Coopers Ferry Development Association, Inc

Shepherd Poverty Alliance Job Description

Purpose of the Organization

Prior to 1984, the central waterfront in Camden, N.J., consisted of primarily heavy industrial production facilities owned by Campbell Soup Company, RCA and a major rail yard and ferry system run by the Pennsylvania Reading Railroad Comp. By 1984, the railway infrastructure had been cleared away, and the production facilities were almost closed with employment at only a small fraction of what it once had been. As a result of the heavy industry and transportation uses, the waterfront was cut off from public access for more than 100 years.

In 1984, the three principal owners of the waterfront land--the City of Camden, Campbell Soup Company and RCA--jointly commissioned a planning study by the American Cities Corporation to evaluate the development potential of their collective holdings. As a result of this cooperative effort, Cooper’s Ferry Development Association (CFDA) was founded as a private, nonprofit corporation with a mission to facilitate the revival of the City of Camden as an urban hub, where people choose to live, to work, and to invest. CFDA develops visionary long-range plans for the redevelopment of Camden’s waterfronts and works with private sector, government and community partners to implement high-quality projects to bring these plans from vision to reality. CFDA seeks to enhance the economic and environmental health of the City by: (1) Strengthening Camden’s connections to its physical assets including its waterways, regional rail and road network, and proximity to Center City Philadelphia. (2) Leveraging public investment into parks and infrastructure in order to improve quality of life, to create recreational opportunities, and to attract private reinvestment, and (3) Cultivating vibrancy and a strong sense of place through physical upgrades and programming.

Based on this success, CFDA has also begun to partner with other communities in the city that face challenges in an effort to establish a new base of economic activity and to improve the quality of life. CFDA has been invited to enter into partnerships with the various neighborhood organizations to provide its technical assistance on the preparation and implementation of the neighborhood’s development plans while also strengthening its organizational capacity.

Job Title or Position

Project Manager Intern – community and economic development

Expectations / Responsibilities of the Position

Project managers in the office are responsible for providing comprehensive oversight for redevelopment projects in an urban setting (throughout the planning, funding, design, permitting, and construction phases). The student would be responsible for assisting and managing redevelopment projects in two specific areas:

1. **Camden Home Improvement Pilot Program (CHIPP):** CFDA is administering a $3 million program (from the State and potentially the federal government) to qualified city residents to make to life safety and structural repairs to their homes. The student will be working with staff on the intake process (application and interviews), reporting requirements, and contractor interface.

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2. **Neighborhood Planning:** CFDA has secured grant funds from the William Penn Foundation to assist the Cramer Hill CDC and North Camden CDC in implementing existing neighborhood plans. The student will be responsible for working with staff and the local CDCs in advancing priority projects (staffing, marketing, fundraising, and/or coordinating with the various public agencies).

3. **Pyne Poynt Park:** CFDA has secured grant funds to rehab a 13-acre public park in North Camden and its adjacent roadways (construction dollars). Pyne Poynt Park is the only public access area for the entire North Camden community to the Delaware River. The student will be working with staff through the permitting, construction, and community outreach process.

4. **Von Neida Park:** Working with the City and County, CFDA will be overseeing the rehab of this Cramer Hill park (primary design challenge is flooding and CFDA is currently working with Rowan University on a virtual simulation model to analyze the flooding conditions). The student will be working with staff on the outreach, public sector coordination, design, and permitting.

**Qualifications**

The student will be required to work with city residents, local community development corporations (CDCs), public sector agencies, non-profit organizations, and private stakeholders in the field of community and economic development.

The student should have strong written and verbal communication and interpersonal skills as well as good organizational, time management, and problem solving skills. The student should also feel comfortable attending and speaking at community meetings.

**Working Conditions**

The student would be expected to work a standard work week with the occasional evening meetings (like city council, community and/or public board meetings).

**On-Site Supervisor**

Joe Myers – VP & COO  
[myers@coopersferry.com](mailto:myers@coopersferry.com)  
856-757-9154  
[www.coopersferry.com](http://www.coopersferry.com)

**Supervisor Plan**

Cooper’s Ferry is small non-profit organization with a staff of eight full time members. The student will be working under the supervision of Mr. Myers but with the four project managers in the office. It is the goal to expose the student to a wide variety of project management experiences relating to all aspects of community and economic development including park and infrastructure development, community outreach and planning, brownfield remediation, and organizational capacity/growth.

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Preparation

Suggested reading materials include the following:
1. CAM Connect, *Camden Fiscal Outlook 2008*
2. Alexander Garvin, *The American City*
3. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

Additional Comments

Despite its challenges (aging infrastructure, structural deficit and state oversight, low tax base, inefficient land use, countless brownfields, and high crime), Camden has great opportunity. It is regionally connected with various transportation modes. It has a thriving central waterfront with over 2.5 million annual visitors and a downtown with expanding medical and educational anchors. It is also less then one mile from Philadelphia with amazing views of its skyline.

Looking to the future, the city has to reconnect with its greatest asset – the Delaware River. A key planning principle for neighborhood and waterfront development is first based upon opening up the city neighborhoods to the Delaware River. Open access will be provide new public recreational opportunities for the community, create new development opportunities on vacant land adjacent to the planned park and also at the same time, bring the value of the water back into the core community while extending the existing city grid outward to meet the water. This is one of the keys to the redevelopment of the City of Camden.