



## Peer System Navigator to Support Women (age 50+) Experiencing Housing Insecurity

**Contract:** Part-time, project-based position starting ASAP until October 2026

**Positions:** 2

### WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE ARE DOING

Researchers from the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health at the University of Victoria are collaborating with the Alliance to End Homelessness in the Capital Region on a three-year project (2024-2026) called Supporting Health and Healing with Information, Navigation and Empowerment (SHHINE). We wish to determine what impact peer system navigators and community circle gatherings have on the health, social inclusion, and access to supportive programs and services support for women (we use an inclusive definition of women that includes transgender women), age 50+ with lived experience of housing insecurity.

The Alliance to End Homelessness in the Capital Region (AEHCR) achieves its mission by working towards decolonization and with an anti-racism, person-centered and strengths-based approach. With a vision of a region, a province and a country where everyone has a safe place they can call home, the Alliance’s mission is to ensure experiences of homelessness in the Capital Region by 2030 are rare, brief, and non-recurring and that housing and supports are culturally adaptive, creative, caring, and person-centered.

### ROLE OVERVIEW

This is a specialized position with the Peer System Navigator (PSN) providing support to women who are 50+ years of age and who are experiencing housing insecurity. The PSN will use a person-centred, trauma- and violence-informed, and culturally safe care perspective to support peer clients’ access to anti-violence, safety, and support services, physical and mental health supports, and housing (where possible). The PSN will also support peer clients to navigate the systemic barriers that prevent their clients from being able to access services with information, referral, and system navigation. Connection with peers fosters hope, reduces power imbalances, and provides emotional and social support for those who have, or who may be experiencing, vulnerable circumstances in their journeys.

On occasion, the PSN may accompany a client or provide direct assistance/support (e.g., one on one health and wellness support). We anticipate that the PSN will support 5 to 15 clients over the course of their employment, supporting approximately 5 clients each at any given time. The PSN role is not affiliated with any single organization, thus are able to assist clients with access to available and appropriate services and supports across multiple organizations, as needed.

We encourage applications from women who have firsthand experience of homelessness or who have faced gender-based or intimate partner violence. Your unique perspective is valued and welcomed.

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

With support from the SHHINE team, the Peer System Navigator will focus on three areas of responsibility: Peer Support, Teamwork, and Administration.

**1. Peer Support: 60%**

- a. Support clients in accessing and the services and assistance that they require/are entitled to
- b. Provide one-to-one support for peer clients in their journeys in ways that encourage self-determination, personal empowerment, growth, safety, and wellness
- c. Provide peer support that is consistent with the onboarding training, program framework, and peer-centered philosophy and approach
- d. Build and maintain trust and understanding when connecting peer clients to local resources, supports, and services
- e. Build connections and provide support for individuals with diverse backgrounds, life experiences, and those who may be at varied stages of their recovery journeys with experiences with homelessness
- f. Demonstrate knowledge and use of reflective practice and personal self-care
- g. Maintain clear communication and regular, ongoing meetings with peer clients in the community according to their goals and needs
- h. Use effective time management and boundary setting skills while providing support for peer clients
- i. Seek guidance/assistance/support from the SHHINE team when specific challenges arise in relation to working with peer clients, in the workplace, or out in the community

**2. Teamwork: 25%**

- a. Build and support collegial, respectful relationships with all team members and peer clients
- b. Maintain regular, respectful communication with all SHHINE team members, staff members of other community organizations and peer clients
- c. Share learning, challenges, successes, best practices, community connections, and resources with the SHHINE team and community organization staff on an ongoing basis
- d. Provide feedback and knowledge to contribute towards best practices for service delivery and program development and evaluation on an ongoing basis

**3. Administration: 15%**

- a. Prepare for and attend regular meetings as needed (e.g., community of practice meetings, scheduled SHHINE team meetings, update meetings, strategic planning sessions, etc.)
- b. Attend and complete all required training activities that are provided
- c. Update the SHHINE team on progress, successes, challenges and issues arising
- d. Keep records of time spent on tasks (e.g., support time given and basic nature of support for clients)
- e. Demonstrate strong communication skills through phone, text, and email
- f. Plan and maintain a schedule that does not exceed contracted hours per week, including peer support activities, required meetings, and administrative responsibilities
- g. Other administrative duties as determined in discussion with the SHHINE team

**CRITERIA**

The PSN will have relevant experience and knowledge of community-based and provincial support services and systems (financial aid, housing, healthcare, justice system, etc.), as well as an understanding of the benefit of the mutually shared (peer) experience as a supportive technique.

Preferred qualifications and characteristics include:

- Kindness, compassion, empathy, and non-judgmental view.
- Committed to social justice, equity, anti-racism and decolonization.
- Skills in relationship-building.
- Ability to establish rapport, provide respectful support and advocate for a diverse range of individuals (including people impacted by poverty, substance use, criminalization) who are experiencing significant barriers to their health and well-being.
- Skills, experience, and commitment to trauma-informed and culturally sensitive principles and practices that provide whole-person care.
- Organized and able to triage crises, urgent demands and de-escalate complex situations.
- Commitment to honor local Indigenous communities and to recognize the ongoing impacts of colonial violence.
- Awareness of the dynamics of neglect, grief, mental health, healing and recovery, abuse, family violence, active and ongoing addiction.
- Able to stay calm under pressure and react to situations keeping safety as the priority.
- Strong written and verbal communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work effectively independently and within a collaborative team environment.
- Competency with office software such as Microsoft Office (e.g., Word, Outlook or other email software and smartphone/computer technologies).

Additional skills that would be helpful include:

- Experience with overdose response, including administration of naloxone.
- A valid Class 5 BC Driver's License and use of own vehicle.
- Crisis intervention skills with a diverse population facing significant structural barriers.

## **BENEFITS**

- Free training leading to a micro-certificate from the University of Victoria in the Fundamentals for the Homelessness Serving Sector.
- Ongoing training in Peer Support and Trauma-Informed Care.
- Peer Supervision and Counselling support.
- Being part of a committed team of engaged women with lived experience, community, and academic members wanting to improve the life situations and wellbeing of women, age 50+ who may have experienced housing insecurity and partner violence.

## **POSITION DETAILS**

**Part-time:** \$28/hr with four per cent (4%) vacation pay per pay period in lieu of paid vacation leave.

**Hours and Schedule:** 18 hours/week

- Flexible schedule depending on the successful candidate availability and peer client needs.
- Hours of work, days off and work location may be subject to change.

**Term:** Position starts Fall 2024 for up to 2 years (research funded)

**Location:** In-person, AEHCR office and in the community as needed

**Other:** A criminal record with vulnerable sector check is mandatory. Records associated with street involvement that do not pose a risk to peer clients are not a barrier to hiring.

**Expected start date:** October 21, 2024

**To APPLY**

Applications may be typed or handwritten and may be submitted with or without a cover letter.

Please mail, hand-deliver, or email applications to:

Mailing address

Michelle Vanchu-Orosco  
Alliance to End Homelessness in the Capital Region  
Unit 535 – 645 Fort St., Victoria, BC, V8W 1G2

Email address (subject line – SHHINE PSN Application)

[rkampen@uvic.ca](mailto:rkampen@uvic.ca), Project Manager  
[mvanchu-orosco@victoriahomelessness.ca](mailto:mvanchu-orosco@victoriahomelessness.ca), SHHINE  
Partner

Application deadline: **October 04, 2024, by 4:00pm**

Call (250) 853-3775 for more information

We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion, and we strongly encourage applications from, but not limited to, individuals who identify as Indigenous Persons, women and gender-diverse persons, persons of colour, racialized, persons living with a disability, persons with experience of sex work, and persons who live with HIV and/or hepatitis C.

Accommodations available upon request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process.

*Our Victoria BC-based Peer Navigators will be working on the territories of the Ləkʷəŋən peoples (Esquimalt and Songhees Nations).*