Summary and Goal
There are over 20,000 vacant properties in the City of St. Louis, with most of them concentrated in North St. Louis. Residents in these neighborhoods live with overgrown lots and crumbling buildings that contribute to disinvestment, high rates of poverty, increased crime, decreased property values, and health risks. These properties strain City resources and affect the prosperity of the entire region.

To address these concerns the St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative (VC) launched in 2018 after several years of effort and planning. The VC is a coalition of partners committed to the reducing vacant property in St. Louis. The VC is not a stand-alone entity, but a coalition of community representatives, private and non-profit stakeholders, and City agencies. The VC helps to coordinate existing vacancy efforts under one umbrella and encourages the public and private sectors to work together toward solutions in a comprehensive and coordinated way.

Objective of the Assignment
The Vacancy Collaborative Communications and Capacity Building VISTA will strengthen the development of the VC by enhancing overall communications and building VC capacity. The VC is looking for someone who is passionate about racial equity, community building, and equitable development; is a self-starter willing to listen, to understand, and to work collaboratively as well as independently; and is comfortable grappling with complex challenges without easy solutions.

Member Activities

- Enhance the overall communications of the VC by
  - Enhancing existing outreach methods and creating new ones, including electronic newsletters, a social media strategy, the website, and educational materials about vacancy that are coordinated with community needs, strengths, and assets
  - Developing a communications strategy that ensures the VC is taking an active role in sharing resources, gathering feedback, and highlighting its work while also considering the VC’s capacity and resources
  - Responding to general inquiries to the VC through the website

- Engaging with neighborhood groups and community residents by
  - Developing a framework for how to engage in community outreach that generates robust feedback and opportunities to share VC resources while also recognizing the capacity and resources within the VC
  - Conducting outreach and giving community presentations to neighborhood groups as part of a team, and as needed
Documenting residents’ concerns and goals for the VC

Build VC sustainability and capacity by

- Supporting fundraising efforts through grant research, materials development, and outreach to potential funders
- Helping put the VC work plan into practice by providing support for some of the working groups, including minutes and other logistical support, attendance at working group meetings, and supporting research needs that may arise
- Attend other relevant meetings of the Vacancy Collaborative

Qualifications

- Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited four-year college or university or equivalent experience in communications and organizational capacity building.
- Passion for community building and for promoting equity and inclusivity in programs.
- Commitment to advancing racial equity and equitable development.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently, as part of a small team, as part of a larger group/committee, and to take initiative as new projects come up.
- Demonstrated ability to stay on schedule, set 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 and occasional hours outside the normal business day as needed.
- Understanding of St. Louis’ history and the causes of our current vacancy challenge, familiarity with urban communities, and knowledge of the built environment and/or physical infrastructure of cities.

This position will be directly supervised by Vacancy Collaborative staff. Community Builders Network of Metro St. Louis (CBN) serves as the fiscal agent and staff home for the Vacancy Collaborative. To learn more about the Vacancy Collaborative, visit www.stlvacancy.com. For more information about CBN, visit www.communitybuildersstl.org.

AmeriCorps VISTA members receive an annual living stipend of $13,400 plus the following benefits:

- End-of-service education award
- Housing assistance
- Option to defer student loan payments until the end of your service year
- Professional development training
- Other benefits, including a relocation allowance, child care assistance, 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 for this position, please send a resume and cover letter to Tara Aubuchon at tara@communitybuildersstl.org by Wednesday, June 15, 2021