

DIGNITY HOUSTON, INC.
**COMMUNITY ORGANIZER
JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

Note: This is a contract position. Dignity Houston, Inc. will provide a Form 1099. The successful applicant will be responsible for his/her own payroll taxes.

SUMMARY

Exercising considerable initiative and creativity under the guidance of the Board of Trustees of Dignity Houston, Inc., works to revitalize and expand the number and age-diversity of active participants in Dignity Houston. Works with community organizations, the media, and others to promote a positive awareness of Dignity Houston and develop partnerships with them.

See the **Job Description** for this position for further details.

HOURS, LOCATION, AND TRAVEL

The successful applicant should be able to devote an average of 10 hours per week. For applicants who are students, this position will be for one semester; for other applicants, this will be a four month position. In both cases, the position may be renewed for a similar period based on the success of the person.

Applicant will be expected to work from home and provide his/her own personal computer and software. (Dignity Houston will provide stationary and other consumable materials.)

Applicant must have personal transportation to visit local colleges and universities, community organization meetings, including those of Dignity Houston, and place publicity materials. Local travel is included within contract payment; no reimbursement for mileage, per diem, or other travel costs will be provided.

NUMBER OF POSITIONS AVAILABLE

One position is currently envisioned. If an applicant team can make a compelling argument for a team fulfillment of the contract requirements, that may be considered with a commensurate adjustment to the reimbursement rate.

CONTRACT REIMBURSEMENT

The reimbursement rate is established at \$6,000 for the four month/one semester contract period, payable in monthly increments. Applicants with substantially greater or less demonstrated knowledge, skills, and abilities may be offered more or less than the established rate.

METHOD OF APPLICATION

All applications must be received by Friday, December 16, 2011. Applicants should submit the following:

- Résumé
- Sample plan to address one or more of the issues outline in the Job Description for this position.

The applicant's experience and education, as outlined in the résumé will be given about 30% and the appropriateness, innovativeness, and expressiveness of the sample plan will receive about 70% weight in evaluating the application.

Applicants may send their application to:

Dignity Houston, Inc.
P.O. Box 66821
Houston, TX 77266

Or by email to:

community-organizer@dignityhouston.org

DIGNITY HOUSTON, INC.
**COMMUNITY ORGANIZER
BACKGROUND**

ABOUT DIGNITY

Generally, Dignity is a national organization of and dedicated to Roman Catholic GLBT persons. It consists of the national organization, DignityUSA (<http://dignityusa.org>), which primarily serves as an advocacy organization for GLBT issues, especially as they relate to Catholics. DignityUSA also provides limited support to its local affiliates which are largely autonomous. The local affiliates are more focused on member services than advocacy.

ABOUT DIGNITY HOUSTON

Dignity Houston (<http://dignityhouston.org>) is the local chapter of DignityUSA. It is one of four chapters in Texas. The local chapter currently has 13 formal members in addition to numerous others who attend the weekly services. The chapter was founded in 1974 and has been in continuous existence since then. During the first decades of its existence, the chapter had a much larger membership. This was time when:

- The GLBT community was largely organized around the AIDS epidemic.
Fortunately, thanks to such community action, the prevalence of AIDS within the GLBT community has diminished greatly, and along with it, that organizing influence.
- The GLBT population was concentrated in the Montrose neighborhood.
Due to jobs, housing cost, social acceptance, and a whole variety of other reasons, the ghettoization of GLBT persons has substantially decreased since then.
- Priests were widely available to say Mass and provide ministerial services for Dignity Houston. The Second Vatican Council actually required that the local diocese minister to the GLBT community.

Immediately following his election, Pope John Paul II began to reverse the progress made in Vatican II. Of particular note, under his approval, then-Cardinal Ratzinger wrote and sent the Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual on October 1, 1986 (the infamous Halloween letter, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_en.html). This letter forbade Catholic priests from saying Mass or performing other Sacraments at places "where homosexual persons assemble and there is not express acknowledgement that homosexual behavior is evil." It also forbade Catholic bishops from making church property available to such "assemblages of homosexual persons."

As a result, priests, fearful of losing their job, retirement, and health benefits due to ministering to GLBT Catholics, have become virtually unavailable to say Mass for the Dignity Houston.

As the result of these and other changes, the membership and number of active participants in Dignity Houston has dramatically declined to a tiny fraction of its former size and prominence. That decline has resulted in an aging membership where the youngest person in frequent attendance is 50 years old.

In this regard, Dignity Houston is not unique among the other Dignity chapters throughout the United States. A major difference is that Dignity Houston was left with a significant endowment from those early years. While many of the other chapters struggle just to stay alive, Dignity Houston has the resources to engineer revitalization and, at the same time, provide an excellent opportunity for a student or other community member to develop skills and acquire experience.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

With its small and aging membership, Dignity Houston has reached a critical mass. It lacks the energy and human resources to revitalize itself and expand its membership on its own. In addition, the older membership is unattractive to younger persons who might otherwise become members. (Many younger people come to a weekly service after finding Dignity Houston on its Web site, only to never return because they find it hard to relate to the preponderance of older members.)

Consequently, Dignity Houston is in need of a social organizer, a community developer to help it in its revitalization effort.

DIGNITY HOUSTON, INC.
COMMUNITY ORGANIZER
JOB DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

Exercising considerable initiative and creativity under the guidance of the Board of Trustees of Dignity Houston, Inc., works with community organizations, the media, and others to promote a positive awareness of Dignity Houston and develop partnerships with them. Works to increase the number of active participants in Dignity Houston and develop engaging activities for those participants.

EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED

- Develops written plans for approval by the Board of Trustees of Dignity Houston.
- Identifies and establishes working relationships with GLBT, women's, and other community organizations.
- Develops publicity materials (press releases, brochures, leaflets, etc.) and works with the media and community organizations for their distribution.
- Develops Web site content for DignityHouston.org.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Ability to develop creative strategies to engage community members, promote public awareness, and develop partnerships.
- Ability to initiate contact with and develop working relationships with key GLBT, women's and other community organization figures.
- Skill in designing and developing printed, aural, and video publicity and public relations material.
- Ability to effectively communicate complex religious, moral, and ethical positions, from a GLBT perspective, in a positive way while respecting diversity.
- Knowledge of or ability to learn the Catholic Church's position on homosexuality and the GLBT counter-arguments to that position.
- Demonstrated ability to write compelling and engaging articles and other media materials.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Skill in using Microsoft Office products, including Word, PowerPoint, and Publisher, as well as other graphics and multimedia software.

PREFERRED EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

- All other things being equal, applicants who have been raised in the Catholic Church are preferred. However, proven ability to communicate effectively is more important.
- Applicants with a bachelor's degree and enrolled in graduate school or with comparable experience are preferred. Highly innovative, self-confident undergraduate upper-classmen will also be strongly considered.
- Experience in dealing with the media is definitely a strong point, but not essential.