

# PEACE CORPS HOUSE

## A Call for RPCV Volunteers for a Local Cause

- 1) **Grant Writer,**
- 2) **Community Assessment Specialist,**
- 3) **Outreach Specialist or Coordinator (depending on level of commitment),**
- 4) **Short-term volunteer to help with local licensing requirements (e.g. 501(c)(3)) & memberships).**

### What is a settlement house?

America's 400 settlement houses — often called a community or neighborhood center — date back to the progressive era of the late 1800s. Located in neglected, stressed, careworn urban neighborhoods, staff work to identify and provide social services and a range of activities designed to reinforce the strengths of individuals and families and their children living in the area.

Operating from an existing house or other building these traditional institutions can provide such social services as daycare, health care clinics, youth guidance and learning, workforce development, crime intervention, good food, recreation, entertainment, and cultural programs, family and senior programs and other services to the community which help improve the lives of the people.

### The Mission of Peace Corps House

- 1) To help make a selected DC neighborhood a more livable and better place to grow up.
- 2) To serve the people in the neighborhood with effective social services.
- 3) To advocate for social justice.

Peace Corps House will start very small, perhaps in a church basement or in a single room in a collaborating organization and likely, initially, develop a single program that “empowers young people.”

### Position Descriptions

**(NOTE:** all positions are voluntary and are excellent ways to gain experience, build up a resume, network, produce quality deliverables, and be part of a unique, new initiative in the DC metropolitan area.)

#### 1. Grant Writer

To lay a foundation for future fundraising, a Peace Corps House grant writer will:

- provide an assessment of our fundraising potential.
- identify diverse development options, sources of initial funding, including visits to establishments like the Foundation Center.
- develop a strategy for soliciting to potential donors.
- produce a report recommending dollar goals, action plan and timetable.
- help train other Peace Corps House volunteers in one-on-one solicitation.
- feel free to recommend program and organizational enhancements needed to achieve Peace Corps House goals.
- offer solutions to problems as they arise.
- write grants.

## 2. Community Assessment Specialist

To help Peace Corps House find its most appropriate, welcoming neighborhood (potentially under the guidance of an experienced instructor, depending on skill set), this volunteer will use Catholic University's School of Social Work program of "Community Analysis: Asset-Based Community Development."

This approach recognizes that all communities and their residents have strengths, assets, resources, opportunities and challenges, including the capacities of residents themselves and the associations and institutions to which they are connected. These can all be identified and next steps developed for achieving desired community goals and changes. The volunteer(s) will:

- engage as many community members as possible in relevant conversations concerning these.
- write up a summary analysis of the conversations with residents, census data, and assessments of community associations and institutions.
- The written analysis will also include an overview of the community, its history and demographics, and an asset map and a narrative description of the map.
- develop a "power analysis" of the three dimensions of power in the community:
  - 1) **Visible Dimensions:** How are decisions made in/for/with the community? Who is represented in those decision-making bodies? What kinds of power do they represent? Who does not appear to have a voice in decisions affecting the community?
  - 2) **Hidden Power:** How do community groups decide what issues to tackle in their own communities? How are people engaged in making decisions about the community or deciding what issues are important for the community to discuss? Are there any barriers to being engaged in that process?
  - 3) **Invisible Power:** Who shapes the meaning for the community? Who tells the community's story, how do they tell that story?
- make recommendations for a starter project for Peace Corps House, including next steps toward achieving it.
- Utilize and grow social media and tech expertise (e.g. iPads, video, and audio).

## 3. Outreach Specialist or Coordinator

Community Outreach Coordinators connect their organization with the public. In this case, the Peace Corps House Outreach Coordinator will:

- develop a plan to reach out to the local RPCV community.
- respond to requests for information about Peace Corps House, its goals, its programs, its history.
- represent the settlement house in public settings and meetings and advocate for it.
- meet with potential stakeholders, including offices of the DC government and the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities.
- capitalize on advice from organizations like the International Federation of Settlement Houses and community centers in DC and elsewhere, as the opportunities arise.

- research community resources and opportunities for Peace Corps House and work with staff and leadership in bringing the Peace Corps House plan closer to fruition.
- establish and maintain cooperative relationships with representatives of community, social and civic organizations, clergy, and/or public interest groups.
- organize community meetings and events.
- work with local media to maximize coverage opportunities.
- maintain and grow social media audience.
- maintain favorable public perceptions of Peace Corps House's accomplishments and community mission.

#### **4. Short-term Volunteer to Help with Licensing Requirements & Memberships**

To help Peace Corps House ascertain and then develop both its legal requirements prior to opening its doors and useful cooperative relationships, this volunteer will:

- work with relevant D.C. government's agencies.
- establish legal connections.
- prepare a report of findings, including a draft action plan.

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