

Hare Krishna Social Services Coordinator

Objectives

Primary Objective: Assist local devotees through difficult times in the material world

Secondary Objective: Preach by example by providing assistance to anyone in need

Hare Krishna Social Services Coordinator Responsibilities

- 1) **Encourage the already established networks of devotees assisting one another** – coordinating their efforts and providing more support and resources for their success. These naturally occurring groups or individuals include Care, Asraya, Mission Hanuman, Second-generation collaborative, Community Development Initiative, BANA school families, ALA school families, food bank providers, women's groups, men's groups, nationality groups, neighborhood groups, MR4SP Facebook, clubs, etc.
- 2) **Connect participants in need to outside resources** and/or bring outside resources into the community to help our members. These would include access to free food, transportation services, EBT/SNAP (welfare and food stamps), financial training, free clinics, etc.
- 3) **Offer group trainings on relevant social services issues.** Examples: end of life planning, financial stability, employment readiness, life management & getting organized, suicide prevention, how to be an effective helper, volunteer training, navigating through the health care system/insurance, healthy lifestyle practices, emergency preparedness, coping with disasters, applying for public assistance or Disability, etc.
- 4) **Empower participants on a path to self-sufficiency** and ultimately to be able to pay it forward by helping others.
- 5) **Represent Hare Krishna devotees in a positive light** to outsiders (actually to everyone, at all times).
- 6) **Assist with accessing funding** for program (grant applications, etc). One aspect of this includes detailed record keeping so we can use in future applications. Another aspect could be coordinating fundraising events.

Hare Krishna Social Services Coordinator – Process when Working with Individuals/Families in Need (Case Management)

- 1) Participant **asks for help** directly from Coordinator – or is referred through someone in their personal support system – or referred by a temple authority
- 2) Intake process **identifies problem(s)**
- 3) **Resources** needed to resolve problems are identified
- 4) **Action steps** with deadlines are identified and assigned
- 5) **Follow up plan** with deadlines is identified
- 6) Date set to plan for **future self-sufficiency** and paying it forward

Notes: Coordinator is not responsible for doing everything that the Participant needs. Whenever possible, the Participant will be empowered to take action himself/herself with accountability. (Example

– Participant agrees to call XYZ tomorrow morning to apply for ABC and will let Coordinator know when that is accomplished and what the results were.)

Part of the process is also to bring in others to support the participant in his or her journey through the crisis and into self-sufficiency. **The Coordinator is not a licensed social worker or counselor, but trained to empathize, screen, assess, and refer.** Because of the many devotees who volunteer to help, services such as meals, counseling, childcare, transportation, repairs, housing, and other support services will be provided. Some services will be provided by already existing charities outside of the devotee community.

It is understood that there may be times when Participants are unable to do much for themselves due to the nature of the crisis. Supporters can still be brought in for meals, childcare, repairs, etc. until the Participants are capable of taking action themselves.

TYPES OF ISSUES THAT COORDINATOR CAN ADDRESS:

- 1) **Health** crises including hospitalizations, physical health problems, mental health breakdown
- 2) **Catastrophes** including fire, flood, hurricane, accident, suicide of a loved one, etc.
- 3) **Transitions** are things like childbirth, aging, loss of life, moving, and loss of employment, etc.
- 4) **Poverty** related crises that include lack of food, housing, transportation, clothing, income, etc.
- 5) **Relationship** issues like divorce, abuse, unplanned pregnancy, foster care or child custody issues, etc.

Coordinator's Initial Steps (before starting to see Participants)

- 1) **Meet with representatives** of various types of support groups to understand what they are already doing and how a Hare Krishna Social Services Coordinator could help support them – assess in which ways they would be willing to collaborate to help more people (lists of groups is under #1 of Coordinator's Responsibilities)
- 2) **Create Intake Form** to keep track of Participant's needs and plans (*done*)
- 3) **Create Participant agreement form** that is reviewed and approved by a lawyer to make sure that temple and volunteers and Coordinator are not liable in any way when acting as good Samaritans assisting someone in need (*draft is done – need lawyer input*)
- 4) **Create Evaluation form** so Coordinator can continue to improve the process of providing social services over time
- 5) **Create survey** (online and paper) to invite others to offer their services (*paper is done*)
- 6) **Establish Record Keeping System** to help with monthly and annual reports, funding applications, etc. (this is why we are asking income information on intake form-need data)

Means to Promote Hare Krishna Social Services Activities

- 1) Table at **Sunday Feast**
- 2) Announcement in **Temple Newsletter**
- 3) Promote on **MR4SP** - and other devotee social networking groups to be identified

- 4) Personal connections with members of various **social groups** among temple members

Logistics

- 1) **Salary** – take home pay needs to be \$20/hour for 20 hours of work per week (taxes, insurance, Social Security, etc. would be paid by employer) (We can start with 20 hours/month until adequate funding is available)
- 2) **Pager** needed so being “on-call” can be shared by Coordinator and several volunteers
- 3) **Cell Phone** - Coordinator can use her own with unlimited talk and text if there is a pager
- 4) **Laptop Computer** – required for portability in work. Coordinator maybe able to get a free desktop computer for use by Participants to apply for Access (EBT/SNAP – welfare and food stamps)
- 5) **Office space** with desk and chairs for meeting with Participants, storing files, and computer work – eventually a larger space to include some emergency supplies would be helpful. Coordinator anticipates having a few “regular” office hours once she is working more than 5 hours per week. Other meetings with Participants would be by appointment at the office or at home, hospital, library, etc. Coordinator also has a home office for computer work only (It would be inappropriate to meet with participants in her in her home though). (*done – Krsna.com has space for Coordinator*)
- 6) Proposed schedule (once hours are increased to 10-20 hours per week): available at Sunday Feast - 4-8 pm (available for short consultations and to promote upcoming events that can help everyone – like free dental clinic, food distribution days, etc.) , + Monday & Wednesday 9:00-12:30 regular office hours, the rest of the 20 hours would be by appointment in various locations, over the phone, at medical facilities, etc. Most of the Coordinator’s work hours would be Sunday – Wednesday leaving Thursday as day off and Friday and Saturday to work another part-time job. Coordinator would be available for crises Thursday – Saturday, but not non-urgent appointments. Pager could be held by volunteers on those three days.

Microloan Program (eventually, not initially)

If funding were available, this is something that could really help devotees who have not yet established an emergency fund and do not have credit cards. Loans of up to \$500 could be given for fixing cars, purchasing medicine, keeping utilities on, preventing eviction, paying fines/tickets, emergency home repairs, etc. To qualify, Participants must agree to repay the loan (minimum of \$10 per week, preferably \$100/month), must attend some sort of financial planning training, and create an emergency fund to try to prevent this from happening again.

Coordinator will create a hand-out on relevant ways to save money and legitimate ways to earn extra money as well as how to establish an emergency fund through disciplined small deposits into savings with every pay check. Participants will use this tool to identify ways to reach self-sufficiency. (I haven’t typed this up yet but have a full page of notes.)