JOB POSTING

JOB TITLE: ELDER RIGHTS SPECIALIST

STATUS: ☒ Full-time ☐ Part-time ☒ Exempt ☐ Non-exempt

AgeOptions is committed to improving the quality of life and maintaining the dignity of older adults and those who care about them – through leadership and support, community partnerships, comprehensive services, accurate information and powerful advocacy. AgeOptions is recognized nationally as a leader in developing and helping to deliver innovative community-based resources and options to older populations in transition and through our network of community agencies, serves approximately 200,000 people annually. AgeOptions receives federal, state, private, foundation, and individual charitable contributions. For more information, please visit our website at: www.ageoptions.org.

BASIC FUNCTION

Under the leadership of the Manager of Community Programs, this position serves as the key person responsible for AgeOptions funded elder rights programs and other social service programs across Suburban Cook County. The Elder Rights and Social Services Specialist establishes and maintains strong relationships with partner agencies; provides technical assistance to funded partner agencies; advocates for increased protective services for older adults and people with disabilities; oversees program development; promotes the provision of quality services; and serves as a resource regarding:

- Elder rights programs (adult protective services, nursing home ombudsman, and legal assistance)*
- Illinois Financial Abuse Specialist Team (a multi-disciplinary team designed to prevent and address financial abuse through outreach, trainings and case consultation to access records, conduct forensic accounting, freeze assets and prosecute abusers)*
- Veterans Independence Program (Veterans-Directed Home and Community-Based Services)
- Other social service programs*

*See program descriptions at end of job posting
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Technical Assistance and Training for the above assigned programs

Oversees the delivery of quality programs:

- Facilitates regular meetings and professional development opportunities (e.g. as facilitate quarterly meetings for local supervisors of Adult Protective Services Programs)
- Provides timely and high-quality technical assistance on best practices, program rules, requirements and the reasons for them
- Remains up-to-date on program changes and trends in the field
- Reviews reports, care plans and budgets for quality assurance
- Responds to program issues by assessing concerns, reviewing action plans, and supporting staff in resolving problems
- Serves as an information resource to AgeOptions staff, partners and clients by consulting on elder rights issues and concerns
- Assists the Grants Unit with program monitoring, as needed

The Elder Rights and Social Services Specialist must understand Federal and State laws and current guidelines, policies and procedures of all programs under his/her purview.

Program Development and Outreach

- Works with external partners to develop the Older American Protection Network and the Illinois Financial Abuse Specialist Team
- Researches and seeks other funding opportunities and prepares applications for funding, as requested.
- Provides regular outreach, education, and training
- Provides recommendations for program development.
- Works with external partners to increase awareness of elder rights needs and resources.
- Advocates for increased protective services for older adults and people with disabilities
- Works with the fiscal department and manager to develop budgets and monitor expenses for program budgets
- Represents AgeOptions at events, meetings and professional associations and organizations.

Reporting and Analysis

- Reviews assigned regulatory or program instructions and assists in preparing comments on rules and regulations, especially concerning elder rights and social services issues
- Maintains appropriate program elements in internal information systems and databases
- Analyzes program trends, data, and developments for use in program planning
- Responsible for input on and the preparation of all reports

Other Duties

- Answer Information and Assistance calls approximately 1 day per week and on Elder Rights issues, as available
- Periodic or occasional tasks or responsibilities, as assigned
SUPERVISION
Currently, this position does not supervise anyone. In the future, it has the possibility of supervising interns or others.

CONNECTIONS
Works with the following partners:
- Illinois Department on Aging
- Adult Protective Services Provider Agencies and Care Coordination Units
- Legal Assistance Foundation
- State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program and Regional Ombudsman partners
- Veterans Administration Medical Centers
- Cook County Sheriff’s Department
- Offices of the Public Guardian and State Guardian
- Office of the Illinois Attorney General
- Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

QUALIFICATIONS
- Masters Degree or Bachelor's Degree and four years of experience in social service, planning or related area
- Ability to develop strong working relationships with community partners
- Strong verbal and written communication, including presentation skills
- Ability to prepare written reports, grant applications and position papers
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office programs including Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel
- Strong technical, analytical, organizational, and interpersonal skills
- Ability to handle multiple tasks simultaneously, working autonomously and with others
- Ability to travel within suburban Cook County on a regular basis, and travel outside of Cook County on an occasional basis
- Experience with protective services programs and/or aging programs, strongly preferred
- Program development experience and experience coordinating and conducting training preferred

Required Certifications
- Obtain and/or maintain Adult Protective Services Caseworker and Supervisor certification through the Illinois Department on Aging (training provided)
- Obtain and/or maintain Ombudsman Level 2 certification (training provided)

To apply:
Please visit our website at www.ageoptions.org. Interested persons please forward resume with cover letter to HR@AgeOptions.org or Fax to 708-524-0870. AgeOptions is an Equal Opportunity Employer, MFDV, Please include salary history. No phone calls please.
**Elder rights programs**

The two main elder rights programs in Illinois are the Elder Abuse and Neglect Program and the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program. The Elder Abuse and Neglect Program is designed to investigate allegations of abuse of people age 60 or older who live in their own homes. AgeOptions funds ten local agencies to receive reports of suspected abuse, conduct assessment in the homes of alleged victims and, with substantiated cases, develop and implement a case plan to stabilize the abusive situation and reduce the risk of further harm to the older adult. The seven types of elder abuse are: 1) physical abuse 2) sexual abuse 3) emotional abuse 4) confinement 5) passive neglect 6) willful deprivation and 7) financial exploitation.

The Long-term Care Ombudsman works to ensure that the rights of residents of long term care settings (e.g. nursing homes) are respected. The two Long-term Care Ombudsman agencies in suburban Cook County receive, investigate and work to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of long term care facility residents age 60 and older.

The Elder Rights and Social Services Specialist is the key contact person for both programs. For the Elder Abuse and Neglect Program s/he convenes quarterly meetings of the supervisors, monitors intake numbers and provides technical assistance to caseworkers. S/he develops grant proposals, conducts outreach and monitors statewide and national policy developments for both programs.

**Veterans Independence Program**

The Veterans Independence Program (VIP) is nationally known as the Veterans-directed Home and Community Based Services program. In this program the three Veterans Administration Medical Centers (VAMCs) in our area refer veterans to the program; veterans can be any age who are eligible for nursing home care, but wish to remain in their own homes and direct their care. AgeOptions funds other local agencies to work with the veteran to develop a budget and plan of care using a set amount of funds made available through the program. In many cases, the veterans will hire family, friends or neighbors to help them with their activities of daily living.

The Elder Rights and Social Services Specialist will be the primary contact for the Veterans Administration Medical Centers, local agencies and the financial management service. In this role, this person identifies and implements program improvements, offers trainings, ensures agencies conduct the required work in the agreed-upon timelines, and responds promptly to VAMC requests.

**The Older Adult Protection Network/Illinois Financial Abuse Specialist Teams (FAST)**

The Illinois Financial Abuse Specialist Team (iFAST) was organized in 2013 as a result of the growing trend in financial exploitation of older adults. The iFAST is a multidisciplinary effort that includes representatives from social service and community-based organizations, county and state law enforcement agencies, financial institutions, legal services, and state agencies. Through the unique professional knowledge of these collective disciplines and an organized response, the iFAST mission aims to respond to, reduce, and prevent incidents of financial exploitation, as well as preserve the assets of, the older citizens of Cook and Suburban Cook Counties. iFAST provides a coordinated community response through case consultation, community education, cross-discipline provider training, and a rapid response network within the area. The FAST model has proven successful in counties across the United States and is endorsed by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.