

Community Organizer Job Description

Location: VANDU offices, 380 E. Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC

Remote or on site: On-site

Contract type: 35 hours / week, days TBD

Wage: \$25/hr

Benefits: Health spending account, paid sick days

Closing date: N/A



Role & Organization Overview

The Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), is a membership-based group of over 2,000 current and former drug users and allied staff who work to improve the lives of people who use drugs through user-based peer support and education. VANDU is committed to increasing the capacity of people who use drugs to live healthy, productive lives. VANDU is also committed to ensuring that drug users have a real voice in their community and in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them.

VANDU's Community Organizers are non-member, allied staff persons who support the VANDU Board of directors to fulfill the organization's mandate. The Community Organizer works closely with VANDU's Executive Director and an elected VANDU Board composed of community members who are current or former illicit drug users. The Community Organizer's primary role is to oversee and support VANDU's day to day meetings, programming, and policy advocacy operations as an allied staff person working to empower the VANDU Board to engage in direct action, education, advocacy and empowerment.

Reports to: VANDU Executive Director and VANDU Board

Roles & Responsibilities

General Responsibilities

The Community Organizer's day-to-day responsibilities include supporting the daily operations of VANDU:

Political empowerment and organizing

- Upholding all relevant rules and regulations passed by the VANDU Board as they relate to governance and group operations
- Support the planning and facilitation of VANDU's member meetings (i.e. weekly education and empowerment meetings open to all members)

- Train facilitators and support the development of capacities of governance, developing agendas, minute taking, facilitation, and public speaking
- Work with the VANDU Board to identify, coordinate, and carry out advocacy campaigns and direct action in priority areas as identified by the membership
- Responsible for financial management of some VANDU programming including budget management, identifying prospective sources of funding, grant writing, and financial reporting.
- Support the VANDU Board and other members to gain relevant expertise with technology and literacy skills
- Coordinate media appearances and refer media requests, consult the membership to respond for requests for comment, and collaboratively prepare press releases and media advisories on behalf of the membership
- Support the membership's participation in and engagement speaking opportunities, actions, and conferences when required
- Work with the general membership and steering committee members in reviewing and editing academic or popular articles, policy documents, reports of meetings/conferences, preparing and making presentations, and reporting to the Board and/or membership
- Be informed of research, consultation reports, city, provincial and federal studies and policies, in the areas of community development, housing, drug policy, harm reduction, and priority areas of focus as identified by the affiliate group or sister society
- Stay informed on recent developments in harm reduction programming and drug policy throughout Canada
- Coordinate supply purchases and other expenditures on behalf of the steering committee or board of directors when required.

Daily VANDU operations

- Holding a key to VANDU's safe and supporting petty cash payouts for all programming, including but not limited to group activities, volunteer shifts, board activities, and other miscellaneous work as approved by the VANDU Board of Directors
- Responding to overdoses and other medical emergencies when required
- Supporting the VANDU Board to create and implement a weekly schedule of shifts to ensure that VANDU's drop-in space is safe and operational in accordance with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) requirements
- Preparing stipend envelopes for VANDU activities that take place outside of regular office hours
- Maintaining VANDU's petty cash reserve by cashing petty cash cheques signed by board members who are designated signatories
- Assisting with the organization of general and annual general meetings for the VANDU membership

- Supporting the operations of the VANDU board through facilitation, chairing, minute taking, and creating operational guidelines for VANDU at the direction of the board of directors
- Coordinating the purchase of office supplies for VANDU when required
- Connecting VANDU members to resources and services, when feasible.

Qualifications

- A minimum of two years of experience supporting community development and/or low-barrier social service initiatives
- Advanced understanding of the principles of harm reduction, community empowerment, and drug user activism
- Anti-oppressive understanding of the social determinants of health and the ongoing impacts of colonization on the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people
- Ability to work in a demanding, fast-paced, and high stakes frontline harm reduction service-providing environment
- Superb interpersonal skills, including the ability to de-escalate and listen actively
- Community organizing experience that includes but is not limited to facilitating meetings, organizing actions, and liaising with policymakers
- Ability to write and manage grants and funding agreements
- Willingness to serve the community as a non-member, allied staff person answering to an elected body
- Familiarity with the political and service-providing landscape of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside
- Strong communication skills, ability to speak plainly, and familiarity with plain language writing

Employment Terms & Accountability

The hourly wage for this full-time position is \$25 per hour, at 35hrs per week, plus benefits including paid sick days and health benefits. Benefits include a Health Spending Account, vacation time, and paid sick time. A Criminal Record Check is required.

How to apply

Please submit your resume, a cover letter and a one-page response to the following questions:

- 1) *What do you understand harm reduction to be?*

2) *Can you tell us a bit about a time when you were tasked with empowering a community of other people to accomplish a political goal?*

In PDF format, subject line **ATTN: VANDU Community Organizer Selection Committee** to vandu@vandu.org by end of day **Nov 1, 2024**. Please note, first round interviews are anticipated to take place between Nov 7-15, 2024.

Only candidates that meet the minimum requirements will be considered, and only those shortlisted for the position will be invited to an interview within 14 days of the specific closing date. Applicants must be eligible to work in Canada.