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**People United for Sustainable Housing, Inc. (PUSH Buffalo)
Community Energy Specialist
Full-time Staff Position
January 2, 2018**

Background

PUSH Buffalo is a member led community-based organization located on the West Side of Buffalo, NY. PUSH's mission is to mobilize residents to create strong neighborhoods with quality, affordable housing, expand local hiring opportunities and to advance economic justice in Buffalo. Central to this mission is a theory of change grounded in issue-based organizing, leadership development, community control of resources, and democratically planned neighborhood development. In 2008, as part of a participatory planning process, PUSH designated a 30-block area on the West Side the Green Development Zone (GDZ). The GDZ is an alternative community development strategy that integrates sustainable design and construction practices; concentrated building retrofit investment and corollary training for jobs in the renewable energy and energy efficiency retrofit sectors; community-based renewable energy project development; urban agriculture; stormwater management; and community planning and organizing toward the goal of building a sustainable and resilient community-controlled economy.

In 2014, New York State launched a sweeping clean energy reform agenda called Reforming the Energy Vision (REV). REV seeks to transform the state's energy industry and regulatory structure to enable deployment of new forms of affordable distributed renewable energy generation and energy efficiency. Regulatory and policy developments under REV, such as community net metering and community choice aggregation, present communities with unprecedented opportunities to engage in planning for their energy future by deciding on procurement options and ownership models for renewable energy projects, while also improving energy affordability, creating living wage green jobs, and mitigating the environmental and health impacts of electricity generation and fossil fuel dependence.

In Summer 2017, PUSH launched a new community energy planning initiative - REVitalize: REV in Action! - in the GDZ aimed at advancing key principles of a community just transition to a regenerative energy economy. PUSH was joined by several environmental justice organizations in New York City in implementing REVitalize planning projects across communities and has begun to share the results of those efforts, including lessons

learned, with NYS agencies and members of Governor Cuomo's energy team in ways that inform public policy and program development. PUSH plans to complete the first low income community solar project in NYS in Summer 2018 on the back of its REVitalize planning efforts. As part of a new parallel NYSEDA REVitalize initiative kicking off in 2018, PUSH will be joining additional REVitalize partners from NYC and upstate NY to form a community of practice that develops and disseminates key learnings to other communities.

Position Description and Responsibilities

The Specialist will lead clean energy education, research, planning, and project implementation efforts in the community with the goal of developing replicable participatory planning processes, drafting comprehensive community energy plans, and completing community distributed energy projects that maximize community benefits and create opportunities for community control and co-ownership. The Specialist will work with and report to the Director of Policy and Strategy, and will collaborate as needed with additional PUSH staff and Departments. The Specialist will co-convene and coordinate a standing PUSH member-led Energy Democracy Committee.

Specific responsibilities of this position include:

- Community Outreach – Conduct targeted outreach to community members and stakeholders around community education, planning, and project implementation activities and opportunities. Outreach could include door-to-door canvassing, leafletting, phone banking, tabling, and other public appearances.
- Community Energy Education - Design and implement community education workshops for residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. Workshops will use popular education methods and practices to build and deepen basic understanding of the existing energy system, and non-extractive alternatives to the existing system. Workshops will also seek to increase technical understanding of particular distributed renewable energy technologies, along with their feasibility and application in community-based projects.
- Research and Assessment – Conduct baseline research using available primary and secondary data that documents existing community energy needs and assets at the individual, household, and community levels. Enlist community members and other stakeholders in the research process as needed. Assess and document the distributed renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy storage development potential within the community, or outside the community if significant direct benefits (e.g., energy savings, jobs) can be provided to low income residents and small businesses on the West Side. Research and develop innovative business models for community controlled and owned clean energy, including models for project finance, aligned with existing local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Support PUSH's clean energy policy advocacy agenda with research-based recommendations, and participate in local and state advocacy efforts as directed.
- Community Energy Planning – Design and implement replicable community planning and decision-making processes that leverage and expand participation in PUSH's member-led Energy Democracy Committee. Ground community planning and decision making in analyses of baseline research and assessment, and the lived experiences of community residents. Coordinate participation by stakeholders, e.g., the Buffalo Public School District, the Buffalo Fire Department, Buffalo State College, City and County government, in planning activities. Planning activities will seek to generate actionable plans for individual projects as well as an overall strategy for a community controlled just transition from fossil fuels. Document lessons learned.
- Project Management – Manage clean energy project pre-development and development activities for PUSH-owned and controlled projects. Coordinate pre-development and development activities with PUSH departments, contractors, workforce and financial partners, and local and state governmental

agencies. Provide technical assistance as needed to community residents and small businesses interested in developing clean energy projects as part of an overall community just transition strategy.

- Leadership Development – Track participation in community education workshops and planning activities. Conduct 1-on-1 leadership development meetings with workshop and planning participants. Work with participants to establish individual leadership development benchmarks and goals, and track progress in meeting benchmarks and goals.
- Work Planning and Reporting – Develop weekly and quarterly written work plans and submit to Department supervisor for approval. Complete internal monthly activity and progress reports for the PUSH Board of Directors. Support the completion of external reporting requirements as needed. Support the dissemination of best practices and lessons learned within other communities through participation in e.g., online webinars, conference calls, conferences, neighborhood walking tours, and other public appearances. Participate in regularly scheduled calls with REVitalize project partners.
- Training and Professional Development – Participate in all mandatory staff meetings, trainings, and professional development opportunities.

Qualifications

The Community Energy Specialist must have excellent written and oral communication and analytical skills, must be well-organized and able to demonstrate cultural competence while collaborating in the community with PUSH staff and members, local residents, institutional stakeholders, as well as REVitalize project partners including NYS government officials. Applied knowledge of renewable energy and energy efficiency principles, practices, technologies, and business models is essential. Basic proficiency with email, word processing, and spreadsheets is required. Experience using web-based mapping platforms and software such as Loveland and GIS is desirable. Candidates with professional experience and/or educational credentials in one or more of the following areas will be strongly considered for the position - renewable energy and energy efficiency project management/development, policy research, law, urban planning, popular education, community organizing, or business and financial planning.

Preference will be given to candidates who have experience and competence with issues of economic, environmental, and racial justice, either professionally or through life experience.

Compensation will be determined based on experience.

How to apply: Interested candidates should submit a letter of application, resume, and contact information for two professional references. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. PUSH anticipates a mid-February 2018 start date. Application materials will only be accepted by email, and should be sent to:

Clarke Gocker
Director of Policy and Strategy
PUSH Buffalo
clarke@pushbuffalo.org

The letter of application will be a critical document for determining who will be interviewed for this position. The letter should be 2-4 pages and summarize relevant experience and skills. The letter should also discuss why the candidate is enthusiastic to assume the responsibilities of this position.

Women, people of color, and people who identify as LGBTQ are strongly encouraged to apply!