

Job Title: Community Organizer
Supervisor: Director of Community Organizing
Hours: 35 hours per week; availability for weeknight and some weekend responsibilities required
Annual Salary: \$45,000, full benefits
Status: Full time, union

CAAS' Mission: CAAS helps local families and individuals achieve financial security while working to eliminate the root causes of economic injustice.

Position Summary: The Community Action Agency of Somerville is recruiting for a full-time Community Organizer to work in community organizing efforts that are in direct response to priorities articulated in both our Community Needs Assessment and our Strategic Plan. The highest priority for low-income residents of Somerville is currently the preservation of and access to affordable housing. The Community Organizer is charged with working with residents in private and public low-income housing in Somerville to maximize their ability to protect their rights and to participate in both individual landlord, city-wide, and statewide decision making on issues of housing justice.

The Community Organizer will be joining a small but dynamic team as the third staff member of the CAAS Community Organizing & Advocacy program. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we are prioritizing our efforts to prevent eviction and displacement in Somerville, particularly for residents who are most vulnerable to housing instability. Work is adapted to be primarily remote and virtual, but occasional in-person visits to the office for printing and coordinating safely distanced outdoor events (such as canvasses or protests) will be expected. Abundant precaution is taken and constantly reviewed by the Director of Community Organizing and management team at the agency.

Specific duties include:

- Recruitment: Conduct base-building and recruitment activities by door-knocking, making phone calls, street and residential canvassing, outreach at community events and public places, digital and social media channels, and through organizing house meetings. Identify publicly owned subsidized buildings, other privately owned low-income residences, and additional opportunities for outreach efforts for tenant organizing. (This duty will be modified for the remainder of time that COVID restrictions and precautions are in place.)
- Identify and Develop Leadership: Organize and conduct one-on-one and small group meetings to build relationships with potential leaders who have not traditionally had access to power (low-income residents, people of color, seniors, youth, non-english speakers, immigrants and refugees). Support tenants in meeting their immediate housing stability needs, including triaging referrals to the CAAS Housing Advocacy Program or other local providers when necessary. Train and inspire tenant leaders to develop new skills as leaders by co-preparation and facilitation of meetings, public speaking opportunities, lobbying visits, organization of public events, etc.

- Implement Organizing Campaigns: Work with the Director to design campaigns that further the housing justice movement and the intersections of racial, economic, and gender justice at the local, municipal, and statewide level. Conduct outreach to identified targets, assist with research, implement tactics over the short and long term, and participate in the evaluation process.
- Communications: With oversight of the Director, draft print and online materials for education building and outreach that are multilingual and adapted to the multicultural residents of Somerville. Assist the Director with the public relationships strategy by preparing messaging for events, print media, social media, and organizing press conferences. Train and inspire tenant leaders to draw connections between the local struggle for justice in affordable housing and state, national, and global issues such as systemic racism and wealth and income inequality.
- Coalition Work: Build coalitions and work with existing ally organizations, government and elected officials, residents and businesses, and tenant leaders to move campaign goals and demands forward. Work with community leaders to build tenant unions. Coordinate organizing efforts with local partners such as The Somerville Homeless Coalition, Somerville Community Corporation, The Welcome Project, and other social justice organizers in the Greater Boston area.

Qualifications:

- High priority will be given to candidates with verbal and written fluency in Spanish, Portuguese, and/or Haitian Creole (samples will be requested);
- Proven ability to establish positive relationships with people of different backgrounds, particularly across socioeconomic classes, racial/ethnic identities, and languages other than English;
- Proven ability to problem solve creatively and take initiative independently;
- Proven track record of collaboration and working positively in a small but growing team;
- Willingness to take risks, develop new systems and relationships, and refine strategies and approaches to organizing;
- Dedication to CAAS's anti-poverty mission;
- Familiarity with the challenges faced by communities experiencing poverty and oppression, knowledge of the root systemic causes, and willingness to deepen this understanding and analysis of intersectional oppressions;
- Experience organizing and facilitating community meetings (multilingual meetings a plus);
- Strong written and verbal communication skills;
- Comfort using technology and online systems, such as Google Suite and Zoom
- Ability to travel to meetings and events in the greater metropolitan area;
- Availability for evening commitments (such as community meetings) and occasional weekend commitments (typically 2 weekend days per month) required;

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is occasionally required to stand; walk; sit; use hands to finger, handle, or feel; reach with hands and arms; stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl and talk or hear. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 10 pounds.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.

Interested candidates should send resumes to: jgrogan@caasomerville.org