



THE IMAGINE JUSTICE PROJECT

AmeriCorps Position Description

- Student Support Specialist -
Communities In Schools of Tacoma

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Imagine Justice Project

Young people often come into contact with the criminal justice system as a result of normal adolescent behavior, such as taking risks and pushing boundaries. Due to institutional racism and implicit bias, this happens more often for Black and Brown youth through the over-policing of communities of color, racial profiling and disproportionate minority sentencing. The isolation and stigma surrounding criminal justice system involvement create additional barriers preventing youth and young adults from achieving their full potential. Protective factors, such as participation in positive youth development programs and connection to caring adults, can create safe and supportive environments for youth that prevent and reduce contact with the criminal justice system.

The Imagine Justice Project is a collaborative Pierce County effort to strengthen youth development and advance equitable, community-centered justice systems. One of the primary strategies of the Imagine Justice program is to leverage AmeriCorps volunteers to build the capacity of local organizations to provide culturally response, trauma-informed positive youth development programs and services.

AmeriCorps Team

An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. The Imagine Justice Project is recruiting 20 individuals to serve as AmeriCorps members in positive youth development programs across Pierce County. The majority of positions are fulltime positions, which complete 1700 total service hours over a period of approximately 11 months. Some shortened and part time positions are also available. Members are eligible to receive a living allowance, healthcare benefits, childcare benefits, as well as significant training and coaching. Upon successful completion of their service terms, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

POSITION INFORMATION

Position Title: Student Support Specialist

Service Term:

This is a 1700-hour fulltime position, at approximately 40-hours per week for 11 months. The term is expected to begin August 22nd, 2022 and continue through July 15th, 2023.

**Days/Hours of Service:**

The typical schedule is Monday through Friday for approximately 8 hours per day, including one 30-minute unpaid lunch break, and two 15-minute paid rest breaks. There will be a regular set schedule between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM with some flexibility to set hours dependent on school and student needs. Some evening and weekend hours may be required for special events and activities.

Every other Friday AmeriCorps members will be expected to come together as a team for training, project planning, and team building. Alternate Fridays are optional days to come together with the AmeriCorps team.

Program Description:

The Student Support Specialists serves within the Communities In Schools (CIS) of Tacoma school sites that provide our model of “integrated student supports.” These supports are delivered in strong collaboration with the Communities In Schools of Tacoma team, school staff and the community. Read more about the Communities In Schools national model at <http://www.communitiesinschools.org/our-model>.

Host Site Description:

Communities In Schools of Tacoma is a strong team focused on our mission of surrounding students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and succeed in life. We are seeking a Student Support Specialist able to build powerful relationships with youth, families, school staff and community partners; able to work with young people 1:1, support volunteers and facilitate small group activities and after-school activities in the Tacoma School District in Tacoma, WA. What sets Communities In Schools apart is the way we coordinate a comprehensive range of services to support all the needs of our students—academic and non-academic—so they come to school (and/or engage in online learning) ready to learn! We specialize in academic supports, social emotional learning, enrichment opportunities and basic needs supports. Our team helps students (and their families) remove barriers to academic engagement and success.

Service Location:

Pierce County is located in the Puget Sound region of Washington State and is home to the iconic 14,000-foot tall Mt. Rainier. This area is the traditional lands of the Coast Salish people. With a population of approximately 800,000, Pierce County is the second most populous County in the state with Tacoma being Pierce County’s largest City.

CIS of Tacoma serves the beautiful and diverse community of Tacoma, WA. Most of the schools we serve are situated in South and Southeast Tacoma, and all are within the Tacoma School District. Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) is one of the largest districts in Washington state, serving approximately 30,000 children.

Position Description:

The Student Support Specialist serves with a school, as part of the CIS Tacoma team, to provide school-wide supports, events and programs to strengthen the school community and student engagement in school. They lead small group activities of students to build strong relationships and new skills (examples: social emotional skill building during “Lunch Bunch”, or leading an after-school academic support group). Additionally, Student Support Specialists will meet 1:1 with students to set goals and help students overcome barriers to success. Student Support Specialists also help build a community of support through community outreach.

Responsibilities and Related Tasks:

- Meet 1:1 with students to assess their strengths and needs, connect them to resources, set goals, and support them in reaching their goals.
- Recruit, train and coordinate community volunteers to build authentic relationships with youth in 1:1 and small group settings.
- Facilitate small-group activities with students in alignment with the sites' School Support Plan.
- Support school-wide activities/programs and basic needs provision (food, school supplies etc.) during the school year, led by the Site Coordinator in collaboration with other partners.
- Partner with the school's CIS Tacoma Site Coordinator to identify and coordinate community resources, volunteers and partnerships to address the identified needs of youth (and their families) who face individual and systemic barriers to academic success through confidential, developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive interventions, services, supports and case management.
- Build relationships with local businesses and community organizations to support the programs and services at the school site.
- Represent the organization positively at all times by acting as a professional ambassador in alignment with the organization's mission, values, and beliefs.
- Participate in regular professional development, team-building, and service activities

Benefits:

- Living allowance of \$18,000 for complete service term. The living allowance is paid in equal installments on the 5th and the 20th of each month. Each installment is approximately \$818.18, totaling \$1,636.36 per month during service term (approximately 11 months).
- Access Segal AmeriCorps Education award in the amount of \$6,495 upon successful completion of service term. This award must be used within seven years of service completion and may only be used to pay educational expenses at eligible post-secondary and technical institutions OR repay qualified student loans
- Optional health insurance coverage for individual
- Optional childcare assistance (must meet specific eligibility requirements)
- Optional student loan forbearance during service term
- AmeriCorps Member Assistance Program (MAP) which includes virtual counseling and coaching, financial and legal assistance, and other resources
- Mileage reimbursement for trips related to CIS Tacoma duties

ELIGIBILITY

Required Qualifications:

- Age 18 or older at start of service term
- High School Diploma or equivalent upon start of service term, OR agree to obtain diploma or equivalent prior to using Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
- US Citizen or permanent resident
- Proof of complete COVID-19 vaccination
- Commitment to building skills and knowledge related to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Ability to travel to service site(s) as well as other training or activity locations across Pierce County
- Basic computer skills and knowledge of Microsoft Suite of programs and video conferencing

- Accuracy with data entry and ability/willingness to learn new database system
- Belief that EVERY young person is able to be successful and demonstrated strong youth-engagement, asset-building and relationship-building skills, particularly with youth, and their families.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with schools, students, parents, community representatives and the public.
- Adapt, facilitate, and evaluate age-appropriate activities with and for the youth being served.
- Flexibility, collaborative spirit. Ability to work cooperatively as a team member with the CIS Tacoma team, and school teachers and staff.
- Strong written and oral communication skills; confidence in initiating communication via phone, email, or in person with school staff, parents, and community partners; follow up when needed.
- Strong initiative; self-motivated, with the ability to work well under minimal supervision.
- Ability to work with people of diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and to work in a diverse environment with diverse personalities and cultures while at all times displaying authenticity, tact, maturity, and flexibility.

Desired Qualifications:

- Represent the diversity of clients being served through personal characteristics and/or lived experience. Bilingual or bi-cultural preferred
- Previous experience working with youth or young adults
- Familiarity with the Pierce County community
- Skills and/or knowledge related to youth development, trauma-informed care, or diversity, equity and inclusion
- Knowledge of middle-school math (algebra & geometry), ability to coach in those subject areas
- Strong organizational skills. Ability to balance multiple projects simultaneously, including school-wide supports and individualized support.
- Knowledge of local Pierce County and Tacoma resources, community agencies and social service systems
- Experience in education, social services, counseling, juvenile justice or related field
- Experience with education prevention, intervention and/or reengagement strategies
- Creative spirit; ability to approach challenges with creative thinking and resiliency

Criminal History:

The Imagine Justice Project values individuals with lived experience that relates to the clients and communities we serve. All AmeriCorps positions are subject to the National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) process. Applicants who do not consent or provide false information are not eligible to serve in an AmeriCorps position. Additionally, any applicant who has been convicted of murder, or who is registered or required to be registered on any sexual offender registry will also be disqualified from any AmeriCorps service position.

Applicants who have been convicted of crimes against children or youth will be disqualified from this position.

Service Environmental & Physical Requirements:

Must have reliable transportation and be able to lift 25 pounds. This position serves within Tacoma School District sites and is on the Communities In Schools of Tacoma Team. The Student Support Specialist works from their school site primarily in an office space, in classrooms and in gathering spaces



at the school. They also participate in home visits, deliveries and external meetings in alignment with health and safety precautions. Masks are required at school sites.

Equal Opportunity

AmeriCorps and the Imagine Justice Project is available to all, without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, genetic information and military service. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to the known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified members.

CONTACT INFORMATION

IMAGINE JUSTICE PROJECT:

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