



## DIRECT SERVICE ADVOCATE

**Department:** Shelter  
**Reports to:** Shelter Manager or Designee  
**Location:** Anchorage

**Classification:** Non-exempt  
**Status:** Full-time, Part-Time, On-Call  
**Revision Date:** 6/13/2025

### **Position Summary:**

As the backbone of shelter operations, the Direct Service Advocate (DSA) helps maintain a safe, supportive, and clean environment for all shelter participants and nonresidential participants. The DSA provides compassionate, trauma-informed support to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (DV/SA/ST) and demonstrates a strong commitment to AWAIC values. The DSA provides coverage for the crisis line and supports 24/7 shelter staffing. Responsibilities include on-site shelter resident support, facility oversight, assisting with meal preparation, and responding to immediate participant needs. This role is responsible for assisting with participant screening, intake, assessment, crisis intervention, and safety planning. This position requires strong interpersonal skills, a calm demeanor in crisis situations, and a commitment to maintaining program participant confidentiality and dignity.

### **Minimum Qualifications**

- A relevant associate's degree from an accredited institution OR two (2) years of experience working in social services and/or with at-risk individuals; a bachelor's degree in a relevant field including human services, social work, psychology, or other related degrees are preferred. Additional experience can be used in lieu of education on a year for year basis.
- Excellent written and verbal communication
- Proficiency with computers to utilize AWAIC's systems
- Valid State of Alaska driver's license OR be able to obtain one within thirty (30) days of hire

### **Essential Functions**

- Adhere to all AWAIC, Inc. Policies and Procedures and remain current on updates and changes.
- Maintain accurate participant records including statistical information and summary of contacts according to AWAIC's Confidentiality Policy, AWAIC's Program Policies and Procedures, and grant requirements and within required timeframes
- Build rapport and supportive relationships based on mutual respect and compassion with program participants
- Answer crisis line providing empathetic and informed support to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking; engage with emergency services on behalf of participants when required.
- Assist with participant screening, intake and discharge processes
- Conduct facility walkthroughs to ensure safety and cleanliness



- Help manage donations and supplies to ensure participant needs are met
- Facilitate support and education groups for adults and children
- Provide resource navigation, advocacy within other systems and short-term follow-up
- Assist participants in creating and updating personalized safety plans
- Educate clients about legal options and system navigation
- Build and maintain collaborative relationships with external partners
- De-escalate and manage crisis situations with program participants
- Uphold ethical communication and model conflict resolution
- Practice cultural humility and trauma-informed care
- Provide basic needs services ensuring participants have items they need to reside in shelter safely and comfortably.
- Facilitate mutual understanding of program guidelines and effect communal living agreements amongst program participants
- Perform administrative tasks such as data entry, filing, and answering phone calls
- Participate in staff meetings and training sessions
- Support onboarding and mentorship for new shelter staff

#### Adult Program Duties:

- Lead and document adult group curriculum
- Support case planning and team collaboration
- Evaluate and recommend participant needs

#### Children's Program Duties:

- Facilitate psycho-educational groups for children and parents
- Evaluate child needs and contribute to case planning
- Coordinate children's outings, budget, and supplies
- Provide childcare support as needed
- Maintain documentation and submit monthly reports

#### Relief/On-Call Staff Duties:

In addition to the duties listed above, On-Call DSA's must meet the following expectations and performance standards.

- Relief must work a minimum of 30 hours a month, including one overnight shift, unless hours are not available
- Must not work more than 28 hours per week regularly, or 1,200 hours annually
- Must attend quarterly Relief Staff meetings
- Must attend all mandatory trainings and meetings

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

- Sound and logical judgment, critical thinking, and reasoning.
- Understand and comply with all agency policies and procedures.



- Understand and incorporate Trauma-Informed Care practices into continuity of care
- Demonstrate cultural humility and develop positive and supportive relationships with team members and program participants
- Consistently report to assigned shifts on time and prepared to perform job duties
- Internal motivation to complete tasks consistently without direct assignment
- Knowledge of community resources that are available to the population of AWAIC.
- Knowledge of crisis intervention, de-escalation, and prevention.
- High degree of sensitivity to and respect for diversity and cultural issues involved in working with individuals of varying ethnicities, spiritual beliefs, identities and incomes.
- Ability to utilize a mixture of evidence-based analysis, wisdom, and judgment to effectively make decisions.
- Dedication to maintaining a continued awareness of innovative service provision to AWAIC's population.
- Effective and innovative problem solving and conflict resolution skills and behaviors.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently, handle multiple concurrent projects, meet deadlines, and manage priorities.
- Knowledgeable and proficient in typical office software programs and applications.
- Consistent demonstration of ethics, integrity, fairness, and trustworthiness.
- Excellent oral, written, and public communication skills.
- Effective, supportive, and positive interpersonal communication skills and behaviors.
- Ability to demonstrate empathy and compassion consistent with the organization's guiding principles and values.
- Strong degrees of self-discipline, self-confidence, and self-development.

### **Physical Requirements:**

The Direct Service Advocate position involves a high degree and wide variety of physical activities essential to supporting participants and maintaining shelter operations. Responsibilities include:

- Lifting and carrying items weighing up to 35 pounds, such as luggage, supplies, or donations
- Pushing and pulling carts across various terrain and in all weather conditions.
- Frequent walking throughout the shelter, including stairways, administrative areas, and outdoor paths.
- Frequent stooping, kneeling, reaching, and bending to perform routine duties such as cleaning, retrieving items, or administering aid.
- Standing for extended periods, up to one hour while facilitating groups or preparing meals.
- Operating a vehicle and assisting participants in entering and exiting safely.
- Alternating between desk work (sitting) and active duties (standing/walking).
- Providing physical assistance to participants during emergencies (e.g., falls, seizures).

### **Mental Demands:**

The position requires resilience, emotional intelligence, and sound judgment. The ability to remain composed and supportive in high-stress or crisis situations is critical. Key mental demands include:

- Making quick, informed decisions in crisis or emergency situations.
- Demonstrating compassion and empathy while maintaining appropriate boundaries.



- Supporting survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking with cultural sensitivity.
- Communicating effectively with individuals in distress or experiencing trauma.
- Managing multiple tasks with attention to detail in a dynamic environment.
- Collaborating with a multidisciplinary team while remaining self-directed and proactive.
- Monitoring participant safety and responding appropriately to emerging needs or concerns.

### **Working Conditions**

- Noise level is mild to moderate, consistent with office and residential environments.
- Must have the ability to communicate information and ideas so others will understand. Must be able to exchange accurate information in these situations.
- Must have the ability to observe details within close range.
- Must be able to remain in stationary or standing positions for extended periods of time.
- Must be able to move within the office to access files and office equipment.
- Consistently operates a computer and related office machinery.
- Must be able to ascend/descend stairways, possibly without the assistance of an elevator
- Move items up to 35 pounds, including while ascending/descending stairways.
- Exposure to topics related to domestic violence, other types of abuse, substance use, and other emotionally sensitive situations and subjects

**AWAIC is an Equal Opportunity Employer**



**Acknowledgement**

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**Employee**

**Date**

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**Supervisor**

**Date**

**Note:** This job description in no way states or implies that these are the only duties to be performed by the employee(s) incumbent in this position. Employee(s) will be required to follow any other job-related instructions and to perform any other job-related duties requested by any person authorized to give instructions or assignments.

A review of this position has excluded the marginal functions of the position that are incidental to the performance of fundamental job duties. All duties and responsibilities are essential job functions and requirements and are subject to possible modification to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities.

To perform this job successfully, the incumbent(s) will possess the skills, aptitudes, and abilities to perform each duty proficiently. Some requirements may exclude individuals who pose a direct threat or significant risk to the health or safety of themselves or others. The requirements listed in this document are the minimum levels of knowledge, skills, or abilities.

This document does not create an employment contract, implied or otherwise, other than an "at will" relationship.