



Groundwork Lawrence
Service Description
LISC AmeriCorps Member



Groundwork Lawrence

Groundwork Lawrence, Inc. (GWL) is a locally-based 501(c) 3 non-profit organization working to create sustainable environmental change through community-based partnerships. Groundwork's mission and operations are premised on the understanding that environmental conditions are inextricably linked to the economic and social health of a neighborhood. As a consequence, Groundwork is committed to “*changing places and changing lives*” through on-the-ground projects and programs that help to transform local communities. To accomplish this, GWL leads and supports a variety of partnership-driven efforts that bring together the public, private and non-profit sectors to solve complex environmental problems and sustain a long-term vision for neighborhood change and renewal. Our projects and programs are designed to:

- **Increase Opportunities for Physical Activity** through the development of parks, trails and recreational facilities that are safe, welcoming and accessible to all;
- **Increase Access to Healthy Food** by creating a citywide network of community gardens, supporting the Lawrence Downtown Farmer's Market and expanding opportunities for community-supported agriculture;
- **Improve the Quality of Our Air, Water and Land** through brownfield redevelopment, volunteer cleanups, tree planting, water quality monitoring, and integration of low-impact development techniques;
- **Support Biodiversity** by implementing habitat enhancement and restoration projects;
- **Reduce Energy Consumption** through the development of pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, encouragement of locally-grown food consumption, and the use of locally-sourced and recycled materials for project construction.
- **Prepare young people** to be positive role models and future leaders in their community.

The formal mission of the organization is “to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships which empower people, businesses and organizations to promote environmental, economic and social well-being.”

Background on Lawrence

Lawrence, Massachusetts, a mill city of 72,000 located about 30 miles north of Boston was established as a planned industrial city in the 1840s. Like many manufacturing cities, Lawrence has been hard hit over the last 30 years by loss of industry, jobs and capital, and remains one of the most economically distressed in the US. Median household income is just \$27,983, compared to \$50,502 statewide. Poverty rates are twice the national average, and unemployment rates (12-14%) are three times the state average. Lawrence has always been an immigrant city with Latinos comprising a 60+% majority of the city's population; there is also a growing enclave of Southeast Asians. Lawrence is also a youthful city with nearly 40% of its population under the age of 18. Although Lawrence faces numerous challenges, there are also many emergent opportunities for sustainable redevelopment and engagement of residents in all types of projects, from tree plantings and the design of riverside trails along a developing greenway, to urban agriculture and “healthy living” fresh food and fitness programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. Although our target area is city-wide, our projects generally focus on the city's most challenged and underserved neighborhoods.

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is dedicated to helping community residents transform distressed neighborhoods into healthy and sustainable communities of choice and opportunity — good places to work, do business and raise children. LISC combines corporate, government and philanthropic resources to help community-based organizations revitalize underserved neighborhoods. Since 1980, LISC has invested more than \$9.7 billion that has leveraged an additional \$31.3 billion to build or rehabilitate 271,000 affordable homes and develop 40 million square feet of retail, community and educational space nationwide in efforts to Build Sustainable Communities. This strategy extends to the LISC AmeriCorps program where we support placing AmeriCorps Members with local non-profit partners to assist in local efforts to revitalize underserved neighborhoods across America creating vibrant places for people to live, work, and play. LISC's AmeriCorps program seeks to attract talented individuals to serve for one year to help build organizational capacity and is committed to providing opportunities for people to serve where they live. www.lisc.org

AmeriCorps Member Activities

The member at GWL will serve as the Cultivating a Healthier Lawrence AmeriCorps Member.

- Assist with developing and/or compiling bilingual outreach, educational and workshop materials on soil testing, soil contaminants, raised bed and container gardening, healthy gardening, cooking and nutrition for a bilingual audience.

- Conduct outreach/relationship-building with vacant lot, homeowner and potential gardeners.
- Create and implement workshop presentations to give at meetings held by partner organizations and to current community gardeners. Create evaluation tool for workshops.
- Work with City to expand and support urban agriculture via the building of new community gardens and clean raised beds for homeowners.
- Measures vacant lot gardener's increased understanding of health risks by conducting pre and post tests
- Increase in number of residents with access to fresh, healthy food.
- Serve as the community liaison for GWL outreach efforts.
- Organize and manage the 2011 Spicket River Greenway Cleanup and event
- Support the Project Manager throughout the design and construction process of the Greenway.
- Other duties and projects as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications

- High school degree, GED certificate or agree to achieve GED within the year
- Minimum of 18 year of age, US citizen or permanent resident status
- Desire and ability to work with a diverse group of people, particularly those living in low-income distressed neighborhoods
- Bi-lingual (Spanish and English) verbal and written communication skills required.
- Ability to work independently and in a team environment
- Strong Computer skills and good written and oral communication skills
- Ability to work a flexible schedule (some night and weekends may be required)
- Background in community organizing, outreach, and/or multi-cultural settings.
- Experience/knowledge of community gardening, food security, and/or place-based redevelopment (Greenways, community gardens, vacant lot reclamation).
- Experience in volunteer recruitment and event management highly desired.
- Experience working with youth a plus.
- A CORI background check is required.

Member Benefits

Full time members are required to serve for a minimum of 1,700 hours and a full year at Groundwork Lawrence. Members will attend a national orientation the week of October 23-29, 2010 and monthly meetings and trainings hosted by the local LISC office. Groundwork Lawrence will also make additional training opportunities available. Members will earn a stipend of \$18,000 and are eligible to participate in the AmeriCorps health insurance program and may apply for childcare benefits. Upon successful completion of the service year, members will be eligible for a \$5,350 education award to pay off existing student loans or return to school.

Please send submissions to:

Candidates with less work experience but a passion for developing healthy sustainable communities are encouraged to apply. Early applicants will be given top consideration. Interested applicants should mail or e-mail a cover letter and resume to: HR, Groundwork Lawrence, 60 Island Street, Lawrence, MA 01840, hr@groundworklawrence.org.

The cover letter should explain your qualifications and your interest in Groundwork Lawrence and the position. City of Lawrence residents are strongly encouraged to apply.

LISC & Groundwork Lawrence promote equal opportunity in selecting AmeriCorps members. We are committed to diversity and inclusion in the selection process.