



# THE IMAGINE JUSTICE PROJECT

## AmeriCorps Position Description

- Program Assistant -  
Hilltop Artists

### **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 connections 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 project is to leverage AmeriCorps volunteers to build the capacity of local organizations to provide culturally responsive, 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:** Art Program Assistant

*(AKA student/teacher support, mentors, bacon savers, unicorns)*

#### **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 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 and continue through July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Days/Hours of Service:**

The typical schedule varies at Hilltop Artists: we offer elective classes during the daytime, after school enrichment programs, and evening advanced programs in glass arts, and twice weekly interdisciplinary arts programs with court-involved young women. Depending on the interests of the Art Program Assistant it's possible to complete hours Monday through Friday from 8:30 am – 5:30 pm, or from 12:30 pm - 8:30 pm, including one 30-minute unpaid lunch break, and two 15-minute paid rest breaks. Some evening and weekend hours may be required for special events and activities (Better Futures Luncheon, Winter Sale, Winter Warmers, Spring Sale), professional development training, and field trips (to other glass shops, studios, and schools).

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:**

Hilltop Artists' mission is to “use glass art to connect young people from diverse social and economic backgrounds to better futures”. We provide tuition-free instruction in glass and interdisciplinary arts to historically underserved young people ages 12 to 26. We use glass arts as an entry point to connect with students and address risk factors that prevent them from graduating, enrolling in postsecondary education, and getting jobs.

**Host Site Description:**

Hilltop Artists was co-founded in 1994 by internationally known glass artist Dale Chihuly and a group of local educators and arts professionals. We are located in two Tacoma public schools (Jason Lee Middle School and Silas (formerly Wilson) High School), at our two, fully operational, glass hot shops.

We serve youth farthest from educational justice: lower-income and BIPOC youth, youth who identify as LGBTQIA+, foster and court-involved youth, students with disabilities, and youth with academic, social, or behavioral challenges. We are dedicated to young people who struggle with traditional classroom environments and students with poor attendance/failing grades. We see youth who confront poverty, abuse, homelessness, food insecurity, drugs, and gang recruitment on a daily basis.

Working with hot glass engages students not reached by other interventions and programs. We support them to increase their social and academic competency, beginning in middle school, with options to continue through high school to age 26. This long-term engagement, along with adult mentors they trust, supports the development of skills such as critical thinking, tenacity, communication, innovation, and teamwork. We use a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) framework whereby young people acquire, and then apply, the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to understand and manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and set and achieve positive goals. 100% of Hilltop Artists youth, who are of an age to do so, graduate from high school, with 77% going on to college.

**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. With a population of approximately 800,000, it is the second most populous County in the state with Tacoma being Pierce County's largest City.

Hilltop Artists is located in the Hilltop neighborhood of Tacoma, historically one of the most economically disadvantaged areas of our city, and we serve 650 young people each year. In addition to



our professional teaching artists we also have a full-time Outreach Services Manager on staff who provides a variety of wrap-around services and support for our students. We work closely with a variety of local arts and social service organizations to provide our students with all of the tools they need to succeed.

### **Position Description:**

The Program Assistant will support Hilltop Artists' Instructors by helping with the social and emotional learning of our students. Our Instructors teach technical skill building in glass arts, our Program Assistant will take an active role in building social skills in our students during our programs. The Program Assistant will talk and listen to our students, be a caring adult, and help with managing the tone and culture of the classroom.

### **Responsibilities and Related Tasks:**

- Engage directly with Middle and High School students under the guidance of Hilltop Artists' Instructors; engagement can range from assisting students with the completion of glass art projects to conversations about why students are having difficulty engaging with their art project, to any topic that a student may want to discuss
- With support from Hilltop Artists' Instructors, suggest and implement alternative activities that play to students' strengths (drawing, glass art activity sheets, glass Jeopardy, looking at art books from our library, watching an instructional video) if they are unable or unwilling to participate in the activity at hand
- Listen to students, support their interests and concerns, refer students to the Outreach Services Manager for additional support if necessary
- Deliver on the principles of Positive Youth Development: focus on positive outcomes, support youth voice in activities, promote youth involvement in positive activities, participate in our community-focused activities with youth, commit to long-term success for young people
- Participate in weekly staff meetings
- Participate in special events (i.e. annual sales, artist residencies/workshops, Museum of Glass demonstrations)
- 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 5<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> 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
- 50% discount in Hilltop Artists' gallery
- Free Hilltop Artists T-Shirt
- Opportunity to make a bead and a paperweight under the guidance of an Alumni Team member or Hilltop Artists Instructor

## ***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

### **Desired Qualifications:**

- Represent the diversity of clients being served through personal characteristics and/or lived experience
- Previous experience working with youth or young adults
- Previous teaching experience
- Excellent communication skills
- Experience or a keen interest in the arts, particularly glass arts
- Familiarity with the Pierce County community
- Skills and/or knowledge related to youth development, trauma-informed care, or diversity, equity and inclusion

### **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.

Individuals selected for this position are also subject to the Tacoma Public Schools criminal history screening and may be ineligible for service based on any findings. Felony convictions of crimes against children or vulnerable adults will disqualify individuals from serving in this position.

**Service Environmental & Physical Requirements:** Hilltop Artists operates in hot shops at Jason Lee Middle School (where our admin and teaching offices are located) and Silas High School. A hot shop has furnaces that keep glass above 2000 degrees Fahrenheit and reheating chambers (glory holes) that reheat glass to about 2300 degrees Fahrenheit. There are torches with open flames that reach 1600 degrees Fahrenheit. Roll-up garage doors are open at all times to provide ventilation and air flow. The hot shop is constantly hot and cold depending on where you are standing, so the ability to negotiate extreme temperature changes and an ability to be around heat is necessary. Dressing in layers is strongly suggested. Closed toed shoes are mandatory.

Hot shops are loud places. Furnaces and other types of equipment create a constant rumble. Music plays continuously and is louder than the equipment. Dust, broken glass, burning cork and newspaper,



and raised voices all add to the cacophony of the hot shop. There is a lot of movement in the hot shop and bodily- kinesthetic learners excel in hot glass. The ability to work around lots of noise, and smells, and movement is necessary.

Physically the Program Assistant must have the ability to lift and carry objects up to 25 pounds, the visual acuity to differentiate between colors, and good manual dexterity. Bending, stooping, and standing for extended periods are generally required, however reasonable accommodations can be made to aid Program Assistants with varying abilities.

**Equal Opportunity:**

AmeriCorps and the Imagine Justice Project are 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:**

*Safe Streets Campaign  
714 S 27<sup>th</sup> St  
Tacoma, WA 98409  
Safest.org*

*Kaitlan Ohler  
Imagine Justice Project Coordinator  
kohler@safest.org  
(253) 389-2407*

**AMERICORPS HOST SITE:**

*Hilltop Artists  
602 N Sprague Avenue  
Tacoma, WA 98403  
hilltopartists.org*

*Dr. Kimberly F. Keith  
Executive Director, Hilltop Artists  
kkeith@hilltopartists.org  
(253) 381-1089 (mobile number)*

*Additional Supervisors:*

*Jessica Hogan, Program Manager  
Jason Mouer, Operations & Instruction Manager  
Sasha Tepper-Stewart, Arts Connect Manager*