



AmeriCorps Vista - Economic Development Associate Job Description

REPORTS TO: Director of Economic Development

The Economic Development Associate will play a major part of the revitalization of the historic Lorain Avenue shopping district through a community-led Master Plan, by engaging and providing ongoing updates to stakeholders, residents and partners. The VISTA project is to assist the Director of Economic Development in the development of a new Lorain Avenue Master Plan.

POSITION SUMMARY

By building upon the Southwest Detroit Shoreway Master Plan Update from February 2016 (<https://www.cudc.kent.edu/detroitshoreway-southwest-master-plan>), the Lorain Avenue Master Plan is a strategic, revitalization effort to guide physical development of Lorain Avenue from W. 81st St to W. 45th street. This strategic master plan will serve as a guide to the community for long term growth from a high-level perspective. As a living planning document, the Master Plan will provide framework for future growth of the district.

This plan will preserve Lorain Avenue's unique character (historic, antique, vintage), ensure diversity, support new investment in this area (we have seen in other parts of the neighborhood), promote desired change, enhance the livability and quality of life for residents, identify & unite short & long term visions of the community, attract private investment, engage the local community, help prioritize work plans and enable clear & consistent decision making. Strategic priorities include economy, livability, health & safety, transportation, culture/entertainment, efficient/high performance from CDC & local government.

Recommendations will be grouped into short-term and long-term actions, in order to build social cohesion and community buy-in and work toward providing larger development opportunities and infrastructure improvement strategies. We will work with the community in identifying and evaluating development alternatives by more clearly defining the future needs of the community and maintaining community focus throughout the planning process.

Planning outline:

1. *June 2023-October 2023* Engage community to create community supported, vision, goals and

objectives through online surveys, public visioning, community meetings, open house events & other engagement opportunities. This builds on the capacity of NWN to design, implement and execute effective marketing and volunteer engagement surrounding the foundation of the Lorain Avenue Master Plan.

2. *August 2023-October 2023* Gather and analyze data to understand and identify possible future conditions that might drive the need for change. This includes financials, operations, conditions of assets, population and population forecasts, demographics, land use, capital improvement projects, upcoming development/investment, stakeholder & community needs. Vista will create a database to analyze, track and maintain this data specific to Lorain Avenue w81-w45.

3. *October 2023-December 2023* Building off the 2016 Master Plan Update, identify and narrow options. Compare pro/con to each data segment, idealize best use of current land and resources to encourage growth, consider a variety of development options based on data collected from community engagement.

4. *December 2023-February 2024* Prepare strategy by prioritizing guiding principles and development projects. Fill existing gaps and address community preferences. Hold property owners accountable.

5. *February 2024- June 2024* Manage and Track performance. By establishing key performance indicators, NWN will be able to track measures that reflect performance and structure tasks effectively through a reporting system to collect analytics and decisions. As a living document, the master plan will be consistently reviewed with updates reported to constituents/community to keep them updated on changes and milestones throughout process.

The Economic Development Associate will be responsible for economic development, coordination and implementation of commercial retail district revitalization of the Historic Lorain Avenue Shopping District corridor.

These responsibilities include the following goals to lay the foundation for the Lorain Avenue Master Plan; Convening community meetings/public engagement sessions to collect data and information to formulate goals and objectives (and identifying the best way to engage the community) for the master plan, execute a viability study of Lorain Avenue between w81st street and w45th street, create and maintain a detailed property & land inventory of Lorain Avenue through county and city databases, Identify existing gaps in physical/social infrastructure in order to bridge gaps in the master plan, analyze and assess data collected to create economic development strategies, assist Economic Development Director in the preparation of master plan, monitor progress & feedback from business owners, residents and stakeholders while updating the community regularly on the development of the master plan. As a member in the VISTA program, you will serve in this role full time, for one-year.

Required Skills:

- Be 18 years or older
- Hold one of the following citizenship or legal residency statuses: US citizen, US National, Lawful Permanent Resident (i.e. Green Card status), and persons legally residing within a state. Examples of persons legally residing within a state may include those holding the following classifications: refugee,

asylee, temporary protected status throughout VISTA service, and holding Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.

- Communications
- Community Organizing
- Public Speaking
- Writing/Editing
- Grant Writing
- General Skills

Desired Skills:

- Architectural/Planning
- Business/Entrepreneur
- Public Service
- Spanish speaking a plus (we serve a 30% Spanish speaking population)

Join over 7,000 AmeriCorps members in the VISTA program who serve annually to alleviate poverty by helping local organizations expand capacity to make change. As an AmeriCorps member in the VISTA program, you will support an organization to make sustainable change in areas that effect poverty, including education, public health, climate, access to benefits, and more. Through activities such as fundraising, grant writing, research, and volunteer recruitment, you will gain professional experience and leadership skills. This opportunity prepares you for a life of service in the public, private, or nonprofit sector.

Join thousands of members in the AmeriCorps VISTA program who are united in our mission to lift people and communities out of poverty. You will build capacity in nonprofit organizations and public agencies to help them more effectively generate the commitment of private sector resources, encourage volunteer service at the local level, and empower individuals and communities.

VISTA Benefits:

Living Allowance

You receive a modest bi-weekly living allowance to cover basic expenses.

Professional Development Training

You have the opportunity to attend in-person and virtual training to learn how to be a community development change agent.

Non-Competitive Eligibility

Once you've successfully completed service in AmeriCorps VISTA, you will receive one year of non-competitive eligibility for employment in the federal government.

This special hiring status enables you to apply for federal jobs with the advantage of not having to go through the standard public competitive selection process. That means that you can be appointed to federal positions that may not be available to the general public. In addition, your application could be processed faster than others. NCE does not guarantee you a federal job, but it does provide a valuable opportunity!

End of Service Award

Members can choose between a Segal Education Award (valued at approximately \$6,495) to pay for a range of education expenses or a \$1,800 cash stipend.

Learn more about the VISTA program at Americorps.gov

To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to Chelsey Kovar, Director of Economic Development at ckovar@nwneighborhoods.org with the subject "VISTA Application".