



## **Full-time Legal Fellowship Announcement – March 1, 2017**

**Position Title:** VISTA Affordable Housing Preservation Project (VAHPP) Legal Fellow

**Reports to:** Director, Litigation & Housing Justice

**Location of Fellowship:** Chicago, Illinois

### **Organizational Description**

The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law (Shriver Center) is a not-for-profit organization that provides national leadership in advancing laws and policies that secure justice to improve the lives and opportunities of people living in poverty. We work directly to win positive change through our specific advocacy initiatives, and we provide a range of professional development resources that build and support the national network of advocates engaged in those efforts. We engage in a broad range of interrelated policy areas and accomplish our mission through programs involving legislative and administrative advocacy and education, policy development, litigation, organizing, communications, and training.

*At the Shriver Center, we know that a richly diverse mix of professionals makes organizations more effective. As such, we make demographic and experiential diversity a hallmark and priority of all our work.*

### **Position Description:**

Reporting to the Director, Litigation & Housing Justice, the VISTA Affordable Housing Preservation Project (VAHPP) Legal Fellow 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 in Chicago to preserve affordable housing and increase tenant capacity building regarding their rights, responsibilities, and options for preservation and improvement of their communities. The VAHPP Legal Fellow's primary responsibilities will be as follows:

- Provide generalized support and legal information to VISTA organizers;
- Support VISTA organizers in developing formal by-laws and incorporating tenant associations of residents;
- Interview residents and conduct research to properly identify the legal challenges of each relevant building;
- Attend membership meetings and present "Know your Rights and Responsibilities" workshops;
- Support tenant associations in meetings with HUD representatives;
- Draft correspondence to HUD on behalf of tenant associations;
- Document and file administrative complaints with HUD regarding environmental hazards, substandard management, and general quality of life issues;
- Recruit and assist pro bono attorneys to support the project;
- Advise tenant associations and organizing sites regarding the best course of action to build tenant associations and preserve affordable housing;
- Assist organizing groups to assemble technical assistance teams where tenant ownership or nonprofit financing is determined to be the best course of action;





- Provide litigation support to legal host site staff (can include legal research and writing, client interviews, assistance with administrative hearings, discovery and trial preparation) as it relates to VAHPP.

### **Minimum Qualifications:**

- J.D., licensed to practice law in Illinois (recent law-school graduates who are awaiting February bar results are also welcome to apply)
- Excellent oral/written communication skills
- Proficient in Internet research and Microsoft Word
- Excellent organization and time-management skills
- Dedicated, independent, and detail-oriented worker committed to the Shriver Center's policy issues

### **Preferred or Desirable Qualifications**

- Familiarity with housing issues
- Experience working in racially and economically diverse communities
- Fluency in a second language

### **Salary/Benefits:**

Please note that this is a volunteer position with benefits funded by the Americorps\*Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) program. Benefits include a monthly living allowance, a health plan, a housing stipend, training, a transportation stipend and after successful completion of the term – an Education Award that can be used to repay students loans or for future education expenses. Federal student loans may be deferred during the 12-month commitment.

### **Deadlines:**

This position has a start date of April 1, 2017..

### **How to Apply:**

To be considered for this position, please send a cover letter, resume, short writing sample, and references to Kate Walz at [hr@povertylaw.org](mailto:hr@povertylaw.org). For more information, visit our website at [www.povertylaw.org](http://www.povertylaw.org).

