Position Announcement / Please Post

VISTA Tenant Organizer

VISTA Affordable Housing Preservation Project (VAHPP)

OVERVIEW OF NEW SETTLEMENT APARTMENTS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES: New Settlement Apartments, home of Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA), is a non-profit, mixed-income housing and community service organization with a 25-year track record of active commitment to neighborhood revitalization, community building and organizing, and positive youth development. New Settlement currently provides housing and year-round educational, cultural and recreational programs and social services to more than 15,000 youth and adults who live in the surrounding area.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) is New Settlement Apartments’ housing organizing initiative. Our work at CASA is grounded in the belief that everyone has a basic right to a safe, healthy, affordable and stable home and that our organizing work should be led by our members. We are made up of community members who work together to improve the living conditions in our neighborhood and maintain affordable housing through collective action. We achieve this by organizing to protect rent stabilization, organizing against predatory landlords, fighting against landlord harassment, working to reform the Bronx Housing Court, working to eliminate landlords’ ability to charge non-rent fees, educating tenants about their rights, building a critical mass of members involved in our work, and developing leaders to lead these important fights. Our work is based in the Bronx but many of our initiatives and campaigns work with allies and coalitions and all of our work benefits tenants throughout NYC. In March of 2013, we received an award from the Association of Neighborhood and Housing Development for Excellence in Neighborhood Organizing and in 2014 we were honored with the Community Activist Award by the Urban Justice Center.

We are looking for a bold, passionate, hard-working, and dedicated person who is looking for an opportunity to grow their organizing skills and capacity and help move our cutting edge and exciting work forward.

Goal of the VISTA Affordable Housing Preservation Project (VAHPP): This project will build the capacity of tenant associations in eligible Project-based Section 8 U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)-assisted properties to increase tenants’ knowledge of their rights, responsibilities, and options for preserving their homes and improving their communities. The project aims to: (1) increase tenant outreach and training capacity of qualified local nonprofit organizations in at least 15 cities and (2) help tenants organize and save or improve at least 120 eligible Section 8 communities which house more than 18,000 families. Ninety VISTA members will build the capacity of tenant organizations through outreach, education, leadership development, and legal aid over the two-year project.
POSITION DESCRIPTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

This is a one year, full-time position beginning in February 2016. This position is a unique opportunity to work with tenants in buildings that are subsidized by HUD and therefore affordable. This position is one of 90 throughout the nation and is one of more than 10 positions in NYC. The VISTA HUD organizer will work with the other VISTAS throughout the city to learn, build coalitions and work on a national agenda!

Guided by the Director of Housing Organizing and in coordination with other organizers and interns, the VISTA Tenant Organizer will work to strengthen CASA’s broad base of members, who are committed to housing justice, understand what it takes to build a movement and are prepared to take bold action to transform the quality and affordability of housing in the Southwest Bronx.

The VISTA Tenant Organizer’s Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Building a Strong Base of Members through:**
  - **Organizing Tenants’ Associations:** This project will build the capacity of tenant associations by assisting, informing, educating, and engaging tenants of eligible project-based U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)-assisted properties to preserve affordable housing and increase tenant capacity building regarding their rights, responsibilities, and options for preservation and improvement of their communities. The VISTA Tenant Organizer’s primary responsibilities will be as follows:
    - Identify eligible buildings for outreach, organizing, and tenant engagement and prioritize buildings at risk due to expiring use restrictions or substandard physical condition.
    - Engage in door to door outreach, identify and recruit tenant leaders to help form or strengthen independent tenant associations or organizing committees that meet HUD standards in 3-4 targeted Section 8 developments per year, averaging 150 apartments per development.
    - Help tenants identify critical areas of need and goals and strategies for selected buildings.
    - Coordinate tenant efforts to engage owners, public officials, and HUD and other agencies to preserve and improve targeted properties.
    - Assist tenant associations in networking and building alliances with other tenant associations and allies in their local areas and nationwide.
    - Assist targeted tenant associations in obtaining services through negotiation with owners and referrals to other agencies.

- **Work with the National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT):** Assist sponsor in raising funds for at least one tenant leader to attend the June NAHT training conference in DC; Participate in bi-weekly NAHT Network training calls and NAHT Network task forces; Help plan and arrange for tenant participation in regional “Eyes and Ears” meetings between tenant associations and HUD HQ and Regional staff; Develop written reports on “best practices” and victory stories.

- **Leadership Development:** The organizer will constantly work to develop the skills, capacity and analysis of our members through informal and formal leadership development work. The organizer will work to encourage participation and a sense of ownership among members.

- **Actively Participate in and Develop our Organizational Capacity:** This includes participating in and prepping members to facilitate our monthly CASA Membership Meetings, creating and facilitating regular workshops specific to housing rights, laws and processes, seeking out training and learning opportunities...
opportunities, keeping up with database and reporting requirements and thinking through ways to develop CASA into the organization it can and should be.

**DESIRED EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS:** A strong track record of a commitment to social justice; ability to communicate, listen and motivate people to action from diverse backgrounds; willingness to work with a team, be creative and take risks; computer literate; ability to work nights and weekends as necessary. English/Spanish bilingual skills preferred.

**STIPEND AND BENEFITS OFFERED:** $15,312, health insurance, and a $5,550 Educational Stipend available upon completion of the program. Great opportunities for learning, growth and development.

**TO APPLY:** fill out an online application at: https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?id=58341&fromSearch=true
And send your resume and cover letter to s.blankley@newsettlement.org with the subject line VISTA POSITION. No phone calls please.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** www.casapower.org @CASABronx