HIAS
PENNSYLVANIA

Legal Services Appointment Accompaniment

Position Summary: Help HIAS PA clients (asylum-seekers and other immigrants) with appointments such as a court hearing or fingerprinting session. It could involve driving clients or assisting with navigating SEPTA to the location, finding the correct room, and supporting or advocating for the client during the event.

Possible Activities (each request will vary):

- Contact the client to schedule an appointment time if not already identified
- Meet clients at their homes, at a public transit stop, OR outside of the appointment location at a specified time
- Go with client on SEPTA to their appointment and find the check in location together
- Help client to check in to the appointment
- Check if the office provides interpretation services
- Stay through the duration of the appointment
- Advocate for the client to make sure the office is following appropriate laws

Expectations:

- Volunteer is able to set aside 3-4 hours for round trip and appointment time, depending on request
- Volunteer is comfortable assisting someone who may not speak the same language
- If utilizing SEPTA, volunteer is expected to provide their own fare, but the client will provide their own
- Volunteer drivers must abide by all HIAS PA driving policies
- Volunteers are discouraged from entering client homes or exploring additional relationship with the client outside of the accompaniment
- Volunteers recognize that HIAS PA is not able to provide support during the accompaniment, and the volunteer will need to problem solve in the field

Qualifications & Requirements:

- Must be at least 18 years of age or older.
- Maintain confidentiality of all client related information
- Ability to navigate all modes of SEPTA transit and utilize Google Maps preferred
- Ability to utilize interpretation apps such as Google Translate and Tarjimly
- Ability to take initiative and problem-solve while maintaining boundaries of the volunteer position
- Ability to remain calm and provide emotional support
- Culturally competent; ability to work with diverse populations
- PA Child Abuse Clearance, PA Criminal Record Check, FBI Criminal Background Check or Waiver, COVID-19 Vaccination
- If driving, copy of license and car insurance sent to HIAS PA
- Certain appointments, such as DMV, may require additional training.

Timeframe: At least a three month commitment. Needs are communicated via email as they arise, and volunteers respond to needs that fit their schedule. Note volunteers may not be selected for every opportunity to which they respond. Most requests will be during weekdays.

Site: The majority of appointments are in Center City or Northeast Philadelphia, but sometimes may be in the surrounding counties. This can vary greatly and all details will be shared prior to committing to that appointment to inform the volunteer's decision.

Supervision: The HIAS PA Community Engagement team will work with the requestor and send the volunteer all pertinent information before the shift. In most situations, HIAS PA will not be able to provide live support, so the volunteer will be expected to problem solve in the field.

Benefits: You will…

- Be instrumental in ensuring clients have completed necessary steps for their cases
- Have the opportunity to advocate on someone's behalf
- Be able to practice interpersonal and relationship building skills