Sustainability Fellowship
Growing a Farmers Market in South Providence, RI
African Alliance of Rhode Island
Providence, RI

About the Sustainability Fellows Program:
UNH Sustainability Fellowships pair exceptional students from across the U.S. with municipal, educational, corporate, and non-profit partners in New England to work on transformative sustainability initiatives each summer. Sustainability Fellows undertake challenging projects that are designed to create an immediate impact, offer a quality learning experience, and foster meaningful collaboration. Fellows work on-site with their mentors at partner organizations for 10 weeks, supported by a network of Fellows, partners, alumni, and the UNH Team. Graduate students, exceptional undergraduate students, and recent graduates from any accredited college or university are eligible to apply.

A detailed description of one Fellowship follows. To learn more about the other Fellowships offered this year, and for application instructions, see: www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows.

About the Fellowship:
The fellow will be an integral part of the African Alliance of Rhode Island’s (AARI) food system work over the course of this project, specifically focused on the sustainability of 3 pop-up farmers’ markets and community conversations about local foods. This project will raise awareness about the local food system, support reductions in food insecurity, and provide pathways to potential job opportunities for the community. AARI is a unique organization grounded in food, art, culture, and health, serving a diverse community. This is an exceptional opportunity for a fellow to contribute to culturally-appropriate food security efforts, learn how to plan, implement and operate a farmers’ market in the urban environment, experience the growing and selling of African vegetables and products, and meet people from around the world.

The goal of this project is to make available fresh locally grown vegetables to communities that currently lack commercial grocery stores and farmers’ markets, and to raise awareness about the local food system. In 2018, three pop-up farmers’ markets located in Providence communities designated as “food deserts” were piloted, with support from a Sustainability Fellow. This year’s Fellow will build on the success of the pilot project, developing and implementing strategies to
bring more vendors and customers to the markets, including cultural activities, live music by local ethnic and cultural groups, and other welcoming events that strengthen community bonds and create a neighborhood identity. The fellow will be responsible for the weekly operation of one of the three farmers’ markets, and assist in the operations of the other two farmers’ markets.

The Fellow will also participate in both formal and informal community conversations on the food system in the minority community, including Food Solutions New England’s 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building community panel conversation organized by AARI. The fellow will have opportunities to assist with other projects, including providing input into two local food system videos being developed by AARI; participating in tasting events with the community; and learning more about local farmers and crops through visits to AARI urban gardens and Bami farm in Johnston. As time permits, the fellow may participate in broader food system issues, such as piloting initiatives to reduce hunger among elderly in the minority community and encourage families to grow their own fresh vegetables.

Outcomes/Deliverables:
• Key relationships and logistics to plan, implement and sustain recurring farmers’ markets over the long-term are further developed.
• One pop-up market successfully coordinated by Fellow during fellowship period, and two markets supported by Fellow.
• Outreach materials (e.g. flyers, vendor maps) created and distributed in both English and Spanish.
• Market vendors and volunteers recruited.
• Input into AARI-produced videos and outreach efforts.
• Vendors, community representatives, and consumers provided with information and assistance regarding market participation.
• Customer satisfaction surveys, interviews, and evaluation report.
• Community conversations focused on the food system in the minority community.

Impact:
The 2019 Sustainability Fellow will gain:
• Experience working on community-based projects in a multi-racial, multi-cultural, urban environment.
• Experience planning and implementing farmers’ markets.
• Skills in documenting and measuring customer satisfaction.
• Skills in communicating with diverse populations.
• Opportunities to strengthen bilingual language proficiencies.

As a result of this project, the Fellow will have the following products to add to their portfolio:
• Outreach materials for markets (e.g. flyers, posters)
• A written outreach/marketing plan
• Market operations materials (e.g. vendor forms and maps, operations plan)
• Analysis of consumer satisfaction surveys

More broadly, this project will help to grow AARI’s food system work and provide new opportunities to individuals and local organizations to engage more deeply with the food system.
AARI foresees increasing demand for fresh, culturally appropriate vegetables, and this project will help to confirm that need. The project could serve as a model for other projects, such as “grow your own food” project with Providence’s Chad Brown and Hartford Avenue residential housing complexes that will benefit from fresh local food and community connection.

Desired Qualifications:
• Bachelor’s degree in the social sciences or related field.
• Energetic, outgoing, and passionate about community connections and food access.
• Strong interpersonal skills (e.g. patience, respect, transparency), and verbal and written communication skills.
• Excellent computer and organizational skills; event planning experience.
• Personal initiative, with an ability to work both independently and collaboratively.
• Community organizing experience, and comfort working in diverse communities.
• Proficiency in English and a second language.
• Flexibility to work early evenings and weekends on occasion.
• Ability to bend and lift up to 50 pounds.
• Commitment to AARI’s mission and interest in local food systems and food justice.
• Farming, foodservice, or farmers’ market experience a plus.

Work Location: African Alliance of RI, Providence RI
807 Broad St Rm 121 02907

Time Commitment: 40 hours per week - June 03- August 16

Mentors: Mentor: Julius Kolawole , Title: Director

Compensation: $6500 summer stipend
(taxable and paid on a two-week payroll cycle over the course of the fellowship term)

Expectations:
Fellows are expected to be primarily dedicated to their assigned projects throughout the summer, and also participate in a variety of networking activities, professional development opportunities, and presentations coordinated by UNHSI. Specifically, Fellows are expected to:
• Attend a mandatory orientation at UNH prior to the start of the fellowship term, May 28-30, 2019. (Travel scholarships may be available for students traveling from outside New England.)
• Work full-time on-site at the partner organization for 10 weeks, for a total of 400 hours, June 3 - August 16, 2019 (an eleven-week period, allowing for one week off, as mutually agreed upon with supervisor).
• Complete a fellowship project according to the work plan (with adjustments as necessary).
• Participate in weekly webinars or advisory group meetings.
• Present work at mid-term and final poster sessions at UNH on July 12 and August 9. (Travel support available.)
• Engage in additional professional development, networking, and advisory activities as offered.
• Provide and receive feedback at the end of the fellowship.

Apply by February 7 at www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows.

Questions may be addressed to megan.carney@unh.edu.