



### **Position Description: Community Development Specialist**

North River Commission (NRC) seeks a full-time Community Development Specialist. Excellent candidates will be dynamic and engaging with strong skills in community engagement, compassion, communications, and project management. This position serves as staff to the Economic Development, Environment, and Arts and Culture Committees. The Community Development Specialist reports to and is supported by the Executive Director.

### **Summary**

The Community Development Specialist is essential in developing and maintaining strategic partnerships among stakeholders that result in impactful solutions. The position collaborates with team members on public art, placemaking, community-engaged planning and development, and events. The position works with the Executive Director on securing financial support for projects. All NRC positions engage with our communities, including civic associations, organizations, institutions, businesses, government, as well as NRC leaders to set priorities. The position works in a team where responsibilities are shared and collaboration is essential. NRC's work is grounded in equity and social justice, and NRC creates equity, opportunity and prosperity for all.

### **Background**

North River Commission is a community-based nonprofit organization founded 61 years ago in 1962 by concerned residents and neighborhood institutions. NRC unites 100's of civic associations, businesses, schools, institutions and places of worship on the Northwest Side of Chicago to improve the quality of life for all constituents in our community by creating affordable housing, quality education, community health and safety, arts & cultural endeavors, environmental sustainability, open spaces, and thriving neighborhood businesses. NRC's service area encompasses Addison to Devon, the Chicago River to Cicero.

### **Responsibilities**

Responsibilities listed are for the Economic Development team along with specific responsibilities for the Arts and Culture and Environment programs. Objectives are shared across the team members through cross training and collaboration. Over a year, all team members will lead or assist on these responsibilities. Many projects combine community priorities of all three work areas, economic development, environment and arts, which reflects the agency's holistic approach to community development.

### **Economic Development**

- Manage the array of public art projects, particularly murals, sculptures, and other installations throughout NRC's service area, including the commercial districts in Albany Park, Irving Park, and North Park, working directly with artists and with collaborators.
- Produce annual placemaking summer concert series, Lot Jams!, including selection of musicians, sound engineer, and venues. Manage the project including securing funding,

marketing, and volunteer engagement.

- Achieve program objectives for the Our Great Rivers funded project, Confluence, which include positive economic development along the Lawrence commercial corridor from the North Branch to Kedzie. Work closely with Chicago Park District project leads and contractors to deliver improvements to Ronan Park at Lawrence, along with TIF-funded riverside improvements at River Park, Legion Park, Kiwanis Park and Northside College Prep.
- Manage the agency's collaboration on the Nature Near Transit project with Center for Neighborhood Technology, Elevated Chicago, along with contractors and other stakeholders.
- Collaborate with Economic Development Committee, board leadership and community stakeholders to establish annual priorities through community engagement and strategic partnerships.
- Work effectively in a team of specialists and directors to achieve shared objectives and report on performance to community stakeholders including board members, peer agencies, and funders.

#### Open Spaces and Environment

- Work closely with Urban Rivers on the joint project funded by a NFWF grant to install in-stream habitats in the North Branch.
- Promote and improve environmental sustainability, especially improving storm water management to prevent urban flood and combined sewer overflows, along with good stewardship of natural resources, in particular the North Branch of the Chicago River and the North Shore Channel.
- Enhance the multi-use trails network in the service area including on-street facilities, in parks, and along riverbanks, in collaboration with Active Transportation Alliance, Chicago DOT, Alderpeople, area civic associations, and other agency and community partners.
- Provide stewardship and planning for North Park Village as a community asset by supporting the North Park Village Advisory Council and collaborating with area civic associations, Chicago Park District, Openlands, Chicago AIS, 39th Ward, EHDOC, Chicago Dept of Housing, and other agency and community stakeholders.
- Enhance community participation and stewardship of parks, particularly through support for Park Advisory Councils (PACs) across the service area.

#### Arts and Culture

- Supporting and participating in public art and placemaking projects above.
- Expanding arts and cultural offerings in the service area to support local arts providers and to reflect and celebrate cultural diversity and experiences within the service area.
- Supporting the Arts Committee and community stakeholders in shaping and realizing their arts and cultural priorities.

#### Organization

- Collaborate with NRC staff, leaders, and community members for delivery of NRC objectives and engagement of communities to identify and prioritize actions through meetings, direct

outreach, and organizing.

- Actively participate in forums, meetings and strategy sessions with community members and key stakeholders.
- With staff and board members, identify and secure funding for community priorities from philanthropic, government, corporate and individual sources.

### **Requirements**

- Bachelor's degree
- Highly collaborative with strong community organizing skills and experience with significant responsibility in project management, outreach, and building partnerships.
- Ability to build relationships in a mission-based environment that fosters support for NRC programs.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills, including professional and clear public speaking and presentations.
- Bilingual ability in Spanish is preferred, also present in our communities are Arabic, Korean, Tagalog, Urdu, and Gujarati.
- Respects and embraces equity, diversity and social justice when interacting with peers, supervisors, community partners, landlords, and residents.
- Ability and commitment to working with diverse communities and organizations, including diverse socio-economic, racial, ethnic, religious, and other identity communities.
- A commitment to community-based work and a desire to work in a flexible, friendly office environment and out in the community.
- Confidence in managing multiple projects in a demanding, deadline-driven, team-oriented environment.
- Experience in and knowledge of Albany Park, Irving Park and North Park Community Areas, preferred.
- Availability to attend evening and weekend programs, events, and community meetings. Travel within the City of Chicago, especially the community areas of Albany Park, Irving Park and North Park is required for programs, events, and meetings.
- Excellent computer skills.

### **Additional Details**

Salary is commensurate with work experience and the anticipated range is \$49,000 to \$57,000. Benefits include excellent health, dental and vision benefits. Paid time off is provided for vacation, holidays, sick time, family leave, and medical leave.

Workplace is in the community and in the office, with limited flexibility to work from home depending on work responsibilities and in-person meetings. Work schedule is primarily weekdays Monday through Friday and depends on community outreach responsibilities that will require some morning, evening and occasional weekend work hours.

Position is open until filled, and the start date is anticipated as soon as practical. North River Commission is an equal opportunity employer.

NRC staff are required to provide proof of up-to-date COVID 19 vaccination and booster shots. A background check is required.

**Application**

Qualified individuals should submit a cover letter, resume, and two references including name, email and phone number.

Send application by email to:

Thomas Applegate, Executive Director: [thomasapplegate@northrivercommission.org](mailto:thomasapplegate@northrivercommission.org)

No phone inquiries.