

USDN 2021 Equity Diversity Inclusion (EDI) Fellowship Program

Overview

The Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) is pleased to offer summer 2021 fellowship opportunities with local governments. Fellows will receive a valuable learning experience while helping local governments advance sustainability and inclusion goals.

2021 fellowships are available with the City of Lancaster (PA), Miami-Dade County (FL), the City of Minneapolis (MN), the City of Newark (NJ), and the City of Richmond (VA). We are accepting applications on a rolling basis, with priority given to applications received by April 11.

Fellowships will be fulltime for 12 weeks, beginning in May or June and concluding in August or September. USDN and host sites will work with selected candidates to finalize start and end dates. While all fellows will begin working remotely, some may transition to in person work as safety permits.



2019 USDN EDI Fellows presenting their work at the USDN Annual Meeting

All fellowship positions include:

- A living wage or higher for the fellowship location
- Full-time employment for 12 weeks
- The experience of working in a local government sustainability program on a well-defined project that advances a community's sustainability and equity goals

- A project that is inclusive of underserved and under-represented communities and responsive to their needs and priorities
- Mentorship from Desiree Williams-Rajee and participation in a national learning cohort of USDN EDI fellows
- Access to all USDN member discussions and products
- Membership in an informal network of past and current EDI fellows

Requirements

Broad requirements for all fellowship projects are listed below. Each local government project also has specific requirements.

- Be passionate about sustainability and/or the environment
- Be new to the sustainability field of work or interested in exploring a career in sustainability
- Have the skills required to match the needs of the projects for which you apply
- Have excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to relate to, communicate with, and learn from racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse communities
- Have experience working with multiple communities, including communities of color
- Have experience considering the impacts of projects on multiple communities, including communities of color
- Commit to working for the entire duration of the fellowship
- Commit to participating actively in the cohort learning and mentoring programs
- Commit to maintaining the privacy of cohort and USDN discussions
- Complete a one-page summary blog post and program evaluation form at the conclusion of the fellowship to reflect on your experience
- Make a presentation on your work to USDN members

To Apply

Applications should be sent to the Urban Sustainability Directors Network at <fellowship@usdn.org>. Please include the name of the community or communities with which you are seeking a fellowship in the email subject line. People of color are encouraged to apply.

Applications should include:

- Completed and signed application form available for download [here](#)
- Current resume

Application review will occur on a rolling basis, with priority given to applications received by April 11. All applicants will be notified of selection decisions.

Thank you for your interest!

USDN Fellowship with the City of Minneapolis, MN

Transportation Engagement Fellowship, Public Works Department

Fellowship Title

Transportation Engagement Fellow

Fellowship Summary

The Transportation Engagement Fellow is a 12-week position within the City of Minneapolis Public Works Department, starting in late spring of 2021. The position will work with staff from Public Works and other City departments to develop a community engagement framework focused on transportation projects, building upon the recently completed Transportation Action Plan and the City's Community Engagement Evaluation. The fellow will work with City staff and community leaders to identify opportunities to restructure engagement. The principal goal of restructuring engagement practices is to reduce barriers to participation for BIPOC residents and to develop methods that more easily allows BIPOC residents to influence decisions and outcomes of transportation projects.

As part of this work, the fellow will assist in a collaborative process to develop a community engagement plan for an upcoming transportation safety project in the Phillips neighborhood. The community engagement plan will include discussions with community members and staff from the Office of Sustainability, the Health Department, Neighborhood and Community Relations, and others to identify strategies through which the diverse community in Phillips can engage with the project and shape the project design and outcomes.

Project Background

The Fellow will work with staff to change engagement for transportation projects in Minneapolis. Testimonials from both staff and residents have highlighted that community engagement in Minneapolis under-engages and underrepresents the viewpoints of the unhoused, renters, youth, and BIPOC residents. Engagement is often conducted using a "one-size-fits-all" model without targeted methods that can help break down barriers to engagement for residents. The Community Engagement Evaluation identified both institutional barriers and community barriers to better engagement, as well recommended changes to City systems and culture to improve engagement practices.

Public Works staff in the Transportation Planning and Programming Division have also been discussing ways to improve engagement on transportation projects and have developed an engagement working group to improve collaboration across departments and better incorporate artists into engagement practices. This work builds off actions identified in the Transportation Action Plan to deepen the partnerships with other City departments related to community engagement. The Plan also calls for a series of actions to improve engagement practices, including developing parameters and accountability measures for inclusive community outreach and engagement.

Team Description

The fellow will be based within the Public Works' Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP) division. TPP is responsible for the transportation planning portion of the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), developing and leading implementation of the City's 10-year Transportation Action Plan, and leading community engagement during the development of conceptual designs for transportation projects. In addition to working with colleagues from TPP, the fellow will also have opportunities to work

with staff from other Public Works divisions and will work closely with staff from the Health Department, Office of Sustainability, Neighborhood and Community Relationships, and others.

Job Description

The fellow's job descriptions and work products are expected to include the follow tasks and work products.

- Orientation and Document Review (Weeks 1-2): Review existing City guidance and Public Works goals related to engagement and documenting successful engagement strategies used by other cities. This includes the Community Engagement Evaluation, Transportation Action Plan, City Comprehensive Plan, City Strategic and Racial Equity Action Planning, and other documents
 - Work product: Written memorandum and oral presentation on key takeaways and research findings and how this will impact work over the coming weeks
- Engagement Planning (Weeks 1-6): Meet with staff from Public Works, staff from other departments, and community members in Phillips (including but not limited to residents, business owners, and institutional/organizational leaders) to discuss potential engagement strategies in Phillips
 - Work product: Develop engagement plan for the Phillips transportation safety project including core messaging, clear objectives of engagement (including how community input will be used), existing barriers to participation for BIPOC communities, discussion of how the City will communicate with residents, schedule, key organizations and individuals, and potential engagement events/strategies
- Outreach and Engagement (Weeks 5-10): Hold initial round of community engagement which. Initial round of community engagement will be focused on identifying how residents currently travel in their neighborhood, their concerns around transportation safety, and defining objectives for the project. Events will be either in-person or virtual based on local health guidance related to COVID-19, and may include City facilitated events or events held by other organizations. Debrief with community leaders on engagement events and summarize what was heard and how it will be used.
 - Work product: Hold initial engagement events, including assisting or leading
 - Development of materials
 - Facilitating conversations and/or leading presentations
 - Summarizing comments heard during events

The fellow will also participate in a report back to residents with information on what was heard, how that information will be used, and next steps on the project, and a discussion with community leaders on the successes and opportunities for improvement.

- Engagement Framework (Weeks 1-12): With support from City staff, draft a transportation engagement framework incorporating information from Tasks 1-3. The framework will include recommendations on developing engagement plans for individual projects including schedule, budget, coordinating with other departments, identifying community leaders, discussion of barriers to participation in engagement, and targeted strategies for the diverse communities of Minneapolis. The framework may also discuss different magnitudes of engagement based on

the project type and location and may identify changes to Public Works (and if needed, City Enterprise) policy.

- Work product: Written engagement framework and presentation on framework to City staff from Public Works and other departments.

As this position includes participation in community engagement events, the fellow should anticipate some work on evenings and weekends.

Desired Knowledge and Skills

The ideal candidate will have a combination of work, volunteer, and/or lived experiences communicating with diverse communities in the Twin Cities. There are no academic or degree requirements for this position. As the position is focused on both community engagement for a specific project and developing a strategic framework for improved community engagement, the ideal candidate would have the following skills and experience:

- Community organizing and/or facilitating community conversations
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Demonstrated ability to work with and build relationships with a diverse set of groups
- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively
- Strong organization and time management skills

The following skills and experience are also desirable, but not required:

- Ability to speak Spanish and/or Somali
- Familiarity with and/or experience working in the Phillips neighborhood
- Experience working on transportation projects or campaigns

Professional Development and Support

The fellow will work with staff from various departments across the City, providing opportunities to build their professional network and better understand how various parts of the City operate. As part of the position, the fellow and their supervisor will work together prior to their start date to identify a mentor who can provide additional support and guidance beyond their immediate colleagues and supervisor. The mentor will also be able to share information on different parts of the planning process, provide unique insights into City processes, pathways to employment at the City, building relationships within government, and identifying growth opportunities. The mentor will help the fellow navigate the different roles that City departments play and will provide insight into rules that govern work in the City.

The fellow will also be able to participate in programming held for summer employees within the Public Works Department. This includes informational interviews, virtual meetings and trainings, and spotlights on each divisional within the department. These sessions will provide opportunities for the fellow to hear from others about their career paths and how they've navigated working for the City of Minneapolis. The sessions will offers a space for summer employees to reflect on experiences in the workplace and process learning.

Pay Rate and Benefits

The position is 40 hours a week at a rate of \$22 per hour. Health insurance is provided as part of this position through USDN.