ACLS Leading Edge Fellowship

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<tr>
<th>Project:</th>
<th>Mapping Civic Solutions to Ensure Fair Use of Public Resources in Puerto Rico</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Sembrando Sentido (San Juan, PR)</td>
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<td>Location:</td>
<td>Remote</td>
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<td>Stipend:</td>
<td>$60,000 per year, plus health insurance and professional development funding</td>
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<td>Start Date:</td>
<td>September 2021</td>
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ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Sembrando Sentido is a non-profit organization that seeks to harvest knowledge, tools and inspiration to strengthen efforts for more transparent, responsible, fair, inclusive and efficient government practices in Puerto Rico. We drive government reform by making Puerto Rico’s government data truly open and building knowledge and power in our communities to improve, monitor and safeguard the use of public resources. At present, we focus on public contracting as this is the area with the highest risk of corruption, implementing initiatives such as i) carrying out the first in-depth evaluation on public contracting; ii) developing a digital platform that centralizes data to help citizens monitor public contracting, and iii) providing social accountability and monitoring tools to help citizens use contracting data to oversee and protect public contracting spending, and ensure fair and equitable impact. To learn more about Sembrando Sentido, visit: www.sembrandosentido.org and www.contratosenley.org

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Sembrando Sentido was born amidst severe social and economic challenges faced in Puerto Rico, and the recognition that a promising post-disaster recovery process requires an efficient and fair use of public resources. Regrettably, weak governance structures and obscurity around government practices persist, with public contracting presenting the highest risk of corruption, and threatening the remaining lifeline of many for the benefit of a few.

Corruption in public contracting can cost Puerto Rico anywhere between USD 740 Million and USD 3.1 billion a year (based on global Open Contracting Partnership estimates). Existing government weaknesses are further aggravated during emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, as the government receives and spends substantial funds in short periods of time, while further relaxing controls and transparency requirements in contracting and overall spending.

Starting in 2021, we are looking for a Research Manager able to help carry out an in-depth evaluation of methodologies, tools and mechanisms to further engage, mobilize and empower civil society in becoming active change agents of government reform in Puerto Rico, particularly in the areas of public financial management, public contracting, and anticorruption. These areas, while of critical importance to ensuring equal and fair economic and social development, are highly complex and technical, often intimidating and preventing citizens from forming active part in them. Thus, we are looking for solutions that have been successful in activating civil society across the globe and exploring their application to the context of Puerto Rico.

The Leading Edge Fellow will join Sembrando Sentido’s team as a Research Manager, to use qualitative and quantitative research methods to identify and test civic interventions that can help ensure public resources are protected, optimized, and used to promote social justice and equity in recovery. The researcher would lead the identification and assessment of adaptive and context friendly solutions, lead focus groups with organizational and external partners, help design interventions based on initial learnings, and help test their viability and impact potential on the ground. The Leading Edge Fellow will report to Sembrando Sentido’s Executive Director,
closely working with the Board of Directors, and other program staff. This is a full-time commitment for the fellowship year, including dedicated time for professional development activities.

Responsibilities and tasks:

- Work closely with the Executive Director, Board and staff members to develop a research methodology and plan
- Thoroughly evaluate tools and mechanisms used around the world to mobilize and empower civil society to become active agents of change in government reform in Puerto Rico, particularly in the areas of public financial management, public procurement, and anti-corruption measures
- Identify, document, and analyze identified solutions, impact, and lessons learned
- Identify organizations and experts to work with, in order to gather additional insights on civic engagement solutions, including preconditions, limitations and constraints
- Design small interventions based on initial learnings, to test the feasibility and effectiveness of one - three solutions on the ground. Work closely with the team to design pilot efforts, test and assess results
- Develop a final report with findings and recommendations for scaling-up the most promising solutions

Qualifications:

- PhD in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences. Read more about eligible fields here;
- A minimum of three years of direct exposure to civic activism efforts around the world (research or professionally related);
- Ability to work under time pressure, meet deadlines and prioritize tasks;
- Excellent writing and research presentation skills;
- Alignment with core values of the organization;
- Familiarity with both qualitative and quantitative analysis; position will not require sophisticated statistical methods but will require tabulation of basic data;
- Excellent organizational skills and detail-oriented approach;
- Willingness to work in a collaborative community organization environment, accountability to goals, and ability to work independently;
- Understanding of, and interest in developing cultural and historical competence.

Preferred:

- Previous research contributes to the scholarship and understanding of civic activism and empowerment for equity and social justice;
- Fluency in English and Spanish

APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: https://www.acls.org/Competitions-and-Deadlines/Leading-Edge-Fellowships
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org)
- Application deadline: 9pm EDT, May 6, 2021

This position is only available through the Leading Edge Fellowship program. You may not contact the host institution to inquire about this position.