ACLS Leading Edge Fellowship

Position Title: Research Manager
Organization: Sembrando Sentido
Location: Remote
Stipend: $62,500 in the first year, $65,000 in the second year, plus health insurance and professional development funding
Start Date: September 2022

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Sembrando Sentido is a non-profit organization that seeks to harvest knowledge, tools and inspiration to strengthen efforts for more transparent, 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. To learn more about Sembrando Sentido, visit: www.sembrandosentido.org and www.contratosenley.org

POSITION 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 and fragile democratic institutions persist. Puerto Rico’s colonial status and its inherent disconnect between citizen needs and government actions, further creates little incentives for participation, and increases vulnerability and inequality. Still, fueled by the summer of 2019 political uprising, citizens’ resurgent interest to participate in and influence the decisions that affect them, presents a unique opportunity to break this undemocratic cycle.

Despite this civic reawakening, little is being done to assess improvements around civic empowerment efforts and their ability to promote stronger governance and democratic institutions in Puerto Rico. Research centers and initiatives such as the MIT Gov Lab and J-PAL are excellent sources of examples on anti-corruption and social empowerment research, but do not include Puerto Rico (or other colonies) as an independent geography of study. Organizations like Transparency International and Freedom House, and regional bodies such as the Inter-American Development Bank gather and analyze critical data and metadata on these issues but exclude Puerto Rico from such analyses. Exclusion from these data sources, limits our capacity to regularly evaluate progress in this area, determine its impact, and make the case for innovative interventions.

To this end, the ACLS Leading Edge Fellow would join Sembrando Sentido’s team as a Research Manager, under the direct supervision of the Executive Director. The Fellow would i) collaborate with organizations in the insertion of Puerto Rico into key indexes and research around civic empowerment, democracy, and governance, and ii) use qualitative and quantitative research methods to design and carry-out innovative research that can help address unique factors inherent in present colonial structures, and that affect or limit civic empowerment for social and economic justice. Desired project outcomes include the insertion of Puerto Rico in at least 2 relevant international indexes and conducting one research project to bring new insights on civic empowerment into the global research and policy discussion. These deliverables will also help stakeholders monitor progress on governance and democracy efforts in Puerto Rico and raise awareness around persisting challenges. The experience will also prepare the selected Fellow for future career opportunities in research on civic empowerment, democracy, and social justice.

This position is only available through the Leading Edge Fellowship program. You may not contact the host institution to inquire about this position.
The fellowship tenure is 24 consecutive months, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

**Responsibilities and tasks:**

- Work closely with the Executive Director, Board and staff members to develop a plan and research methodology, as well as carry-out the research.
- With support from Sembrando Sentido staff, select indexes, barometers, and other data/metadata sources that could help gather valuable data in relevant areas for Puerto Rico.
- Evaluate processes of inclusion into pre-selected data sources and work with Sembrando Sentido’s partner organizations to achieve insertion.
- Use Sembrando Sentido’s previous research to determine additional areas that need further analysis and develop methodology for a civic empowerment research project that could address existing gaps (regardless of inclusion into new data sources).
- Carry-out research, with the team’s assistance, and develop a final narrative report with findings and recommendations.
- Work closely with the Executive Director and team to produce briefing documents to help disseminate findings, and advocate for policy change.
- Assist in developing funding proposals for future research projects.

**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; if selected, finalists will be asked to submit research and writing sample;
- Familiarity with both qualitative and quantitative analysis; position will not require sophisticated statistical methods but will require tabulation of basic demographic data (language, nativity, etc.).
- Excellent organizational skills and detail-oriented approach;
- Willingness to work in a collaborative community organization environment, accountability to goals, and ability to work independently;
- Ability to work under time pressure, meet deadlines, and prioritize tasks;
- Alignment with Sembrando Sentido’s mission and values.

**Preferred:**

- Fluency in English and Spanish

**APPLICATIONS**

- Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: [https://www.acls.org/competitions/acls-leading-edge-fellowships/](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

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