

position description

Date: August 2022

Title: Research Assistant 4, Community Engaged Research Specialist

Department: PQHS

School: Medicine

Location: BioEnterprise Building, 11000 Cedar Ave

Supervisor Name and Title: Rachael Sommer, Director

POSITION OBJECTIVE

Working with a high degree of independence and under general direction, coordinate a community-level intervention within the Nourishing Neighborhoods Empowering Communities study (i.e., Nourishing Power study), a participatory action research project of the Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health. The research assistant will be responsible for developing, implementing, training, and disseminating new and innovative research techniques involving a high degree of skill and training in community-engaged environmental health research. The research assistant will work closely with the principal investigator to explore significant developments and strategies to promote authentic community collaboration in the center's efforts focused on research, training, and community engagement with the broader goal of translating findings of the center into policies, practices, and relationships that promote community and population health equity

The research assistant will serve as the Community Engaged Research Specialist providing coordination of two components of the Nourishing Power community-level intervention: (1) the Food Systems Change Fellowship and (2) Nourishing Power Networking. The fellowship is a six-month intervention offered twice over the next two years designed to support community leaders with visions for transforming the food system through community-driven action. Nourishing Power Networking includes quarterly events and related programming (e.g., capacity building, shared resources, etc.) designed to spark community ownership of local food systems change. The research assistant will work closely with the evaluation core of the study to ensure rigorous implementation evaluation of these intervention components. The research assistant, in close collaboration with center leadership, will also serve as the coordinator of the center's monthly seminar series designed to showcase the breadth of community-engaged research conducted by the center and its faculty affiliates, community partners, and invited external speakers that addresses the role of structural racism in creating and sustaining environmental health inequities.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

1. Coordinate major research activities related to implementing two components of the Nourishing Power community-level intervention (i.e., Fellowship, Networking) in nine cities in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Provide input and recommendations to the principal investigator and project partners to develop and implement intervention logic, intervention curriculum, marketing and outreach for intervention recruitment and retention, and work in partnership with the evaluation core of the study to support implementation evaluation. Apply principles of community-engaged research and adult learning approaches to effectively engage community stakeholders (i.e., residents, food retailers, leaders from community organizations, coalitions, and local governments) in intervention delivery, prioritizing those representing Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. (54%)



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2. Assist in developing culturally relevant and reproducible procedures for community-engaged research projects involving a high degree of skill and training. Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to implementation of the Nourishing Power community-level intervention (i.e., Fellowship, Networking) to allow for systematic documentation of study implementation and adaptations over time. Ensure SOPs are up to date and teach and instruct research team members in study procedures and methodology. (20%)
3. Evaluate adequacy of techniques and study and test new procedures to translate and disseminate research findings of the Swetland Center to inform policies, practices, and relationships that promote community and population health equity. Coordinate the center's monthly seminar series applying principles of community-engaged research and adult learning approaches (10 seminars per year). Conduct evaluation and continuous quality improvement projects to expand the reach and impact of the seminar series and the Nourishing Power study. (15%)
4. Co-author translation and dissemination products of the Nourishing Power study, such as data briefs, intervention toolkits and manuals of operation, peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, social media posts, and/or white papers. Provide input and recommendations to the principal investigator to support grant writing related to community-engaged environmental health research. (6%)

NONESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

1. Monitor the Fellowship and Networking core budgets. (<2%)
2. Train undergraduate and graduate students on the implementation techniques of the Fellowship and Networking components of the community intervention. (<3%)
3. Perform other duties as assigned. (<1%)

CONTACTS

Department: Continuous contact with Center Director and research staff including principal investigator, program managers, research associates, research assistants, graduate research assistants, and other staff of the Mary Ann Swetland Center to implement project goals and Center-wide communication.

University: Regular contact with other departments.

External: Regular contact with community partners associated with study implementation including potential funders. Frequent contact with co-investigators from the FARE Project and Neighborhood Connections.

Students: Continuous contact with graduate students, student workers, volunteers, and Swetland Center Interns.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY

May supervise research assistants and technicians.

QUALIFICATIONS

Experience: 5 to 8 years of related experience required.

Education/Licensing: Bachelor's degree required in public health, community health, environmental sciences, social work, urban studies, or related fields. Master's degree preferred.

REQUIRED SKILLS

1. Has knowledge of commonly-used concepts, practices, and procedures within food systems, social justice, health equity, and/or environmental justice.
2. Experience implementing community-based programming and/or applied population health research studies in non-clinical settings.
3. Relies on instructions and pre-established guidelines regarding community-based participatory research to perform the functions of the job.
4. Ability to work collaboratively in cross-function teams comprised of individuals from various academic departments and community sectors and to work in diverse community settings, including evidence of capacity to build trust and work collaboratively with groups.
5. Ability to operate laboratory tools: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Box, Canva, Basecamp and cloud-based task management systems.
6. Ability to meet consistent attendance.
7. Ability to interact with colleagues, supervisors, and customers face to face.
8. Excellent written and oral communication skills with the capacity to communicate complex ideas to diverse audiences.
9. Excellent attention to detail.
10. Ability to be motivated, self-directed, and independent.

WORKING CONDITIONS

There are no special health or safety hazards, environmental conditions or hazardous equipment or supplies. Must have personal, reliable transportation to travel to community sites in Cuyahoga County throughout the project, documented mileage will be reimbursed. Must be able to work a flexible schedule, including evenings and weekends. Must be willing to participate in community-based engagements and events. This position is eligible for the staff hybrid work program.