

My Experience at Pine Street Inn

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Pine Street Inn

- Largest provider of homeless services in all of New England
- Range of services
 - Permanent Supportive Housing
 - Job Training + Placement
 - Emergency Shelter
 - Street Outreach



Position: Volunteer Programs and Development Assistant

Overview:

- Support the Volunteers Department + Development/Advancement Staff with a variety of program tasks to maintain a smooth operation
- Described VERY WELL by NUCareers
- PAID

Title: Volunteer Programs and Development Assistant

Days/Hours: (40 hours per week) Sunday ? Thursday work week, schedule will vary.

Pay Rate: \$12/hour

Reports To : Director of Volunteers / Volunteer Coordinator

Department: Volunteer Programs/Development & External Affairs

Summary:

The Volunteer Programs Assistant will assist with a variety of program tasks that will enable the department to run more smoothly. Volunteers are an integral part of the Inn providing over 45K hours of service to the shelter annually. Duties will include answering phones, updating records, setting up volunteers, public speaking and working with staff from various departments and programs. The co-op will support both Volunteer & Development staff and split their time between the two offices.

Essential Functions Include But Are Not Limited To:

- Represent Pine Street in a professional manner to visitors and volunteers in person, on the telephone and in writing
- Follow up with all email, phone and other inquiries in a timely manner
- Assist with the volunteer/donation acknowledgement process
- Maintain the individual volunteer application process and contact prospective volunteers about upcoming orientation dates
- Assist with the maintenance & distribution of monthly calendars
- Communicate with various staff via e-mail and phone about prospective volunteer groups, special projects, events and any issues/problems
- Assist with on-site volunteer management and special events (may include some weekend work)
- Research prospective groups or companies that may be interested in volunteering at Pine Street, communicating with past service groups about future service dates
- Help to maintain & update the volunteer web page and postings in the volunteer room
- Assist with volunteer groups and tours as necessary

Interview Process

- Included a phone interview and an in-person interview
 - Interviewed with my direct team and supervisor
 - About 30 minutes in length
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- Interviewers were very transparent about the job description and what exactly it would entail. They answered every question I had in a very clear and direct way.

Interview Process - Tips

- If a number calls you that isn't saved and you're out in public/busy, DON'T ANSWER. There is a very large chance it could be a co-op employer!
- Always remember to bring several copies of your resume - you never know how many people will be in the room!
- Smile, take it easy, and give yourself time to think about your answers... no need to rush an interview.

How was my time spent?

- **Overseeing Volunteer Groups/Individuals: About half of my time (41%-60%)**
 - Setting up groups, leading tours, acting as a liaison between kitchen staff & volunteers, overseeing dinner service
- **Doing Research/Compiling Information: Some of my time (21%-40%)**
 - Updating notes for tours with Pine Street Inn facts/statistics and general information on homelessness at large
- **Database Entry and Maintenance: Some of my time (21%-40%)**
 - Overseeing in-kind donation acknowledgement letters and tracking who comes in to volunteer

A Task I Had Never Done Before...

Leading tours! I'm pretty comfortable with public speaking, however, leading tours can be slightly more challenging than a prepared speech because you never know what questions will be tossed your way.

Over time, I did a lot of research on Pine Street Inn as well as homeless in general so I increasingly became fluent on the different factors that make up homelessness. By the end of my co-op, I thoroughly enjoyed leading tours and would rarely get stumped by any questions.

Volunteers Department

Although PSI is a very large operation with over 500 employees, I spent most of my time with the Volunteers Department which is a small team of four (including me). As a result, I did feel like an integral part of the team because there was so much work to complete but only four of us to do it.

As time went on, I became more comfortable/familiar with the operation so I definitely stepped into some bigger roles.

What did I hope to learn?

At this co-op, I very much wanted to learn the inner workings of a non-profit and what exactly makes a non-profit successful. Working as part of the Advancement/Development team definitely provided me this insight as I got to observe what goes into bringing funds/support into the Inn.

Did anything surprise me about my co-op?

I was generally pretty surprised about how accommodating/understanding people were of the fact that I'm an intern. Especially as a first-time co-op experience, it was so incredible to have coworkers and supervisors that were so patient with me and fully willing to take time out from their day to teach me a new skill.

Something I Learned About Myself

- I learned that I prefer hands-off supervision as opposed to micro-management; I very much like prioritizing tasks on my own time.
- I like working on smaller teams. The workplace feels a lot more friendly/intimate which is something I value.
- I learned that I could work a little harder on keeping my workspace organized - a cluttered desk is a cluttered mind!

How did this co-op affect me?

I very much enjoyed exploring the non-profit world, however, I'm not sure if it's the right fit for me. Helping/educating people has always been a large passion of mine but I definitely want to explore other options of achieving that like advocacy, research, or education.

My Co-op and my own Personal Perspective

Something I found so interesting about this co-op is that homelessness truly knows no boundaries. It affects people of all races/gender identities/sexual orientations/religions/nationalities/etc. Some part of me expected to see a disparity in race, however, as observed within the Pine Street population homeless truly can (and does!) happen to anyone.