JOB POSTING Special Project Worker: Peer Leader, Breaking the Ice Part-Time Contract | Job #26-29

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY

Anyone is invited to apply for this position.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The 519's Breaking The Ice (BTI) project is a community engagement and outreach program focused on supporting people who use drugs in Toronto's Downtown East. The team has a specific focus on understanding the needs and barriers faced by 2SLGBTQ+ people who use crystal meth.

Peer-driven and rooted in principles of harm reduction and anti-violence, the team works collaboratively to identify and meet the needs of diverse 2SLGBTQ+ people who use drugs/crystal by harnessing community strengths, partnerships, and innovative models that foster self-determination, connection to community, and increased community capacity and knowledge for those we work with.

The BTI team also acts as a hub for referrals to case management, housing supports, mental and physical health services, and broadly supports diverse community needs for people who use drugs.

BTI Peer Leaders will work closely with staff across The 519, partner organizations, and community members. This exciting opportunity is well suited for energetic and compassionate people who have the expertise of lived experience and/or knowledge of substance use, harm reduction, sex work, homelessness, and/or incarceration and who demonstrate a deep commitment to equity, 2SLGBTQ+ communities, and community-based work.

PRIMARY FUNCTION

Reporting to the Coordinator, Anti-Violence and Harm Reduction Initiatives, BTI Peer Leaders will support community member access and participation in The 519's low-barrier programs and activities; with a focus on 2SLGBTQ+ community members within Toronto's Downtown East who are unhoused and/or who use substances, particularly crystal meth.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

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- Engage in the collaborative facilitation, support, and debriefing of The 519's weekly Sunday Drop-In, Meal Trans, Friday Morning Coffee, and other community programs and services with a focus on supporting people who use drugs.
- Engage in street outreach on foot within the assigned Toronto's Downtown East communities including building effective relationships with people who use drugs and the community/neighbours.
- Prepare harm reduction supplies and resources including, but not limited to, safer injection supplies, safer crack use kits, hormone therapy kits, safer sex supplies, safer crystal meth use kits, drug checking kits, Naloxone, educational information, informational pamphlets, etc.
- Offer and promote access to harm reduction education, resources, safer drug use practices, and supplies.
- Offer and promote access to sexual health education, safer sex resources, and safer sex supplies.
- Offer and promote access to overdose prevention and response education – including overdose prevention and safety planning, and Naloxone access and training.
- Distribute supplies, resources, and education to bridge basic needs gaps for community members (e.g. within Toronto's Downtown East communities).
- Respond to opioid and stimulant overdoses, when necessary, as part of team response with The 519 staff members. Support community members with social, community and health referrals, harm reduction and safer consumption education, and informal counselling.
- Collaboratively respond to incidents in the centre and the community exercising excellent conflict prevention, de-escalation and intervention techniques to build effective relationships with the community and neighbours.
- Represent The 519 as a trusted ambassador in interactions with community members, visitors, partner organizations, and at community events during assigned shifts.
- Effectively track and report activities and engagements (e.g. contacts made, supplies distributed, referrals, etc.)

- Contribute to, and co-create, resources rooted in community-held knowledge of drug use, issues identified by 2SLGBTQ+ PWUD, and practical harm reduction strategies that are accessible to people who use drugs at various intersections.
- Supports the planning, implementation, and debriefing of kit-making groups.
- Supports the planning, implementation, and debriefing of arts-based engagements using art as a therapeutic tool with 2SLGBTQ+ people who use drugs.
- Safe handling / disposal of used drug equipment.
- Collaboratively contribute to incident report writing and follow-up where applicable.
- Maintain boundaries and confidentiality of community members within the context of multiple community and professional relationships.
- Meet commitments related to adhering to work schedule, program commitments, and community member needs and follow-up.
- Conduct administrative tasks including data entry and writing short reports.
- Actively engages in supervision, team meetings, assigned training, professional development opportunities, and The 519's broader activities (e.g. All Staff meetings, Green Space Festival, etc.).
- Implement and abide by The 519's policies and procedures and comply with all applicable legislation and regulations including The 519's anti-discrimination and harassment policies, accessibility policies, confidentiality, MFIPPA and purchasing and inventory control systems.
- Works as a team with all other staff and volunteers.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

1) Relevant lived/living experience and/or knowledge of substance use assets.

2) Relevant lived/living experience and/or knowledge of homelessness, sex work, incarceration, mental health access, HIV, hepatitis C an asset.

3) Lived/living experience and/or knowledge of overdose response.

4) Knowledge of, experience with, and comfort in community work with a particular focus on supporting 2SLGBTQ+ communities, unhoused people, people living in poverty, people

who use drugs, people struggling to access mental health and health care systems, and newcomers and refugees from LGBTQ+ communities.

5) Familiarity with the Church-Wellesley and broader Downtown Toronto East communities and insight into community concerns, trends, composition, networks, and resources an asset.

6) Demonstrates harm reduction-based knowledge and practical skills including overdose recognition and response.

7) Good people skills - open, non-judgmental, strong relationship-building skills, and willing to learn.

8) Ability to work independently as well as working collaboratively as a supportive team member.

9) Ability to be self-reflexive and to hear, accept, and adopt feedback and follow assigned work directives.

10) Responsible, reliable, and punctual.

11) Ability to engage and maintain professional communication skills – willingness and ability to discuss multiple community relationships, and to set and maintain appropriate boundaries for safer work.

12) Experience in harm reduction outreach, drop-in, group, and/or peer support settings an asset.

13) Ability to lift a minimum of 30lbs and walk long distances carrying a backpack or pulling a cart.

14) Ability to support room set up/strike, kitchen-related tasks including dishwashing and food service and prep, handling of harm reduction and safer sex supplies, and support washroom checks.

POSITION DETAILS

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Position Status	Part-time, 6-month contract with possibility of renewal up to 1 year (minus a day)
Union Status	Special Project Worker; Wage Grade 2
Hourly Rate	$18.15 + 4% vacation
Benefits	Not eligible
Hours of Work	<18 hours per week, including weekdays, evenings and weekends
Vacation	4% vacation pay on every pay cheque
Location	Due to the nature of this position, the successful applicant will be expected to work on-site at The 519 and in the Church-Wellesley neighbourhood.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Email your cover letter and resume as one document to Careers@The519.org no later than November 5, 2026. Please quote Job #26-29 and your name in the cover letter and in the subject line of the email. For example, in the subject line write "Job 26-29 First Name Last Name". Please also share which pronouns you would like us to use when corresponding with you (directly and within The 519) in your email or your cover letter.

Applicants are required to demonstrate in their resume that their qualifications match those specified in the job posting.

The 519 actively encourages applicants from all equity seeking groups. The 519 embraces diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive workplace. Our goal is to attract, develop, and retain highly talented employees from diverse backgrounds allowing us to benefit from a wide variety of experiences and perspectives. We thank all applicants. No agencies please.

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Accommodation: The 519 is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive organization. We are committed to providing barrier-free and accessible employment practices in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Should you require Code- protected accommodation through any stage of the recruitment process, please make them known when contacted and we will work with you to meet your needs. Disability-related accommodation during the application process is available upon request.