

position description

Date: October 2020

Title: Research Assistant 4

Department: Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

School: School of Medicine

Location: Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health, Case Western Reserve University
School of Medicine

Supervisor Name and Title: Rachael Sommer, MSSA, LISW, Director of Operations and Partnerships

POSITION OBJECTIVE

Working with a high degree of independence, the research assistant is responsible for coordinating major activities of the Mary Ann Swetland Center. Specifically, the research assistant will be responsible for developing, implementing, training, and disseminating new and innovative community-engaged research techniques involving a high degree of skill and training. The research assistant will contribute to several active studies within the Center's robust research portfolio focused on the complex interplay between the environment and human health with a focus on translating these findings to advance environmental health equity. The research assistant will provide input and recommendations to the Center Director regarding significant developments in research projects.

Working with the Center's Modeling the Future of Food in Your Neighborhood Study, the research assistant will develop protocols for engaging the community in the translation and dissemination of the Center's research focused on food systems modeling including methods for engaging diverse community stakeholders in community action planning for food systems transformations that lead to equity. This includes expertise in building trusting relationships with community stakeholders, collaborative models of implementation, and grant writing skills. The research assistant will engage in mixed methods applied research including qualitative data collection, analysis, and reporting as well as quantitative data collection and descriptive reporting.

The research assistant must have exceptional skills in communication using diverse methods to develop reports, infographics, webinars, and leverage social media to share study methods and findings. Additionally, the research assistant will provide consultation to faculty affiliates and undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral trainees of the Swetland Center on community-engaged research including provision of trainings, one-on-one consultations, and information sessions. The research assistant will hold monthly office hours with community partners to better understand the needs and interests related to environmental health to support future directions and collaborative opportunities for the Center. The research assistant will assist the Director of Operations and Partnerships on annual evaluation of the Center's community engagement approach within the areas of research, training, and service.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

1. Co-develop, implement, and evaluate complex community-based and participatory research methodologies that apply adult learning approaches to engage community stakeholders including residents, food retailers, and leaders from community organizations, coalitions, and local governments to devise an action plan to address the deeply rooted forces impacting community food security. Apply and evaluate the use of multifaceted decision support tools to help community stakeholders simulate different policy and system level interventions to examine their impact on

outcomes such as economic opportunity, food security, and fair access to fresh and healthy foods. Support the development of scientific papers and presentations as well as presentations for lay audiences related to study approach. (40%)

2. Manage community dissemination core of the Modeling the Future of Food in Your Neighborhood study including coordination of community-engaged research meetings with faculty, trainees, and community partners; development and management of timelines to achieve deliverables using project management strategies; and execution of communication methods to translate work to diverse audiences including community partners, funders, academic, and lay audiences. (35%)
3. Co-develop annual evaluation of the Center's community engagement approach within the areas of research, training, and service. Collect and interpret complex qualitative and quantitative data and using findings to make recommendations for enhancing community-engaged research and community systems science within the Center. (15%)
4. Teach and instruct others in community-engaged and participatory research methodologies. Develop and implement trainings for faculty affiliates and undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral trainees of the Swetland Center on community-engaged and participatory research including provision of trainings, one-on-one consultations, and information sessions during summer internship. Coordinate monthly office hours with community partners to better understand needs and interests related to environmental health to support future directions and collaborative opportunities for the Center. (10%)

NONESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

1. Engage in staff-wide activities of the Mary Ann Swetland Center and the Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences. (<1%)
2. Perform other duties as assigned. (<1%)

CONTACTS

Department: Continuous contact with research staff including principal investigator, program manager, research associate, graduate research assistants, survey staff, and other staff of the Mary Ann Swetland Center to implement project goals.

University: Occasional contact with other departments.

External: Occasional contact with vendors to exchange information.

Students: Contact with student employees.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY

This position may supervise research assistants and technicians.

QUALIFICATIONS

Experience: 5 to 8 years of related experience required.

Education/Licensing: Bachelor's degree. Master's degree in community development, public health, social work, environmental health, anthropology, or related field preferred.

REQUIRED SKILLS

1. Knowledge in public health, environmental justice, and/or food systems.
2. Ability working in diverse community settings including evidence of capacity to build trust and work collaborative with groups.
3. Demonstrated ability using community-engaged and participatory research approaches.
4. Skills in collecting data using complex qualitative and quantitative research methods.
5. Ability supervising staff and students across varying disciplines.
6. Excellent written and oral communication skills with capacity to communicate complex ideas to diverse audiences.
7. Excellent attention to detail.
8. Ability to work collaboratively in cross-function teams comprised of individuals from various academic departments and community sectors.
9. Ability to be motivated, self-directed, and independent.
10. Ability to meet consistent attendance. Ability to interact with colleagues, supervisors, and customers face to face.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The research assistant is required to work onsite at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Work is computer-based in an office setting. Some travel (20%) is required for data collection and to attend relevant professional meetings in Ohio and across the United States. This position will require work from home while social distancing is being implemented due to COVID-19.