

Policy and Participant Action Intern

From its activist beginnings as an underground needle exchange, New York Harm Reduction Educators (NYHRE) is now New York's largest syringe exchange program, serving over 5,000 low-income drug users and street-based sex workers each year in the Bronx and East Harlem using a unique street-side, low-threshold model. Services are also offered at two storefront offices, one in the South Bronx and one in East Harlem.

Position Summary:

The Policy and Participant Action Intern is an ideal internship for candidates with a background in community organizing and political advocacy who are looking to do more leadership development with individual members and small groups. Your primary aim is to build power for NYHRE's participants, including facilitating participants' active involvement with the decision-making body of NYHRE and with community and political leaders. The Policy and Participant Action Intern is tasked with ensuring the Participant Advisory Board (PAB) has a powerful voice within the agency, that the Peer workers have the support, education and opportunities they need to advance, and that the participant base is kept up to speed on policy issues that are relevant to their lives and opportunities for activism. The ideal candidate will be deeply invested in the advancement of peer workers and participants through civic engagement and real, meaningful professional development.

The Policy Intern will work in close partnership with the Peer and Community Development Associate and will report to the Director of Advocacy and Supportive Services. These two positions make up a very small, but fast-paced department that is absolutely critical to NYHRE's mission to reduce the harms of inner city apartheid, the "War on Drugs," and a white supremacist hetero-patriarchy. You should be familiar with current issues in drug policy, as well as critical race, gender and queer theories, and be committed to working from (and towards) an anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-homophobic perspective. This position is largely self-directed and there is tremendous opportunity for those who find satisfaction in being involved in diverse and convergent campaigns and collaborative projects at once. You should be someone who makes opportunities where others sit back, turns complaints into solutions and leverages disappointments to teach strategy.

Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain relationships with allied organizations, community organizing groups, coalitions, and community stakeholders that share or represent participants' interests.
- Seek, identify, and connect NYHRE participants with opportunities to get involved in community efforts to make social change outside of NYHRE.
- Guide NYHRE peers and participants in maintaining a significant presence at local neighborhood community boards, state and local community planning boards, and other venues responsible for formulating policies impacting the lives of sex workers, people who use drugs and people living with HIV/AIDS.
- In partnership with the Peer and Community Development Associate, run the U.P.R.I.S.E. peer education program, including by conducting workshops and lining up guest trainers.
- Keep abreast of and provide updates to staff and participants on legislative, budget, and regulatory issues at the local, national and global level that affect people who use drugs, sex workers and people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Keep staff and participants informed about upcoming community events and political actions, and coordinate NYHRE's participation in these events.

- Work with the Director of Advocacy and Supportive Services, the Director of Development and External Affairs and the Executive Director to draft testimony, marketing materials, or other relevant internal or external communication.
- Support participants in advocacy efforts such as writing letters to the editor, and making calls and visits to legislative offices and regulatory agencies.
- Establish peer groups to develop trainings for staff, other participants and outside community groups and organizations on harm reduction issues.
- Assist with program evaluation activities, including ongoing dialogue with participants and other stakeholders to continually improve the location and delivery of our services.
- Collect, compile and submit data required for program evaluation and grant reporting. Maintain accurate and detailed participant records.

Requirements and Experience:

- Must be dedicated to advancing an agenda of equal rights and social justice for low-income people who use drugs, especially through activism and political participation.
- Must be committed to the principles of Harm Reduction and to working with low-income people who use drugs and sex workers.
- Must be committed to advancing an anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic agenda.
- Significant work or life experience in the areas of substance use, sex work, and HIV and HCV prevention and care desired.
- At least 2 years demonstrable experience in advocacy and/or community organizing desired.
- Excellent training and motivational skills, with experience mentoring staff, peers, participants, interns, etc. desired.
- Must be an organized, self-motivated team-player, with strong interpersonal skills, excellent written and oral communication skills, and the ability and willingness to be hands-on and solve problems *as they arise*.
- Proficiency with MS Office software package and use of the Internet.
- Must be available to attend community events and meetings during non-traditional hours (evenings and weekends). Must be willing and able to work outdoors at our street sites at least 20% of the time; hours may vary.
- Bilingual (Spanish) preferred.

Reports to: Director of Advocacy and Supportive Services

Status: Part-time stipend (20 hours)

To apply: Send a resume, cover letter and writing sample to Johanna Breyer at jbreyer@nyhre.org. Subject line should read, “Policy and Participant Action Internship– *last name*”. The attachments should be entitled “Lastname, Firstname Cover Letter”, and “Lastname, Firstname Resume”. No calls please.

NYHRE is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Individuals who have personal experience with drug use, PLWHA, women, people of color, members of the LGBTQ community, and the formerly incarcerated are strongly encouraged to apply.