Community Builders Network VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

Fundraising and Communications VISTA

Sponsoring Organization: Mission: St. Louis
Project Name: Community Builders Network of Metro St. Louis (CBN)
Project Number: 14VSM001
Project Period: October 26, 2020 – October 25, 2021
Focus Area(s): Economic Opportunity

Summary and Goal
The Community Builders Network of Metro St. Louis (CBN) is a coalition of community building organizations, including community-based nonprofits, lenders, private developers, philanthropic organizations, and government actors. Our mission is to gather community leaders of all backgrounds to build engaged and equitable neighborhoods, which we believe are key to a strong and healthy St. Louis region. CBN works to help strengthen the region’s community builders in three primary ways:

1. **Strong Organizations**: Our organizational capacity building programs support our members and their partners so they can do their best work.

2. **Supportive Systems**: Our civic capacity programs build bridges across places, sectors, and silos and advocate for policies that strengthen our civic muscle.

3. **Sharing Stories**: Our public awareness programs spread the word about what it takes to make our neighborhoods great places to live and why strong communities matter.

CBN is made up of over 70 member organizations from across the St. Louis area, including 33 “Mission Members,” place-based nonprofits that serve our region’s neighborhoods with work focused on community and economic development, affordable housing, and social services. These Mission Members typically have deep roots in the communities they serve: well over half have been in existence for 25 years or longer. They’re also highly in-tune with what those communities are good at, the support they need the most, and the futures to which they aspire. About 65% of the households our Mission Members serve in our region are low-income.1

CBN is currently going through strategic planning for the next five years, and financial sustainability for ourselves, our member organizations, and our community development sector has been identified as a key priority. As a result of the VISTA’s service, CBN will develop stronger communications, storytelling, and fundraising infrastructure that will fuel our ongoing efforts to build and support strong, inclusive St. Louis communities.

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Objective of the Assignment
The CBN Fundraising and Communications VISTA will strengthen CBN’s financial sustainability and that of its member organizations by supporting fundraising, communications, and storytelling activities, both for CBN and for CBN members.

Member Activities

- **Support, streamline, and grow CBN’s communications systems by:**
  - Managing updates and content for the CBN’s website, monthly newsletter, Facebook, Twitter pages, and investigating the possibility of establishing other social media accounts for CBN (e.g., Instagram).
  - Tracking and evaluating analytics for website, newsletter, and social media performance, then recommending and implementing strategic changes that will make our communications strategies more effective, efficient, and sustainable over the long-term.

- **Support, streamline, and grow CBN’s fundraising systems by:**
  - Leading and growing CBN’s fundraising efforts for key donation campaigns, including Give STL Day and Giving Tuesday.
  - Researching, identifying, and supporting solicitation for 3 to 5 significant prospective new funding opportunities. These could include grants, corporate partnerships, and fee-for-service opportunities.
  - Support planning for CBN’s 10-year anniversary fundraiser (tentatively the “Community Development Family Reunion”) by:
    - Designing and improving procedures and materials for event outreach, correspondence, and promotion, including tracking and organizing materials for sponsorship benefits.
    - Developing a creative new spin on CBN’s traditional award nomination, selection, and honoring process to align with the “family reunion” theme.
    - Growing CBN’s existing partnership with Humans of St. Louis and other local storytelling entities to collaboratively celebrate the work of our network, including the possibility of a collective branding campaign for St. Louis’ community development ecosystem.

- **Create and curate communications and fundraising materials, resources, and opportunities for CBN members by:**
  - Creating simple resource guides and toolkits to support CBN member fundraising and communications initiatives.
  - Connecting member organizations to potential funding opportunities and sharing the CBN team’s knowledge, contacts, and resources as appropriate.
Qualifications

- Demonstrated work or volunteer experience in communications and fundraising, with a track record of achieving results.
- Passion for community building and for pursuing and promoting racial equity and inclusivity.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently, as part of a small team, and as part of a larger group/committee, and to take initiative as new projects come up.
- Demonstrated ability to stay on schedule, set and coordinate cascading timelines, and meet deadlines.
- Excellent computer skills, including using Microsoft Office products.
- Strong problem solving, communication, analysis, and writing skills.
- Willingness to work in a variety of settings, primarily remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, and occasional hours outside the normal business day as needed.
- Experience using social media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook.
- Experience designing flyers and/or promoting events.
- In-depth knowledge of and/or passion for local communities and their nuanced histories.

This position will be supervised by CBN staff. For more information about CBN, visit www.communitybuildersstl.org.

AmeriCorps VISTA members receive an annual living stipend of $13,399.15 plus the following benefits:

- End-of-service education award
- Housing assistance
- Option to defer student loan payments until the end of your service year (interest accrued during service will be paid by the National Service Trust upon completion of service)
- Professional development training
- Non-competitive eligibility in the federal hiring process
- Other benefits, including a relocation allowance, childcare assistance, free diapers, mileage reimbursement for service-related travel, and health care options

To learn more about what it means to serve as an AmeriCorps VISTA member in St. Louis, visit https://www.servethelou.org/vista.

To apply, please send a resume and a short letter about why you’re interested in the position and what you feel you’d bring to our team to CBN Executive Director Jenny Connelly-Bowen at jenny@communitybuildersstl.org by Friday, September 11, 2020. We’re looking forward to hearing from you!

CBN is an equal opportunity employer and embraces applicants of all backgrounds, from all walks of life. We do not discriminate and will take action to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, military service eligibility, veteran status, sexual orientation, marital status, physical or mental disability, or any other protected class.