ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

The Alliance for Community Transit-Los Angeles (ACT-LA) is a coalition of 42 organizations that fight for housing and transit justice in Los Angeles County. Our coalition strives to create just, equitable, sustainable transit systems and neighborhoods for all people in Los Angeles, placing the interest of low-income communities and communities of color first as we create a more sustainable region. Our coalition members include tenants’ rights organizations, affordable housing developers, workers’ centers, public interest law firms, and public health advocates. Our coalition members build up community leadership capacity to advance racial, economic, and environmental justice in the built environment. Many of our coalition members have roots in or reside alongside the communities we serve, thus fostering social solidarity and sustaining a multicultural civically engaged community.

ACT-LA runs policy campaigns through its Transit Justice and Housing & Land Use Justice Committees. ACT-LA members are advocating for community-led safety strategies on public transit, building organizational capacity to advocate for social housing, and leading an applied research lab to develop and scale decommodified housing models. In our campaign to reimagine safety on public transit, we focus on advocating to shift funding from Metro’s multi-agency police contracts because they have led to unjust outcomes for Black riders and other riders of color and been both wasteful of public resources and ineffective at providing riders any real and lasting sense of safety. We advocate for Metro to invest instead in care-based safety strategies such as frequent transit service, systems of social support, and environmental design. ACT-LA’s social housing campaign seeks to catalyze a permanently affordable, community-controlled housing model in LA. In our decommodify housing lab, we dissect unjust housing legacies in the U.S. and support community-led development of strategies to counter dominant market-based approaches to housing. To learn more about ACT-LA, visit allianceforcommunitytransit.org.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

ACT-LA seeks an Applied Research Specialist to join a small, high-capacity staff team. The coalition’s Applied Research Specialist would lead our coalition’s research efforts and support our ongoing advocacy, communications, and community organizing efforts in Los Angeles, CA. Presently, ACT-LA staff with support from coalition members work collectively to address the research needs identified in our campaigns. ACT-LA staff would ask the Specialist to coordinate, lead, and conduct research as appropriate. This position reports to ACT-LA’s Advocacy Manager. The Specialist would primarily support three of ACT-LA’s active campaigns, including our campaigns to reimagine safety on public transit, establish social housing in LA, and decommodify housing through an applied research lab of community groups and coalitions.

The Specialist would join ongoing coalition dialogue with ACT-LA staff, coalition members and community leaders to co-define and then lead and conduct research that strategically advances our campaigns. The specialist’s responsibilities could include critically analyzing public policy briefs and
data, interviewing or otherwise surveying community members about their lived experiences and preferences related to the built environment, and communicating our coalition’s policy priorities to various audience types and sizes. The Specialist could be asked to analyze data including descriptive statistics from sources such as the US Census; public agency budgets; transit agency user surveys; and public opinion polls. The Specialist might be asked to write and edit blog articles, white papers, reports that synthesize any research conducted, and/or materials to support public testimony on our campaigns.

Research data would uplift the lived experience of organized tenants, bus riders, and other community members. The Specialist would help build the coalition’s relationships with local LA university students, faculty, and professors. The Specialist could identify campaign needs for quantitative data and analysis, which might include statistical and spatial (GIS) analysis or visualization, and match those needs with local university-level courses or institutes where students or faculty could help fulfill those needs. The Specialist would serve as a point person for ACT-LA’s academic partnerships.

The fellowship tenure is 24 consecutive months, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

Responsibilities and tasks:

- Maintain positive relationships with ACT-LA staff, coalition members, and allied partners.
- Co-define, lead, and conduct research to advance ACT-LA’s policy advocacy and campaigns.
- Critically analyze public policy, qualitative data, and basic quantitative data.
- Respectfully interview or otherwise survey community members.
- Build relationships with academic partners at local LA universities to support our campaigns.

Qualifications:

- PhD in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences. Read more about eligible fields in our FAQ;
- Excellent writing and research presentation skills and project management aptitude;
- Deep, demonstrated commitment to racial justice;
- Positive, solution-oriented attitude; and experience building relationships across disciplines.

Preferred:

- Familiarity with Los Angeles’s and California’s political landscape;
- Experience working with grassroots community organizations;
- Fluency in Spanish language.

APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: https://www.acls.org/competitions/acls-leading-edge-fellowships/
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org)
- Application deadline: March 28, 2022, 9pm EDT