

Position: Empowerment Specialist
Department: Policy
Title of Direct Supervisor: Chief Policy Officer
Position Status: Full Time, 40 hours per week, Non-Exempt



GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) works to end hunger in Montana through food acquisition and distribution, education, and advocacy. The Empowerment Specialist leads MFBN's efforts to engage people with lived experience of food insecurity and with utilizing social service programs. These lived experts are uniquely positioned to inform MFBN's work and to drive more equitable policies and approaches. The Empowerment Specialist cultivates and sustains relationships with lived experts in order to inform and strengthen MFBN's policy advocacy, as well as broader organizational goals. The Empowerment Specialist strives to support lived experts through the process of recognizing and utilizing their own power to engage with the issues impacting their lives. Engaging lived experts is a new and emerging priority for MFBN, and will require leadership from the Empowerment Specialist to be successful. The Empowerment Specialist supports additional department work as needed.

NOTE: This position is currently grant-funded through September 30, 2024. MFBN will strive to secure the funding necessary to extend the position beyond this term but cannot guarantee the position beyond this date. The offer letter for this position will reflect these circumstances.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Engage lived experts through the Amplify Montana initiative (85%)

- Facilitate and work closely with the Amplify Montana Advisory Board (AMAB) to guide Amplify Montana and MFBN's efforts to engage lived experts
- Conduct listening sessions, interviews, surveys, or other opportunities as needed to learn from individuals with lived experience of food insecurity to inform and strengthen MFBN's work
- Manage various engagement strategies that integrate feedback from lived experts, support leadership and professional development for participants, and align with MFBN's strengths and priorities. Engagement strategies may include, but are not limited to:
 - Advisory councils to guide coalition and organizational work
 - Coordinating the Big Sky Leadership Academy, a 14-week program for lived experts to gain leadership and professional development training
 - Advocacy training that prepares individuals to share their own stories and voices
 - Convening conversations with lawmakers
 - Submitting testimony during the legislative session
 - Educating the public and lawmakers through earned media, personal stories, or photovoice projects
 - Creating working groups to advise specific projects or carry out targeted goals
 - Coordinating events and activities that engage people with lived experience with various other stakeholders including lawmakers, Board of Directors, partner agencies, donors, and beyond
- Support and mentor lived experts throughout all engagement opportunities, and build authentic relationships based on mutual trust and respect
- Work closely with Policy staff to identify shared policy priorities and to connect lived experts with current advocacy opportunities; recruit participants and speakers for public hearings, media stories, and other advocacy events as needed
- Serve as a resource for community partners working to build relationships with and learn from lived experts; facilitate training sessions and create best-practice documents around a shared vision for increased engagement of lived experts

Communications (10%):

- Inform MFBN's work and communication efforts through a biennial survey of individuals accessing food through MFBN partners and programs (see our most recent survey data at www.mfbn.org/research)
- Create and distribute a biennial report that highlights the survey data, along with stories of individuals with lived experience of food insecurity, to inform the public, lawmakers, and others on the issue of food insecurity in Montana
- Ensure story collection and storytelling processes are dignified and conducted in a way that is non-exploitive and recognizes the expertise and strengths of individuals experiencing food insecurity
- Compile key takeaways and significant themes from listening sessions, interviews, or other engagement opportunities to ensure that learnings are shared with appropriate decision-makers and stakeholders
- Work collaboratively with MFBN's communications staff to provide recommendations for messaging that prioritizes the voices and perspectives of lived experts, helping to change the narrative of who experiences food insecurity and highlighting the root causes of poverty

Facilitate organizational equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work (5%):

- Coordinate MFBN's EDI committee, including developing agendas, facilitating meetings, preparing learning materials, and leading discussions
- Work closely with MFBN leadership to identify and pursue opportunities that affirm our organization's commitment to EDI principles

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS:

- Commitment to MFBN's mission and the alleviation of hunger in Montana
- Willingness to be flexible and demonstrate leadership in a developing area of work
- Motivated to strengthen MFBN's efforts to engage lived experts at partners
- Ability to approach work from trauma-informed and strength-based perspectives
- Ability to make decisions using sound judgment
- Ability to work with diverse individuals, and to communicate with clarity and empathy
- Strong writing ability and excellent interpersonal skills
- Experience in group facilitation
- Strong organizational and planning skills
- Ability to work on multiple responsibilities with attention to detail and accuracy
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Willingness to take initiative and suggest new ideas and strategies
- Motivated to approach the work with a desire to learn
- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite
- Valid driver's license and ability to travel in-state and occasionally to out-of-state conferences

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

- Bachelor's Degree, preferably in social work or social science field, and/or 2+ years of experience in advocacy, public policy, human services, or community organizing
- Individuals with lived experience of food insecurity are strongly encouraged to apply

WORKSITE:

- 5625 Expressway, Missoula, MT 59808
- Position is open to remote or hybrid work options
- Occasional travel required, primarily in-state

COMPENSATION:

The salary range for this position classification is \$23.70 - 25.88/hour DOE. The final offer will be based on the skills and experience the candidate brings to the position, while maintaining organizational pay equity.

Montana Food Bank Network offers a competitive benefits package including 100% employer-paid medical for employees, \$175 monthly HSA contribution, retirement plan with up to 3% employer match, paid holidays, and 4 weeks paid time off (PTO) in the first year. We also strive to provide non-cash benefits that encourage a work-life balance and promote the health of our employees and their families, including flexible work schedules, education and training opportunities, and eligibility for the Public Service Federal Student Loan Forgiveness Program.

TO APPLY:

Please submit your resume and cover letter to Gayle Carlson, President & CEO, gcarlson@mfbn.org. The position will be open until filled.

The Montana Food Bank Network is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all employees and is proud to be an equal-opportunity employer. MFBN does not discriminate with regard to hiring, assignment, promotion, or other conditions of staff employment because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, veteran status, disability, genetic information or any other status protected under local, state or federal law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, upon request, reasonable accommodations may be made to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of our positions. Offer of employment is contingent on the successful completion of a background check.