and external referrals, and ensuring follow-through;
- Attending community meetings with the Minneapolis City Attorney's Office, Downtown 100 probation officers, Minneapolis and Metro Transit police officers, Downtown 100 prosecutor, and others to positively and professionally advocate for youth and provide context and advice to improve outcomes;
- Collaborating with Mental Health Practitioner to provide thorough and integrative care for youth;
- Accompanying youth to court appearances and other appointments as a YouthLink representative;
- Providing services through the YouthLink drop-in center a minimum of 2 shifts per week;
- Assessing and appropriately responding to youth crisis;

- Understanding youths’ journey and providing non-judgmental services based on a harm-reduction/trauma-informed approach;
- Completing, maintaining, and communicating individual program files, program reports, and documentation (including financials and reimbursements) accurately and within established timelines;
- Maintaining professional boundaries with young people, co-workers, partners, and community;
- Understanding and applying YouthLink’s Guiding Principles to work with young people, staff, and community and partner agencies;
- Other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

A Bachelor’s degree or 2-4 years working with high-risk youth is required. Qualified candidates must:

- Have the ability to collaborate and advocate confidently and effectively within a variety of systems;
- Have strong verbal communication and interpersonal skills;
- Maintain a high degree of professionalism;
- Be able to provide non-judgmental services, including demonstrating an acceptance of a variety of lifestyles, behaviors, and cultural and spiritual practices;
- Have a thorough understanding of historical trauma and implicit bias, including street acculturation and behaviors;
- Be comfortable in a fast-paced, active environment;
- Be mission-driven and able to incorporate agency philosophy into service delivery.
- Be able to verbally and physically respond to aggression when necessary in ways that de-escalate, establish, and maintain staff and client safety.

Must have a valid MN state driver’s license and access to reliable transportation upon date of hire. The winning candidate must be able to pass a background check and drug test in accordance with local, state, and federal laws.

Hours: Full-time, 40 hours per week, Monday – Friday. Some evening/weekend hours may be required.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

\$17.30 - \$18.75 per hour, depending on experience. Non-exempt. YouthLink’s competitive and comprehensive benefits package includes:

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| • Medical | • Long Term Disability |
| • Dental | • Elective benefits: Short-term disability, FSA, |
| • Life Insurance | 401(k) |

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail a cover letter and resume with the subject line “Community Youth Specialist” to careers@youthlinkmn.org. Cover letter should include an explanation of how you have applied one or more of YouthLink’s [Guiding Principles](#) in your work.

Equal Employment Opportunity: YouthLink shall seek to ensure and provide equal opportunity for all persons seeking employment without regard to race, age, color, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, national origin, disability, or any other characteristic as established by law.