Research Fellow Job Description: Winter & Spring 2022

About WaterNow. WaterNow Alliance is a national network of local water leaders advancing sustainable, affordable, and climate resilient water solutions in their communities. We focus on innovative strategies to accelerate adoption of reuse and efficiency technologies, green infrastructure, watershed health, stormwater recapture, and groundwater management. Our goal is to support communities to become as water resilient as possible, as cost-effectively as possible, while protecting our natural resources for generations to come. WaterNow is a project of Multiplier, a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor organization.

About the Research Fellowship. WaterNow is seeking a Research Fellow for a six month fellowship to support our project to identify the major obstacles limiting adoption of green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) as a management strategy in Southwest Pennsylvania. The project focuses on determining community-readiness in the region to finance and implement green infrastructure projects at larger scale. The Fellowship provides recent law school or master’s program graduates the opportunity to gain valuable experience with a fast-growing sustainability-focused non-profit through hands on tasks and real responsibility. This is a remote position and may be extended depending on funding availability.

Project Description. Families, homes and communities across Southwestern Pennsylvania have been vulnerable to adverse health and safety impacts of stormwater and sewage overflows for decades, impacts exacerbated by the changing climate and that disproportionately affect the economically disadvantaged and people of color. The Research Fellow will be an integral part of meeting this project’s objective to advance financial and political solutions to scale community-wide adoption of, and support for, green stormwater infrastructure as a key strategy for addressing stormwater management.

Fellowship Accountabilities. The Research Fellow’s specific objectives will include:

1) Analyze stormwater issues facing communities in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties, and identify opportunities to engage with municipal leaders to address these issues;
2) Document decision-maker perceptions regarding local stormwater challenges, and what they understand about the range of strategies available and financing options;
3) Identify 6-10 communities well-situated to explore larger-scale GSI implementation; and
4) Explore additional partners to support the positioning GSI as a central element of local planning, budgeting, and financing to address stormwater management in smaller communities in the region.

To meet these objectives, the Fellow will engage in the following research and analysis tasks:

- Conduct a minimum of 12 in-depth interviews with local leaders regarding barriers to financing and related green stormwater implementation issues;
- Identify key drivers for local investment in green stormwater infrastructure;
• Create municipal profiles of communities in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties with information on community governance, demographic, and utility information;
• Develop a database of local stormwater and public finance ordinances and regulations to inform which communities are well-situated to explore larger-scale green stormwater implementation based on municipal codes, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits governing municipal separate storm sewer systems, Long-term Control Plans governing combined sewer systems, and other related local policies and programs;
• Synthesize interviews, drivers, and legal and policy research to identify at least six communities in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties that have the desire, capacity, and leadership to implement green stormwater initiatives.

The Research Fellow will make significant contributions to the following project outputs:
• A detailed power-mapping document outlining key decision-makers and processes related to GSI in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties; and
• A detailed report outlining at least 6 communities in the region with the interest, capacity, and leadership to implement green stormwater initiatives.

A strong candidate will possess the following attributes:
• Excellent writing and research skills
• Organized with strong attention to detail
• Demonstrated commitment to and experience in sustainable water policy
• Working knowledge of the Clean Water Act and other federal environmental statutes
• Experience with or interest in local government
• Proficiency with MS Word and Excel
• High degree of professionalism, strong work ethic

Qualifications and Requirements
• Recent law school or master’s program graduate; Bar admission not required
• Available beginning January through June 2022
• Commitment of 25 hours per week

Compensation and Benefits
This is a part-time, contractor position with compensation of $32-$35 per hour, depending on skill and experience. We are not able to offer additional benefits for this position at this time.

To Apply. Please send a cover letter, resume, and writing sample to Water Policy Director Caroline Koch, at cak@waternow.org. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Email cak@waternow.org with questions.