

Senior Manager, Direct Services

Department of Direct Services

Department	Direct Services
Reports To	Director of Programs
Direct Reports	5 Program Managers (1 Drop-In Centre, 2 Shelter, 1 MAP Van, 1 Kitchen)
Staff Overseen	~50 unionized frontline staff + ~30 volunteers
Employment	Full-time, permanent — excluded management
Location	Vancouver, BC — Downtown Eastside

About WISH Drop-In Centre Society

WISH Drop-In Centre Society is the largest sex worker support organization in Canada, located on the unceded, stolen lands of the xʷməθkʷə,əm (Musqueam), Sḵwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations. For over 40 years, WISH has been a refuge and essential point of contact for street-based sex workers in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. WISH is a non-judgmental place of compassion and trust where we centre the voices of those most impacted by systemic inequity, criminalization, and gendered violence.

Our three key direct service programs — the Drop-In Centre, Shelter, and MAP Van, — are delivered by a team of deeply experienced workers, many of whom carry lived expertise. WISH is a unionized workplace and values the collaborative relationship we have built with our union.

Position Summary

The Senior Manager, Direct Services is primarily a people-leadership role. Its central purpose is to build the management capacity of five Program Managers who are skilled practitioners — with strong subject matter expertise in harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and emergency response — but who are earlier in their development as people-leaders. These managers in turn oversee approximately 50 unionized frontline staff covered by the CSSEA-CSSBA General Services Collective Agreement (transferring to the HEABC-CBA Health Services & Support – Community Subsector Association Collective Agreement April 1 2027).

This means the Senior Manager's most important work happens in supervision, coaching, and labour relations guidance — helping Program Managers learn to navigate performance conversations, apply the Collective Agreement, support staff through conflict, and hold accountability while maintaining trust. The Senior Manager is not expected to be the subject matter expert in every program area; they

are expected to be an expert in developing managers and in leading through others in a unionized environment.

The Senior Manager also sits on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and carries accountability for overall service quality, budget oversight, and cross-departmental relationships.

Duties & Responsibilities

1. Management Coaching & Leadership Development

This is the core of the role. The Senior Manager is responsible for the ongoing growth of five Program Managers as leaders of unionized staff.

- Provide regular, structured one-to-one supervision and coaching to all five Program Managers, with deliberate focus on building their management skills.
- Coach Program Managers through the full range of people-management situations: performance concerns, attendance management, staff support, team dynamics, participant engagement and difficult conversations.
- Identify each Program Manager's development edges; build individualized long-term coaching plans and track growth over time.
- Support Program Managers in applying the Collective Agreement accurately and consistently — building their confidence and competence rather than stepping in directly.
- Model and reinforce management practices that hold accountability while maintaining the trust and psychological safety of unionized staff.
- Build a peer-learning culture within the management team: shared debriefs, case consultation, and mutual support.
- Identify patterns across the manager team and address them through both group learning and individual coaching.
- Attend frontline staff meetings as needed to observe team dynamics, provide support, and offer operational oversight.

2. Labour Relations

As WISH's primary management-side resource for labour relations in Direct Services, the Senior Manager offers guidance and support to Program Managers in implementing these processes. Coach and guide Program Managers through progressive discipline, corrective action, performance improvement, and attendance management under the Collective Agreement in coordination with the People and Culture Manager — ensuring they lead the processes with appropriate support, documentation, and follow-through.

- Review and authorize formal discipline actions, letters of expectation, and performance improvement plans before they are issued, under the guidance of the People and Culture Manager.
- Liaise with internal and external union representatives; plan and participate in union meetings, , and conflict resolution processes, representing WISH as the employer where appropriate and in collaboration with the People and Culture Manager.

- Collaborate and communicate with HEABC on Collective Agreement interpretation and emerging labour relations matters.
- Co-chair bi-monthly Labour Management Committee (LMC) meetings alongside elected staff representatives; prepare agenda items and ensure follow-up on action items.
- Ensure Program Managers understand and consistently apply Collective Agreement provisions including but not limited to those related to scheduling, leaves, modified duties, seniority, and job appointments.
- Maintain accurate documentation of labour relations matters in collaboration with the People & Culture Manager.
- Identify recurring labour relations issues and work proactively with the People & Culture Manager and the union to address systemic causes.

3. Human Resources

- Work with the People and Culture Manager, who leads hiring processes, for recruitment across all positions within Direct Services, ensuring alignment with WISH's mission, values, and the Collective Agreement and the Employment Standards Act (ESA).
- In collaboration with the People & Culture Manager, oversee compliance with the ESA and the Collective Agreement across all direct services programs.
- Develop effective onboarding and training plans for new staff and managers; ensure employees are properly oriented and aligned with WISH's policies and values in collaboration with Program Managers, the Director of Programs, the People and Culture Manager, and/or SLT members as appropriate.
- Work with the People & Culture Manager to maintain, review, and enhance consistent People and Culture documentation practices and systems across all programs. In collaboration with the People and Culture Manager, analyze trends related to recruitment, retention, attendance, and training to support informed decision-making.
- Support Program Managers to build their skills in hiring, onboarding, and performance management by coaching them through the process and providing training where helpful.
- Collaborate with the People & Culture Manager to balance employee needs and organizational interests across excluded and unionized staff.
- Provide strategic input on staff learning, professional development, and organizational wellness.
- Work with the People and Culture Manager to implement, monitor, and review safe work practices in compliance with WorkSafeBC requirements; support the People and Culture Manager to liaise with WorkSafeBC on incidents and ongoing compliance where needed.
- Lead internal workplace investigations involving Direct Services managers, staff and participants.
- Ensure adherence to program-specific and organization-wide policies and procedures across all direct services teams.

4. Strategic Leadership & Organizational Presence

- Serve as a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT); participate in organizational decision-making and planning to further WISH's mission and values.
- Lead an assessment of current HR knowledge, skills and practices among SLT and managers; identify gaps and design trainings in collaboration with the ED and People and Culture Manager.

- Collaborate with the Director of Programs, People and Culture Manager, and Participant Engagement Senior Manager to develop and deliver programming consistent with WISH's strategic direction.
- Communicate organizational strategies and operational plans to Program Managers; deliver Direct Services updates to the SLT and other departments; provide consistent and timely two-way communications between the SLT and Program Managers.
- Work with the Participant Engagement Senior Manager to ensure that the Direct Services and Participant Engagement teams receive aligned, timely and accurate information and supports.
- Collaborate with the Director of Programs and Executive Director on policy development across the organization.
- Represent WISH at community events and with external partners as requested.
- Lead and support a workplace culture committed to justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

5. Program Oversight & Operations

Day-to-day program delivery is the responsibility of Program Managers. Program direction and leadership is the responsibility of the Director of Programs. The Senior Manager maintains accountability for service quality and operational integrity across all direct service programs.

- Hold accountability for the quality, consistency, and outcomes of direct services with leadership from the Director of Programs; support Program Managers in resolving operational challenges.
- Respond to emergent situations and critical incidents; ensure post-incident follow-up with appropriate departments and agencies.
- Assist with or perform essential Program Manager duties in their absence. Review program budgets; coordinate quarterly financial review meetings; liaise with Finance and Fund Development on statistics, funder reporting, and budget interpretation.
- Collaborate with the Operations Manager on capital and facility decisions affecting programming; assist with facility management, including approving emergency repairs, liaising with contractors and tracking maintenance budgets.
- Provide on-call support as required, including emergency on-site presence when necessary.
- Perform additional duties as required in collaboration with the SLT.

Qualifications & Skills

Required

- Demonstrated experience managing and coaching managers or supervisors — people who lead other people. A track record of developing leaders who are strong practitioners but newer to management is essential.
- Experience in a unionized environment with working knowledge of collective agreement administration, progressive discipline, grievance processes, and labour management relations.

- Strong understanding of foundational HR principles and best practices as well as core labour relations tenets.
- Experience with performance management systems, workplace investigations and HR documentation in a unionized setting.
- Comfort coaching managers through difficult people-management situations rather than handling situations directly.
- Ability to hold accountability and act decisively while maintaining respectful, trust-based relationships.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills; able to give direct, honest feedback and navigate conflict constructively.
- Ability to manage complexity, competing priorities, and high-stakes situations with composure.
- Strong organizational skills; able to track multiple staff situations and development trajectories simultaneously.
- High level of confidentiality, discretion, and diplomacy.
- Hold a sex workers' rights position within an intersectional feminist framework that is decolonial and anti-racist.

Strongly Preferred

- 3–5+ years leading teams or programs in a human-services context — social services, healthcare, housing, harm reduction, or a comparable field where frontline staff carry specialized expertise. However, transferable experience in any industry (including corporate, retail, logistics, hospitality, public sector) will be seriously considered.
- Experience navigating HEABC or CSSEA agreements, or equivalent labour relations experience in a BC context.
- Familiarity with trauma-informed workplaces or organizations serving high-complexity communities.

Assets — Not Required

- Experience in a not-for-profit.
- Knowledge of the Downtown Eastside community, harm reduction principles, and sex worker rights and lived contexts.
- Prior or current sex work experience.
- Knowledge of urban Indigenous communities and ways of knowing and working.
- Familiarity with WorkSafeBC requirements, emergency response planning, and JOSH processes.
- Proficiency with HR/scheduling/CMR systems such as Synerion, ADP, or ShareVision.

Core Competencies

- People development: builds managers' capacity through coaching.
- Labour relations: applies collective agreements accurately; represents the employer with confidence and fairness.

- Accountability: sets clear expectations and follows through, even when it is uncomfortable.
- Equity lens: applies principles of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging across all aspects of the work.
- Judgment: balances empathy and flexibility with consistency and organizational integrity.
- Communication: clear, direct, and constructive with staff, managers, union representatives, and senior leaders.

Additional Information

Background Check

WISH is mandated to require a criminal record check. Records relating to sex work, substance use or poverty-related criminalized activity are not relevant to this position and will not be considered.

Equity & Inclusion

WISH is committed to equitable hiring and to building a team that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. We particularly encourage applications from Indigenous women and Two Spirit people; women, Two Spirit and gender diverse people with lived experience in sex work; and Black and racialized women and gender diverse people.

Candidates from outside the non-profit sector — including the private sector and government— are also encouraged to apply. Leadership and labour relations experience transfers. What matters most is your ability to develop people and to lead with fairness in a unionized environment while upholding WISH's social justice values.

Working Conditions

Full-time, permanent management position excluded from the bargaining unit. Based at WISH's offices in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Occasional evening, overnight or weekend availability will be required to support operations or respond to emergencies. Hours: 8 hour days, M-F, typically between 10 am and 7 pm with some flexibility and some work-from-home opportunities (usually about 8 hours a week)

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