

Community Advocate

Overview of On The Rise, Inc.

On The Rise, Inc. (OTR) is a dynamic Cambridge, MA-based non-profit founded in 1995 that serves women, trans, and non-binary people currently/formerly experiencing homelessness throughout the region. Our Safe Haven day program provides a space where participants can meet some of their tangible needs, such as taking a shower, receiving their mail, or doing laundry, as well as meet one-on-one with Community Advocates to work on longer-term goals. The Keep The Keys program supports our participants as they transition into stable housing and the opportunities and challenges that presents. Our innovative approach supports our participants' initiative and core strengths to help them find safety and discover new possibilities. OTR is committed to social justice, dismantling oppression, and striving to be an anti-racist organization.

At On The Rise, the core of our work is building authentic, long-term relationships with program participants. Through these relationships we foster the trust and belonging that is foundational to people's feelings of agency, empowerment, and safety in community. Program participants display enormous strength and ingenuity in coping with challenges such as homelessness, domestic violence, mental illness, the after-effects of childhood abuse, involvement in the legal system, systemic oppression, and intergenerational trauma. We work to meet people where they are and follow their self-determined visions of success as they navigate structural barriers and challenges. We strive to create a low-threshold environment where people can bring their whole selves, while also holding each individual accountable to the community.

Hours, Activities, and Responsibilities

OTR's normal business hours are 8-4 on weekdays and the duties of the position require Community Advocates to be onsite, in person. The Safe Haven is open most holidays and, by the end of the year, we plan to be open Monday-Saturday. In order to ensure adequate staffing during all the Safe Haven's scheduled operations, each Advocate, on the six person team, will work one Saturday per month and occasional holidays. Holiday and Saturday hours would be part of a 5 day work week. The advocacy team is composed of six Community Advocates, two Program Managers, and the Director of Clinical Services. This position directly reports to one of the Program Managers.

This position is a blend of direct service and advocacy.

Direct service: Each Advocate spends half their day staffing the Safe Haven, a daytime program where the people we serve may address some basic human needs like food, clothing, rest, and hygiene. During this time two to three Advocates manage the day-to-day operations of the Safe Haven, such as distributing the goods we have in-house, making sure everyone has a chance to access the resources they need while they're here, and maintaining safety. Frequent climbing of stairs and carrying up to 25 pounds is required.

This time in the Safe Haven is also essential for the Advocates to do our core work of relationship building. Creating opportunities for authentic, growth-fostering boundaried relationships is the most important responsibility of the Advocates. These relationships are the basis for long-term, broad-based support, and the Safe Haven is where those relationships begin.

Advocacy work: The other half of the day is reserved for advocacy and meetings. This participant-led support may relate to a wide range of issues including:

- Case management work in a non-clinical setting (for example, helping someone fill out housing applications, calling around for a detox bed, or making referrals for outside services)
- Accompaniment to a wide variety of outside appointments or meetings (doctors, court, housing, lawyers, family, etc)
- Provide support and advocacy to our Keep The Keys participants (people who have moved into housing)
- Providing crisis intervention using a harm reduction approach, including assessment of danger and risk and a discussion about the tradeoffs inherent in any change
- Street outreach
- Visiting participants (at home, hospital, jail, etc)
- Exploring outside-the-box possibilities with guidance from the participant (for example, helping someone connect to local businesses where they might show their art, or working on protest signs for a rally)

Who we are looking for:

The following qualities are essential for a strong Advocate.

Mission and Values:

- Commits to OTR's mission and values of relationships, self determination, wellbeing, safety in community, inclusion and diversity, and anti-racism and anti-oppression.
- Dedication to OTR's tenets of harm reduction, trauma inclusion, relational-cultural theory, strength-based de-centered practice, a wellbeing approach, and anti-oppression frameworks.
- Personal experience of trans and/or non-binary gender identities or experience working with and being in relationship with trans and/or non-binary individuals.
- Participates in employer-sponsored activities acknowledging, confronting, and dismantling racism and other issues of oppression and examining the impact of racism on themselves, on OTR, and in the community at large.

Teamwork and Collaboration:

- Reframes case management from an individual activity to a collective Advocacy team effort that leverages diverse skills and perspectives within the team.
- Actively supports, challenges, and communicates with teammates and receives support and challenge with openness, curiosity, and humor.
- Works within the continuum of service providers to enhance the success and effectiveness of referrals between OTR and other programs.

Relationships and Boundaries:

- Builds authentic relationships with program participants, fellow staff members, and outside collaborators.
- Maintains appropriate boundaries by continuously examining the motivations and impacts of decisions.

Initiative and Agency:

- Exercises independent judgment, creativity in problem solving, and initiative in providing advocacy.

- Like all OTR employees, exhibits the flexibility required in a small organization, openness to change, and seeks out resources for personal and professional growth.

Skills and Expertise:

- At least 3 years of prior work experience in human services or related fields. History of homelessness or other significant life challenges may also qualify as prior experience.
- Valid Driver's License required. Vehicle not required.
- Computer literacy and working knowledge of or willingness to learn Google Apps Suite.
- Experience with substance use recovery (lived) and/or LADCs/CAC/CADCs ***preferred and prioritized***
- Bilingual in Spanish or Haitian Creole ***preferred and prioritized***

Hiring Process, Salary, and Benefits:

- **To apply:** Submit a cover letter and resume to [hiring@ontherise.org](mailto: hiring@ontherise.org). Applications without a cover letter will not be considered. Please respond specifically in your cover letter to these questions:
 - What personal and/or professional experiences motivate you to work in human services?
 - What interests you about working at On The Rise specifically?
- **Salary Range:** \$52,000-\$62,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications. This is a full-time, salaried non-exempt position.
 - **Starting Bonus:** \$1,500 starting bonus, less applicable taxes and withholdings. Half to be paid after 30 days of start date and half to be paid after 60 days of start date.
 - **Additional annual compensation** of up to \$2,000 for language proficiency in our target populations: Spanish, and Haitian Creole.
- **Hiring Timeline:** Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. It is On The Rise's hope that the hired candidate begins work by late January/early February.
- **Generous benefits package including:**
 - 75% employer sponsored health and dental coverage
 - Up to 5% retirement plan employer contribution
 - Annually 15 vacation days (increasing to 20 days after completing fourth year of employment), 12 sick days, 12 paid holidays, 2 personal days
 - 100% employer paid short-/long-term disability plans, life insurance, and paid family and medical leave benefits
 - Monthly clinical supervision with LICSW provided onsite

On The Rise recognizes the importance and benefits of diversity in the workplace and the community. We are an AA/EOE, and we strongly encourage people who are bilingual/bicultural, people of color, people with disabilities, members of LGBTQ/T communities, trans, and non-binary people to apply.

OTR is committed to providing access, equal opportunity, and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities in employment, its services, programs, and activities. To request reasonable accommodation, contact [hiring@ontherise.org](mailto: hiring@ontherise.org).