



Step Up For Mental Health Internship Experience

Mellon Foundation Unpaid Internship Award
Recipient Presentation

Lillian Baca

My Background:

Degree

I am pursuing a degree in Psychology.

I am also minoring in Gender Studies.

Desired Field

I would like to use my Psychology degree to pursue Marriage and Family Therapy.

Future Goals

My next step is to continue my education. I want to get my Master's in Counseling Psychology with a concentration in Marriage and Family Therapy.

Who is Step Up For Mental Health?



Mission:

"Step Up For Mental Health's mission is to support, educate and provide services to empower families living with the challenges of mental health disorders. We do this by providing a safe place to share stories and find support for others who are dealing with mental health disorders or caring for a family member with a mental illness. We believe that mental health issues impact social issues, including education, homelessness, and poverty. Step Up For Mental Health® strives to match families with resources to help move them toward a more productive life."

<https://www.stepupformentalhealth.org/about/mission/>

Role and Tasks:

Title: Intern and Peer Support Facilitator

- Answering the Helpline phone
- Adding new clients into the case management system
- Taking client intake calls and responding to their needs based on what the non-profit can offer them
 - Bus Pass, Bill Pay, Food Box, Clothes, and so much more
 - Outside Resources if we can't fulfill their needs ourselves
- Organizing and providing one-on-one peer support sessions for clients that are looking for more emotional support



Pictured: Lillian (Left) and Caroline (Right) holding up swag bags they filled that will be given out to people experiencing homelessness living in humboldt park in Chicago

“Swag Bags” for people experiencing homelessness

Filled with: gloves, hats,
band-aids, hand sanitizer,
snacks, and many other
necessities, and a card with
words of affirmation.

Takeaways:

I really learned how capable I am to do this kind of work for others

Having the opportunity to directly work with clients through challenging times and be a supportive hand was fulfilling and built up my confidence in what my desired career field will be.



Conclusion:

- I learned so much about the mental health world and some of the available social resources in Chicago for people in need
- I learned a lot about case management software and some of the processes in the client care process
- I learned about balance. Since there is a substantial amount of emotional weight involved in crisis care and mental health care, I have had to practice stepping away and taking care of myself too
- I am so incredibly dedicated to the pursuit of mental health care and helping others with their well-being. I loved working with my clients and I gained so much from the experience.
- I feel so incredibly fortunate to have been helped through this experience from the Mellon Foundation as well. As a result of the award, I was able to dedicate more time and energy into the work I was doing with Step Up For Mental Health. I grew a lot as an individual and as a worker. I am grateful for my experience