



## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: SPECIAL EDUCATION BRIDGE LOAN PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

**Reports to:** Deputy Director

**Location:** New York City

**Start-Date:** February 2019

**To Apply:** Please contact HFLS Deputy Director Kim Kaplan at [KKaplan@HFLS.org](mailto:KKaplan@HFLS.org)

## **The Organization**

The Hebrew Free Loan Society fosters economic stability and opportunity among New Yorkers in need by providing access to safe, affordable credit in the form of 0%-interest loans.

Founded in 1892 by immigrants on Manhattan's Lower East Side, HFLS has provided over \$300 million to more than 875,000 borrowers. We are not the only microfinance organization in New York, but our model is unique: We are the only microlender providing an array of interest-free loans to low- and moderate-income borrowers. HFLS is a nonsectarian lender, making loans based on need to borrowers of all backgrounds.

HFLS maintains a 99.9% repayment rate, the result of a unique lending model that relies on guarantors to prevent default. As our loans are repaid, the capital is lent out again and again, helping more people and multiplying our impact over time.

## **The Opportunity**

The City of New York has a commitment to ensuring that all children receive an education appropriate to them, including children with special education needs. Some of these children study in NYC public schools, but for others, there is no public school program that can meet their learning, social, and emotional needs.

In cases like this, the NYC Department of Education will pay tuition for a private school that can meet the student's needs. Unfortunately, the system either pays for or reimburses parents for tuition in a way that many families and/or schools cannot accommodate: Lower-income families cannot come up with the money to front the tuition or wait many months for DOE reimbursement, and schools cannot wait many months for DOE payment. To solve this predicament, HFLS offers interest-free bridge loans to bridge the period between settlement and payment from or reimbursement by the City.

The Special Education Bridge Loan program currently serves nearly 250 families each year, lending approximately \$5 million. It is one of HFLS's largest loan programs, and it continues to grow. In order to meet the growing demand and because this program differs in significant ways from the rest of our loans, we are seeking a volunteer who cares about special education to serve as our in-house specialist, answering questions about the program, processing applications, and liaising with our school partners to ensure families with special needs children can access the education their children require to learn and thrive.

## **The Role**

The Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for administration of the HFLS Special Education Bridge Loan Program. S/he will report to and work closely with the Deputy Director to ensure all applications for this program are processed accurately and in a timely manner, manage relationships with school partners and attorneys, and produce occasional reports on program outcomes. S/he will also help identify ways to streamline the Special Education Bridge Loan process to improve efficiency for families, school partners, and HFLS.

This is an ideal opportunity for a volunteer who is extremely organized, has a keen eye for details, and is interested in the ins-and-outs of special education finance in the country's largest school system. S/he must be a fast learner with the interpersonal and communications skills necessary to sensitively guide families, schools, and attorneys through the loan process.

The Special Education Coordinator will volunteer 16-20 hours per week in HFLS's midtown office.

## **Areas of Responsibility**

- Process Special Education Bridge Loans
- Manage partnerships with private special education schools and programs, and liaise with attorneys and families
- Maintain complete files and tracking spreadsheet for all special education loans
- Monitor funds available and funds required for new loans on a weekly basis
- Conduct regular reviews of outstanding loans and follow up as needed regarding repayment

## **Skills and Experience**

- Passion for HFLS's mission to foster economic stability and opportunity for lower-income New Yorkers.
- Strong writing and communications skills
- Significant attention to detail and organizational skills
- Bachelor's degree required; administrative, legal, and/or special education experience preferred
- First-hand knowledge of the New York City Department of Education special education funding process preferred