



ABOUT COMMUNITY ACCESS

Founded in 1974, Community Access is a pioneer of supportive housing and social services in NYC for people with mental health concerns. We proudly lead advocacy efforts that rally our community to promote human rights, social justice, and economic opportunities for all.

Our mission is to expand opportunities for people living with mental health concerns to recover from trauma and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy and healing-focused services. We are built upon the simple truth that people are experts in their own lives.

communityaccess.org

JOIN OUR TEAM: PEER BRIDGER PROGRAM

Community Access is launching a new project to support residents of NYC adult homes who live with mental health concerns as they move into community-based supported housing. We're proud that the New York State Office of Mental Health selected us to run this program – the largest ever state-funded peer employment initiative – because of our unparalleled track record in training and hiring peers. This undertaking follows a long legal process – a class action lawsuit on behalf of 4,300 adult home residents – and we're working hard to help support these residents in reaching their goals.

We are now hiring many positions, and we are looking for peers who are enthusiastic about using their life experience to help others!



WHY THE ADULT HOME INITIATIVE?

As a leader in peer workforce development in NYC, and the home of Howie the Harp Advocacy Center, Community Access has been selected by New York State to hire and provide 40 full-time staff to support the residents of 12 adult homes.

Since the downsizing of the inpatient psychiatric system in the 1970s, supplying adequate community-based housing and supportive services have remained critical priorities. Many people with mental health concerns were discharged from state hospitals to Department of Health-licensed adult homes originally designed to serve seniors needing daily living assistance. Over time, thousands of people with a range of mental health needs were housed in these adult homes without appropriate services.

- In 2002, the *New York Times* exposed the “death, misery, squalor and chaos” in many adult homes.
- In 2003, Disability Advocates Inc. (DIA)—now known as Disability Rights New York—sued the state on behalf of 4,300 individuals living with mental health concerns residing in adult homes.
- In 2013, a landmark settlement was reached in which New York State agreed to provide more than 4,000 NYC adult home residents with the opportunity to move to their own supported housing.
- As of the fall of 2018, around 750 residents had transitioned to supported housing and thousands more remain in adult homes.

The Peer Bridger Program is being created to promote the goals of the settlement through peer to peer supportive relationships. The program at Community Access will support residents of 12 adult homes: 8 homes in the Rockaways, 2 homes in northern Queens, and 2 homes in the Bronx.

BECOMING A PEER BRIDGER

Peer Bridgers in the Adult Home Initiative will assist residents through the process leading to successful transition into supported housing. The initiative is designed to engage residents in peer-based supports in order to identify and overcome barriers to housing transition, addressing questions and fears, while building self-advocacy and systems-navigation skills.

Qualifications:

- Be a peer: a recipient/survivor of mental health services
- Have a minimum of a high school equivalency diploma
- Strong understanding and practice of peer support, recovery, wellness and related services

For more information and to apply visit
www.communityaccess.org/ahi

