Job Title: Youth Services Specialist

Department: Rehabilitation and Workforce

Reports to: Director of Youth Services

Summary
VISIONS’ Youth Services Specialist helps design and implement vocational training programs for pre-teens, high school and college age youth. Services provided by the specialist include career exploration and counseling, prevocational and work experience training.

Prevocational skills are those specific skills necessary for vocational exploration and definition, job seeking, on-the-job behavior and skills, as well as life-related activities which support the person in securing and retaining a job. Prevocational training provides career information and employability skills development (e.g. social, time management and self-advocacy skills) which allow the consumer to be successful in a work experience training, internship or volunteer opportunity. Prevocational training also introduces skills directly related to the job search; application and interview process (e.g. resume writing, completing an employment application, interviewing techniques, dressing for success).

Work experience training involves identifying and securing internship sites in the community and appropriately matching each consumer with a site. Consumers may participate in work experience training either after school or in the summer. Time at an actual job site provides the consumer with an understanding of the work environment, and work-related behaviors, work skills and work experience. The emphasis in this program is on providing opportunities for the consumer to develop work skills in real-life integrated employment settings.

The Youth Services Specialist also works closely with the Director of Youth Services and Senior Technology Instructors to facilitate prevocational activities for the youth in the Snack Bar after school program. The Youth Services Specialist will work with the Workforce Development department as assigned to coordinate activities such as employer awareness events. The Youth Services Specialist will also attend local events and meetings coordinated by the New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) as well as the parent groups for children who are blind and visually impaired. The Youth Services Specialist will establish a working relationship with the Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) throughout the New York City Department of Education. The Youth Services Specialist will visit schools with resource rooms that provide services to blind and visually impaired high school students. The Youth Services Specialist will also maintain a relationship with staff at the New York Institute for Special Education and Lavelle School for the Blind.
Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Plan, develop, and implement activities for scheduled Prevocational Training programs at VISIONS at Selis Manor and at VISIONS VCB, which is currently a four-day residential (overnight) program.

2. Work with the New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) and schools to recruit and serve the number of individuals needed to meet contracted Prevocational and Work Experience Training (WET) goals.

3. Develop internship opportunities for consumers referred by NYSCB to our youth programs.

4. Evaluate needs of both consumers and employers for appropriate job matches.

5. Establish written “contracts” detailing VISIONS role, the consumer’s role and the site supervisor’s role.

6. Maintain an organized system of recording and tracking internship sites, persons referred and results. Records should include all necessary documentation related to services such as intake assessments, specific plans for placement and follow-up, interim and final reports.

7. Monitor consumer work experience training activities for attendance, appropriate on the job behavior and attainment of competencies. Attendance is recorded on timesheets which should be verified and calculated for accuracy.

8. When indicated refer consumers for services in other departments (such as social work, orientation and mobility, vision rehabilitation therapy).

9. As part of prevocational and work experience training, familiarize consumers with job readiness, job search techniques, resume development, job applications, interviewing techniques, and scheduling of interview appointments.

10. Work collaboratively with the technology instructors to design and offer programming to increase participants’ familiarization with and utilization of adaptive technology.

11. As assigned, provide awareness and training to educate prospective internship sites and employers about vocational barriers and promote full accessibility at sites.

12. Attend regularly scheduled transition meetings with New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) and other blindness/vision rehabilitation agencies.
13. Represent the agency, as requested, in job related functions with business, government, and community agencies.

14. Other duties as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications

1. Bachelor’s degree in social work, education, human services or related discipline.

2. Two years’ experience with disadvantaged, at risk and/or disabled youth.

3. Willingness and ability to stay overnight for residential programming weeks for youth at VISIONS Center on Blindness in Rockland County.

4. Willingness to work occasional weekends and travel to other boroughs for events and recruitment.


6. Ability to relate well with a diversity of ages and cultural backgrounds.

7. Fluency in Spanish a plus.

8. Agree to a criminal background investigation.

Salary: Commensurate with experience.

This full-time exempt position is located primarily at VISIONS Selis Manor office at 135 West 23rd Street in Manhattan. Scheduled evening and weekend hours are required.

VISIONS is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit rehabilitation and social service agency incorporated in 1926. VISIONS provides service for blind and visually impaired people of all ages in the Greater New York Metropolitan Area.

VISIONS is an equal opportunity employer. All job candidates, consultants, volunteers, and interns 18 years of age and older, must consent to a background investigation including a criminal justice system search, reference and education checks.

To apply for this position, please send your cover letter and resume to Melissa Phipps, Director of Youth Services mphipps@visionsvcb.org by March 1, 2014.