

**A GRANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF DUPAGE AND BRIDGE  
COMMUNITIES**

WHEREAS, the County of DuPage ("County") is a body corporate and politic; and

WHEREAS, BRIDGE COMMUNITIES ("Agency") is a 501(c)(3) organization created under the Internal Revenue Code, and

WHEREAS, the County has established the Member Initiative Program which permits members of the County Board to advance items which benefit their district and assigns certain amounts of public funds for those purposes; and

WHEREAS, the County's funding for each Agency is not a donation and must be used to perform certain services or functions within the County's statutory authority to perform; and

WHEREAS, the County and the Agency are hereafter sometimes referred to as the "Party" and collectively referred to herein as "the Parties"; and

WHEREAS, the Parties have prepared this Agreement to govern the distribution of the grant funds identified above.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements contained herein, the Parties hereby agree as follows:

1. **Purpose of the Agreement.** The Purpose of this Agreement is to define the project for which grant funds are to be used and provide funding for eligible expenses.
2. **Recitals.** The recitals to this Agreement are incorporated as though set forth fully herein.
3. **Term.** This Agreement shall remain in effect through November 30, 2025. Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of this Agreement shall remain in effect indefinitely and shall survive the termination of this Agreement. Funds shall be expended prior to November 30, 2025.
4. **Project Description.** Agency shall receive thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) from the County. Agency shall undertake the following project or activities described in the Proposal attached hereto as Exhibit A.
5. **Termination, Breach.** This Agreement may be terminated upon thirty (30) days' notice to the other Party with the written consent of the other Party. All terms of this Agreement shall be considered material terms and therefore all breaches shall be deemed material breaches. In the event of a breach of this Agreement by any Party, the non-breaching Party shall provide the breaching Party with written notice of the breach and shall provide a period of not less than thirty (30) days to cure said breach.
6. **Venue, Applicable Law.** The exclusive venue for disputes arising from this Agreement shall be the 18th Judicial Circuit Court, sitting in Wheaton, Illinois. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Illinois.
7. **Payment.** The County agrees to pay the Agency thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00). Payment is contingent upon: (1) compliance with County rules and regulations; (2) Accounts Payable review by Finance Staff and County Audit Staff including providing sufficient invoicing and proof of purchase; and (3) completion of a fully executed Agreement. Payments shall be made in the form of reimbursement and upon invoice from

Agency. Payments for eligible expenses authorized under this Agreement shall be made within thirty (30) days of receipt of completed invoices and proof of purchase. All funds shall be expended not later than November 30, 2025.


8. **Assignment.** Neither Party shall assign performance under this Agreement, nor shall either Party transfer any right or obligation under this Agreement without the express written approval of the County.
9. **Amendment.** Any amendment to the terms of this Agreement must be in writing and will not be effective until it has been executed and approved by the same Parties who approved and executed the original Agreement or their successors in office.
10. **Waiver.** If the County fails to enforce any provision of this Agreement, that failure does not waive said provision or the County's right to enforce it.
11. **Sole Agreement.** This Agreement contains all negotiations between the County and Agency. No other understanding regarding this grant Agreement, whether written or oral, may be used to bind either Party.
12. **Liability.** The Agency agrees to indemnify, save, and hold the County, its officers, agents and employees, harmless from any claims or causes of action, including attorney's fees incurred by the County, arising from the performance of this Agreement by the Agency, its officers, agents or employees. This clause will not be construed to bar any legal remedies the Agency may have for the County's failure to fulfill any of the County's obligations under this Agreement. Notwithstanding any provisions of this Agreement to the contrary, indemnification under Section 12 of this Agreement shall be limited to the Agency's allocation, less any amount unspent.

COUNTY OF DUPAGE

BRIDGE COMMUNITIES,

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Deborah Conroy  
Chair, DuPage County



Amy Van Polen,  
CEO

ATTEST:

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Jean Kaczmarek,  
County Clerk



DuPage County  
Office of the County Board  
421 North County Farm Road  
Wheaton, Illinois 60187-3978

**MEMBER INITIATIVE PROGRAM APPLICATION** - Please complete all sections for submission

**SECTION I Organization Information**

Organization	Bridge Communities
Contact Person	Margo Matthew
Address	500 Roosevelt Road
City	Glen Ellyn
Phone Number	(630) 403-5091
Email	margo.matthew@bridgecommunities.org

**SECTION II Project Description**

Project Title	Employment Services Program for Adults Experiencing Homelessness
Cost of the Project	\$50,000 (\$30,000 grant request)
Brief Description of the Scope of Initiative	Funding will support the salaries of two Employment Counselors who coach clients on how to achieve their employment and adult education goals. Staff work one-on-one with clients and provide guidance throughout the job search, with job retention, and with career development. Through skills assessment, resume development, interview preparation, and job readiness classes, this program prepares clients for success resulting in increased earnings, benefits, marketability, and job stability. Ultimately this program helps clients to become self-sufficient and escape homelessness.
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- In 2025, 60 adults experiencing homelessness will benefit from personalized employment coaching to increase their income and employment stability</li><li>- For adults exiting Bridge in 2025, 80% will be stable to thriving in employment</li><li>- For adults exiting Bridge in 2025, 75% will increase their income from program entry to exit</li><li>- For adults exiting Bridge in 2025, 85% will believe themselves able to achieve their employment goals</li></ul>

**SECTION III Signature**

Member Name	Lynn LaPlante
District	4
Signature	

**SECTION IV Supplemental Documents**

Please attach the following (if applicable)

- Letters of Engagement from all involved organizations
- Vendor Ethics Disclosures
- Bid Documents
- Proof of Good Standing with IL Secretary of State for all partner organizations
- Tax Documents (such as W-9 forms, where applicable)



**DuPage County Member Initiative Program  
May 2025**

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**Request**

Bridge Communities is requesting \$50,000 in support of our Employment Services Program for Adults Experiencing Homelessness.

**Bridge Communities**

The mission of Bridge Communities is to transition families experiencing homelessness to self-sufficiency by working with community partners to provide mentoring support, holistic services, and stable housing. Bridge Communities is committed to transforming the lives of families facing homelessness by improving their education and employment opportunities and strengthening their financial and life skills. Since 1988, we have supported families as they achieve financial stability and secure long-term housing. We believe in a two-generation approach to breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness, addressing the needs of both parents and their children.

As DuPage County's largest provider of transitional housing for families, Bridge has become a regional leader in housing stability. Bridge Communities provides safe housing, personalized financial coaching, and a wide array of services through our Employment Services Program, the Children's Program, and the Family Wellness Program. Bridge staff also refer adults and children to community partners for additional services depending on their individualized needs and goals, including mental and behavioral health counseling, legal services, and food pantries. Bridge's commitment to collaboration with community partners enhances the services we provide, expanding the opportunities for families to achieve financial independence and overall wellness.

Over the course of their tenure at Bridge, client families learn the foundational skills necessary to achieve their long-term goals of increased income, improved financial stability, improved employability and education, improved life skills, and improved mental health and overall wellbeing for each member of the family. Our work and mission are focused on creating equitable opportunities for all the families we serve so that they can all achieve self-sufficiency regardless of their original circumstances. Ultimately the goal is to achieve financial stability and break the generational cycle of poverty and homelessness.

Our model is unique because each family is paired with a team of volunteer mentors who serve as their primary support system, helping them manage their finances and meet their goals. This transformative relationship between clients and mentors has proven to empower our client families toward financial self-sufficiency and often outlasts the formal duration of the program. Our program is designed to be personalized so that each family member can set goals that are focused on improving the issues that

contributed to the root cause of their family's homelessness. No two families have the same past circumstances or future goal plan, and clients are an integral part of creating and implementing solutions for their family.

Over the past 37 years, Bridge has served over 1,000 families, helping them create lasting change. In 2024, Bridge helped to promote self-sufficiency in 102 families, including 280 individuals. Thirty-three (33) families exited our core housing programs during the year. For these families, 91% exited with increased assets, 91% exited with decreased debt, 67% exited with increased income, and 82% exited with stable to thriving employment. Eighty-five percent (85%) exited to permanent housing.

### **Employment Services Program**

Bridge provides critical employment support to help wage earners advance their careers and increase their income while in our program, all so they can better support their family, achieve financial stability, and escape homelessness. The Employment Services Program connects individuals to stable employment and prepares clients for success in the workplace. In DuPage County, a single adult supporting two children would need to earn over \$70,000 per year to afford the most basic needs, relevant taxes, and permanent sustainable housing without being housing-cost burdened. Personalized employment coaching continues to be essential as clients navigate the high cost of housing and living needs in DuPage County as they try to secure a high-quality, family-sustaining job with benefits.

Staff meet one-on-one with every incoming adult to assess their educational and employment status, and then develop a customized plan with goals that fit with their skills, interests, and financial circumstances. Staff assist clients with resume writing, securing and retaining a job, and navigating the application and financial aid process for education and training programs.

The Program includes:

- **Employment and education coaching:** With staff support, clients set employment and education-related goals, secure and retain a job, and develop their career through education and training.
- **“Steps to Success”:** This job readiness workshop provides a group setting for participants to practice skills such as presentations, networking, and interviewing.
- **Career assessments:** Staff use assessment tools to evaluate job readiness and educational gaps. These assessments help identify our clients' aptitudes, interests, and educational gaps.

Our staff also work with clients to ensure that they have the formal education and training they need to succeed in the workplace. Bridge works with each client to determine the best educational opportunities for their background and interests. Staff assist clients in choosing an area of study and help them plan and execute, including financial strategies to minimize expenses. Our staff help clients complete college entrance and FAFSA applications, register for classes, and find scholarship opportunities.

Expected outcomes for the program include:

- In 2025, 60 adults experiencing homelessness will benefit from personalized employment coaching to increase their income and employment stability

- For adults exiting Bridge in 2025, 80% will be stable to thriving in employment
- For adults exiting Bridge in 2025, 75% will increase their income from program entry to exit
- For adults exiting Bridge in 2025, 85% will believe themselves able to achieve their employment goals

The Employment Services team consists of a Director and two Employment Counselors who work with clients throughout their time with Bridge. Combined, these three professionals have decades of experiencing in human resources, employment coaching, training, recruitment and hiring, and consulting. Bridge Communities requests \$50,000 in support of salaries for the Employment Counselors.



## **Employment and Education Counselor**

*Department: Employment & Adult Education*

*Reports to: Director of Employment & Adult Education*

*Last Revised: November 2023*

### **Job Summary**

Through skills assessment, resume development, interview preparation, education coaching and planning, and other career transition activities, the Employment & Education Counselor strives to develop and prepare clients for success with both short and long term goals resulting in increased earnings, benefits, marketability and job stability. We work one-on-one with clients who are either under-employed or unemployed, providing guidance throughout the job search, success during onboarding transition, and on-going support with job retention and career development. For clients desiring further education, we provide assistance throughout the process of selecting a program, registering for classes, and securing financial aid/scholarships.

The EAE Counselor is a 40-hour per week, salaried exempt position. Generally this position works Monday-Friday, normal business hours, but some nights and weekends are required. This position qualifies for all Bridge Communities offered benefits, including health and disability insurance, generous paid time off, 403(b) retirement matching, et al. They will work remotely most of the time but will be required to attend meetings at the organization's headquarters in Glen Ellyn regularly, as well attend client meetings in person at various Bridge locations.

### **Responsibilities (40 hours)**

#### **Coaching: 40%**

- Develop trust-based relationships with individual adult Bridge clients, using the principles of Trauma Informed Care, so they are willing to be counseled on all aspects of the job search process and educational planning.
  - Job search activities may include, but are not limited to, aptitudes, skills and values assessments, development of marketing materials, interview preparation, and networking assistance.
  - Adult education activities may include, but are not limited to, academic and career path assessments, identification and research into appropriate educational programs, college site visits, and exploring ways to pay for school, including scholarship assistance.
  - We also coach on how to successfully manage work, school and family schedules.

#### **Training: 15%**

- Facilitate Job Readiness classes and other training or presentations as needed.

**Internal Relationships: 20%**

- Consistently communicate and collaborate with Case Managers, Program Partners and Mentors regarding client plans and progress. Partner with teams and Case Managers to support clients in completing employment and education goals.
- Attend Staff Meetings & other staff events to remain engaged and connected to Bridge Family.

**External Relationships: 15%**

- Network and cultivate individual relationships within the community, as well as with local employers and organizations.
- Participate on West Suburban Jobs Council as member and on committees as needed.
- Recruit and onboard employment volunteers to keep them engaged, and update and maintain volunteer database.

**Administrative: 10%**

- Participate and complete special projects as assigned.
- Maintain strict records and track client progress and core metrics related to employment and education goals.

**Core Competencies**

1. **Service to Mission:** Champion unwavering dedication to fulfill our purpose and goals.
  - a. Align all activities, decisions, and initiatives with our mission and values, ensuring that every action contributes to the goal of client self-sufficiency that BC seeks to achieve.
  - b. Foster a sense of purpose & unity among staff, volunteers, and stakeholders, driving us to work collectively to bring about positive change in families' lives.
2. **Stewardship:** Build trust, embody ethical practices, and act as good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.
  - a. Demonstrate responsibility and transparency towards our stakeholders.
  - b. Manage resources effectively, make informed decisions, and report results accurately.
  - c. Hold ourselves accountable to our donors, beneficiaries, board members, volunteers, and the broader community.
3. **Leadership:** Foster our vision and values while promoting equity, belonging, innovation, and growth.
  - a. Guide, inspire, and empower individuals to work collaboratively towards achieving Bridge Communities' mission and objectives.
  - b. Prioritize the development of staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders, fostering a shared sense of purpose and commitment.
4. **Innovation:** Explore new ideas, seek creative solutions and adapt to changing circumstances.
  - a. Explore new methods and approaches to address organizational challenges and improve the effectiveness of programs and services.
  - b. Go beyond traditional strategies, leveraging technology, partnerships, and evolving practices to better serve our beneficiaries.



5. **Collaboration:** Communicate effectively, share resources & knowledge, and seek feedback & diverse perspectives to amplify our impact.
  - a. Work harmoniously with internal and external stakeholders to achieve common goals and amplify the impact of Bridge Communities' efforts.

### **Performance Expectations**

As an Employment and Education Counselor, it is expected this position demonstrates commitment in achieving agency strategic initiatives and departmental goals. The Employment and Education Counselor is responsible for successfully coaching Bridge clients through their employment and/or educational journey by establishing productive relationships with clients, mentors, case managers, & outside agencies.

This position will also help establish and further relationships with partner agencies through consistent positive communication and interactions. It is also expected someone in this role will facilitate and develop curriculum related to employment and/or educational knowledge as needed on a regular basis.

The individual is expected to adhere to the highest ethical standards in, convey a professional and positive image and attitude regarding Bridge, demonstrate commitment to professional growth and development, and demonstrate commitment to strengthening Bridge Communities' policies and practices as they relate to equity and belonging.

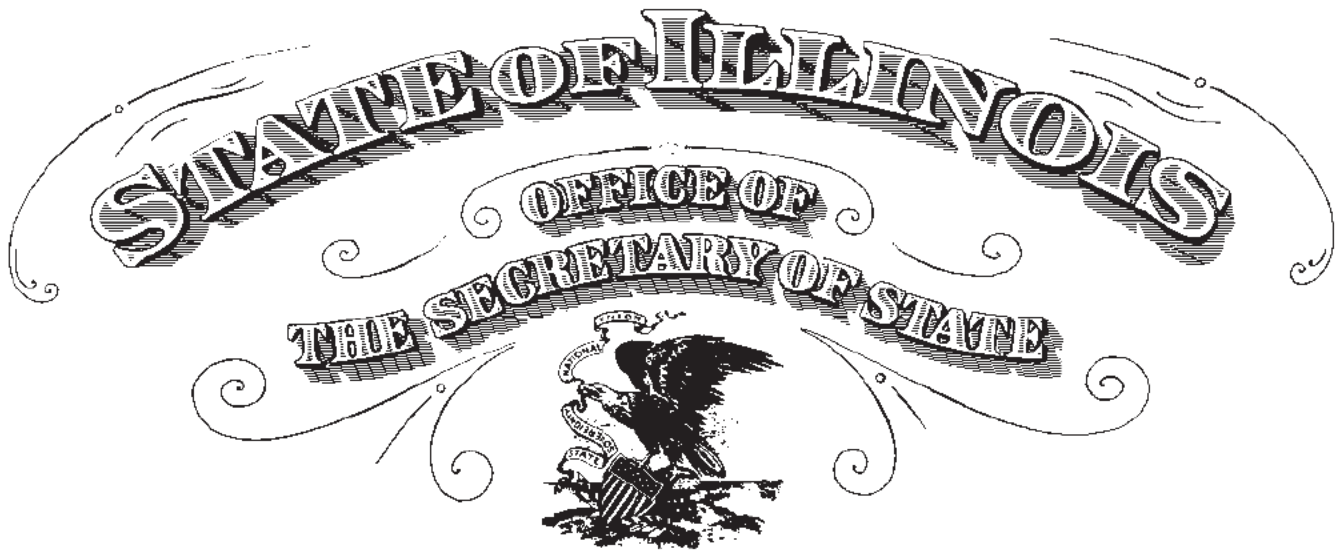
### **Qualifications**

- 1) Education and Experience
  - a) Bachelor's degree in human resources management or related discipline.
  - b) 2+ years' experience in HR and/or Career Transition.
  - c) Expertise with coaching individuals in career transition, specifically in resume development, networking, and interviewing.
- 2) Knowledge and Skills
  - a) Strong knowledge of hiring processes.
  - b) Familiarity with MS Office suite, including Outlook, Word, Excel, & Powerpoint.
  - c) Open to development of skills and knowledge
  - d) Willingness to be flexible and adaptable to change
  - e) While performing duties of this position, employee will be required, on occasion, to lift up to 25 pounds. The ability to stand on your feet for extended periods of time may be needed.
  - f) Valid Illinois Driver's License and the ability to travel locally.
  - g) Fluent in speaking & reading/writing Spanish is preferred but not required.

Bridge Communities is an equal opportunity employer. It is our policy to grant equal employment opportunity to all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, age, national origin, sex, religion, pregnancy, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, military or veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws. This policy pertains to all personnel actions

including, but not limited to recruitment, evaluation, selection, promotion, compensation, and termination.

This job description does not list all duties of the job. You may be asked by supervisors to perform other duties. You will be evaluated, in part, based upon your performance of the tasks listed in this job description. Your employer has the right to revise this job description at any time. The job description is not a contract for employment, and either you or the employer may terminate employment at any time, for any reason.



***To all to whom these Presents Shall Come, Greeting:***

*I, Alexi Giannoulas, Secretary of State of the State of Illinois, do hereby certify that I am the keeper of the records of the Department of Business Services. I certify that*

BRIDGE COMMUNITIES, INC., A DOMESTIC CORPORATION, INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS STATE ON JANUARY 26, 1990, APPEARS TO HAVE COMPLIED WITH ALL THE PROVISIONS OF THE GENERAL NOT FOR PROFIT CORPORATION ACT OF THIS STATE, AND AS OF THIS DATE, IS IN GOOD STANDING AS A DOMESTIC CORPORATION IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.



***In Testimony Whereof, I hereto set my hand and cause to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Illinois, this 29TH day of JANUARY A.D. 2025 .***

