



AmeriCorps Member Position Description



Member Position / Title: Community Garden Coordinator

Member Immediate Supervisor Name: Laura Gafford D

Days / Hours of Service: M-F, 8-4

Member Immediate Supervisor Title: Lead Gardener

Partner Organization Name: Sankofa Community Development Corporation

Address: 5200 Dauphine St. City: New Orleans, LA Zip Code: 70117

Website: www.sankofanola.org

Organization/Agency Mission and/or Goals: Sankofa CDC is a 501(c)3 that leads programs to combat systems which cause health disparities and impact the quality of life of vulnerable populations in the Greater New Orleans Area. The organization was started as an effort to initiate preventive health services and promote a culture of health in New Orleans' Lower 9th Ward following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. To support food equity in the Lower 9th Ward, Sankofa CDC operates a fresh produce market and food pantry. Additionally, Sankofa CDC has created a green infrastructure drainage and ecological land restoration project. Other work by Sankofa CDC includes healthy cooking and gardening classes as well as cardiovascular health education work.

Program Mission and/or Goals: Sankofa CDC staff has been developing a plan to create a sustainable community garden that would address some of the food equity and health needs of the community through sustainable gardening and healthy eating educational programs. The goal of creating this community garden is to extend Sankofa CDC's mission and extend our outreach into the community with regards to building healthier communities.

Community Need: Many of the health disparities in the Lower Ninth Ward are attributed to socio-economic situations and a lack of available resources that result in environmental justice issues for residents of the area. The New Orleans Data Center states that the Lower 9th Ward population is comprised of African American residents (91%) with a third of households living in poverty (33.4%), higher than the poverty rate of the entire City of New Orleans (26.2%), as well as the United States (15.1%). High School graduation rates of the Lower Ninth population state 18.9% of residents left high school without receiving a diploma, which is higher than the City of New Orleans rate (10.5%) and the United States (8.5%). Lower 9th Ward residents also have a lower average household income (\$30,035), when compared to New Orleans' average household income (\$60,599), and the average U.S. household income (\$77,866). In addition, the Lower 9th Ward is currently a "food desert", having no grocery

stores in the area that sell fresh produce and other healthy food items.

Member Position Summary: The Community Garden Coordinator would be responsible for Administrative support (reports, etc), volunteer coordination, coordination of community garden gatherings (share and support), direct support with maintenance of community garden. In addition, Community Garden Coordinator would be responsible for community engagement & outreach. The Community Garden Coordinator works with Sankofa CDC staff to support and implement the Community Garden Program activities. The Community Garden Coordinator will: 1) help organize events; 2) recruit and train volunteers; 3) plan and lead sustainable, organic, environmentally conscious garden activities; 4) integrate environmental issues, wellness, and garden activities into the curriculum; 5) develop a system for recruitment, training, coordination and tracking of volunteers & events to maintain the garden throughout the year; 6) help plan the seasonal Plant Give-Away and Plant Swap and other community garden events; 7) pursue grants to support the growth and development of the Community Garden program; and 8) assist in the maintenance of the gardens and gardening education spaces, supporting the preparation for garden work activities, and ensuring the care and maintenance of tools.

Member Impact: Sankofa CDC is developing its community garden to support an exchange of information between local gardeners and offer a space for growing and resource support. The Service Corps member would work with community members to support growing practices that address collaborative work around food production and community legacies of gardening. Learners of all ages would be engaged in programs that explore the benefits of sustainable agricultural practices. Beneficiaries to the program would include students visiting during field trip programs, scouts participating in a badge program, families learning how to garden together, and adult learners engaged in gardening classes.

The community garden presently includes a pollinator garden, raised beds for community use, in ground planting of vegetables, and a hoop house. Gardening information exchanges will support the sharing of sustainable agricultural practices that supports both sustainable education and gardening as an important cultural and historical practice of the community. The program would focus primarily on students and schools located within the Lower 9th Ward neighborhoods, an area that has struggled with food equity issues and high poverty rates for years.

The Service Corps member's implementation of the curriculum to schools and other learners would allow Sankofa CDC to track how many students and other participants were reached by this program, and track the effectiveness of the curriculum developed through teacher evaluation surveys.

Measurable short-term goals will be the delivery of a completed curriculum. Measurable long-term goals would be determining the effectiveness of the curriculum. This would be accomplished through the collection of teacher evaluation surveys. Feedback provided by teachers will inform Sankofa CDC's decisions in making any needed adjustments to the curriculum and/or program delivery.

Essential Functions of Position:

- Administrative support to garden programs (reports, data collection)
- Volunteer coordination (coordinating garden volunteers to work in the garden)
- Assistance to lead gardener with gardening and grounds maintenance (composting, planting, grounds clearing, harvesting)
- Community engagement (coordinating garden gatherings in community garden for information exchange)

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of plants and gardening; Knowledge of meeting facilitation; Knowledge of community engagement; Understanding of racial equity, health disparities, community planning and decision making; Excellent written and oral communication skills - Effective classroom management & instructional abilities and methods - Must be willing/able to work outside in all weather conditions for a majority of the work day. Must be able to lift 50lbs.

- Knowledge and experience with vegetable gardening and/or farming in Louisiana
- Experience building relationships in diverse communities
- Clear written and verbal communication skills
- Creative problem-solving abilities & flexibility
- Demonstrated ability to work with families and children
- Experience supervising volunteers promoting cooperation and team building
- Diplomacy and ability to work with a variety of personalities
- Sensitivity to and understanding of the experience of people with limited incomes
- Demonstrated cultural competency
- Dedication to promoting equity, inclusivity and diversity

Required Academic and Experience Qualifications: - College Degree - Background or experience in environmental education or informal education preferred