

Program Officer, Policy & Research

Center for Community Progress Job Description

Job Title	Program Officer, Policy & Research
Reports To	Vice President, Policy & Research
Date	March 5, 2024
Location	Washington, DC (hybrid with possibility for remote)

Center for Community Progress

As a national nonprofit, our mission is to foster strong, equitable communities where vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties are transformed into assets for neighbors and neighborhoods. We are former practitioners and policymakers who understand that today's neighborhoods have been shaped by decades of unjust and racist land use and financing policies—and we are driven by the promise of safe, healthy, resilient, and inclusive neighborhoods that provide opportunity and dignity for all.

The expertise and passion of our staff is unmatched, and Community Progress is highly regarded as the nation's leading resource for urban, suburban, and rural communities seeking to equitably address the full cycle of property revitalization. In all our work, we seek to ensure that all communities have the policies, tools, and resources they need to transform vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties. Our state-of-the-art technical assistance has been provided to more than 300 communities in over 35 states and our educational programming has reached tens of thousands across the United States.

More information is available at www.communityprogress.org.

Job Summary

The Center for Community Progress is seeking an experienced, innovative, and perceptive applicant to serve as Program Officer, Policy & Research, joining a small team of passionate thought leaders and technical experts who care deeply about racial equity and justice. Recognizing the barriers vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties create to fostering equitable communities, this individual will work alongside some of the nation's top experts on topics such as land banking, alternative land use, delinquent property tax enforcement, and housing and building code enforcement.

Community Progress's policy priorities focus on federal, state, and local policy related to neighborhood stabilization and revitalization through the prevention and reuse of vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties. The Program Officer will support this policy education, research, government relations, and issue advocacy work. They will collaborate with the Vice President, Policy & Research in shaping, implementing, and managing policy and research efforts.

The ideal applicant for the position will have (1) experience in public policy advocacy/analysis and government relations, (2) a natural comfort working with diverse audiences, and (3) a shared passion and deep commitment to building equitable, inclusive communities that provide opportunities for all.

This position is full time. Our preference is to have this position operate from the organization's Washington DC office, on a hybrid-remote-office work schedule. In its pursuit to build a nation-leading team of highly skilled diverse experts, Community Progress may consider a remote location for this position and some flexibility for working hours.

Duties and Essential Job Functions

- Monitor and analyze federal and state policy and legislative developments related to community development and revitalization, with a particular focus on vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties
- Work with the Vice President, Policy & Research program staff to support the development of an organizational policy agenda and positions on key policy issues related to:
 - property vacancy, abandonment, and deterioration, and their root causes
 - housing insecurity
 - fair and equitable access to quality, affordable housing
 - code enforcement, nuisance abatement, and property tax enforcement systems
 - rental housing and landlord-tenant issues, particularly in low- and moderate-income communities
 - housing finance, mortgage foreclosure, and property tax foreclosure
 - tangled title issues associated with heirs' properties or family properties
 - access to capital for Black, Brown and Indigenous communities that have been systemically denied homeownership opportunity
 - other issues related to community disinvestment and neighborhood stabilization
- Develop issue briefs, public comment letters, factsheets, talking points, hearing testimony, blogs, newsletters, op-eds, and other resources, ensuring timely completion of high-quality deliverables
- Track and analyze vacancy-related trends; assess the need for policy or legislative solutions at the federal, state, and local levels; and work to identify or develop proposed solutions
- Support Community Progress in building key strategic partnerships and relationships, including with nonprofit partners and congressional and executive branch offices to support policy, outreach, education, and reform efforts at the federal level
- Support internal projects and help brainstorm new initiatives and programs that connect policy and research work with other programs.
- Help identify opportunities for policy reforms in targeted states and work with state and local partners to build, inform, and/or sustain state-level coalitions around these reforms
- Provide policy and research support to the National Land Bank Network, the Rental Research Community of Practice, and other organization initiatives and program areas

- Help ensure Community Progress' advocacy and policy efforts are informed by research and best practices
- Develop and manage special projects that help improve how Community Progress and the field address the negative impacts of vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties, with a strong focus on racial and economic justice
- Be willing to travel up to 20 percent of the time, as conditions allow
- Attend staff, coalition, and other relevant meetings virtually and in-person as necessary
- Provide additional support as assigned by the Vice President, Policy & Research

Reporting Relationships

This position does not have any full-time staff directly reporting to them, but opportunities to supervise interns may arise in the future.

Qualifications

The Program Officer, Policy & Research must have:

- A demonstrated commitment to public and community service with an enthusiasm for Community Progress's mission and a shared commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Awareness of the history of unjust policies that have contributed to disinvested communities and racial inequities, and a commitment to working collaboratively with leaders in the field to develop new policies and programs that prioritize racial and economic justice
- Knowledge of and prior work experience and/or lived experience related to the challenges facing urban, suburban, and rural communities as they relate to vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties
- High quality research and data analysis skills including the ability to present research and analysis through visual and digital media, (ideally including ArcGIS mapping tools)
- Exceptional attention to detail and an ability to work well under pressure and tight deadlines
- Interpersonal skills that embody collaboration and a team-oriented approach
- Willingness to think creatively, ask questions, and share ideas
- Ability to lead projects, work independently, and be an organized and effective manager of own and other team members' work
- A clear and courteous communication style when working with various audiences
- Excellent analytical, research, and writing skills, experience in legislative and regulatory drafting and analysis, including the ability to summarize and synthesize on-the-ground observations and

link those observations to strategic recommendations related to policy, practice, programs, and partnerships

- Strong public speaking skills, ability to make complex and technical information accessible to a wide variety of audiences
- Strong relationship-building skills, commitment to nonpartisanship, and a demonstrated ability to collaborate with individuals, groups, and policymakers with opposing points of view and diverse political perspectives
- Strong problem-solving skills and ability to think creatively

Required

- A minimum of two years of experience in the public sector (local/state/federal government) and/or nonprofit sector with a focus on community development, housing, or other closely related experience,
- A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

Preferred

- A minimum of four years of experience working on federal or state policy related to systems that impact vacancy and abandonment, including but not limited to, municipal finance, housing finance, delinquent property tax enforcement, housing and building code enforcement, public land acquisition and disposition, rental regulation, civil rights, and fair housing
- A JD or master's degree in public policy or other related field

Candidate's additional education may substitute for experience, and additional experience may substitute for education.

Salary and Benefits

The Center for Community Progress is offering a salary for the position of Program Officer between \$70,000 and \$75,000 annually, commensurate with experience or skillsets. Actual salary and position title may be based on several factors including, but not limited to, a candidate's skill set, experience, education, work location, and other qualifications. Additionally, the Center for Community Progress provides an excellent and comprehensive benefits package that includes medical, dental, vision, 401k match, access to flexible spending or health savings accounts, and generous personal time off benefits.

Application Instructions

Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, resume, and one writing sample [via this online form](#) by **March 29, 2024**.

Equal Opportunity Employment

The Center for Community Progress (Community Progress) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, or sex in administration of its programs or activities, nor does it intimidate or retaliate against any individual or group because they have exercised their rights to participate in actions protected, or oppose action prohibited, by 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, or for the purpose of interfering with such rights. Community Progress' Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning non-discrimination requirements implemented by 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7.

If you have any questions, or believe that you have been discriminated against with respect to a Community Progress activity, you may **contact** Courtney Knox, CAO, at cknox@communityprogress.org or at (877) 542-4842 ext. 154. You may also visit our website for more information: <https://communityprogress.org/notice-of-non-discrimination/>.