



Neighborhood project director (1099 contract)

Mission

Voices for Earth Justice (VEJ) is a 501c3 nonprofit on a mission to bring people of all faiths together for “prayer, education, and action for Earth.” VEJ formed in 2002 as an educational and organizing resource for faith leaders who wanted to use their voices for environmental justice.

Structure

VEJ operates under the governance of a volunteer board (currently seven members) and a part-time executive director (paid). At this time, three members of the board are Detroit residents. The board plans to add more Detroit residents over the next few months. VEJ’s current executive director, who began serving in September 2017, announced that he would step down to make way for a new executive director by the end 2021.

Building and grounds

In 2011, VEJ bought five lots and two buildings at the corner of Greydale and Puritan on the south end of James T. Hope Playfield (Park) in Detroit. VEJ intended to transform the property into a community resource center and a place where regional faith leaders could gather for retreats and workshops. Over the next few years, VEJ raised funds to secure and stabilize what is now known as Hope House & Garden. In 2015, VEJ planted a neighborhood garden and started offering educational programs for neighbors around Hope Park. The garden expanded each year until reaching its current size (two full lots) in 2020. Each summer, hundreds of youth volunteers come from around the country to work at Hope House & Garden. In 2018 and 2019, VEJ offered community education and youth programs at the site. The coronavirus pandemic in 2020 canceled community programs, but the garden had its best year yet in terms of harvest and volunteer participation.

Programs

In addition to Hope House & Garden, VEJ offers several interfaith celebrations (Earth Day and Winter Solstice), education (Sunday Dinners), and reflection (Wonder Walks) programs around southeast Michigan.

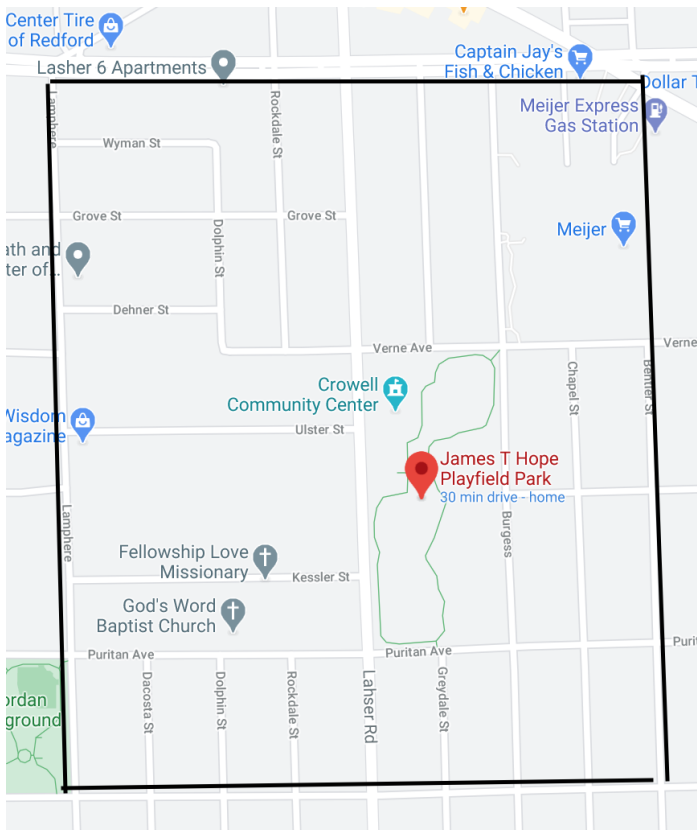
In 2020, VEJ received a Kresge Innovation Projects: Detroit (KIP:D) Round 6 grant. This grant will fund a yearlong project to engage Hope Park residents in designing the future of their neighborhood. The Hope Park Neighborhood Land Use and Vision Project (“Hope Park Project”) should lead to a neighborhood consensus on the best function and form that the built and natural environment should take for the good of residents. The final plan will focus on three things: 1) Conceptual design and plan for Hope House & Garden, 2) conceptual use for vacant buildings and land, and 3) conceptual use for the Community of Christ Detroit Hope Church.

The Hope Park Project will have a great influence on the future direction and focus of Voices for Earth Justice, from community programming and facility design at Hope Park to the overall mission of the organization.

About Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit

Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit (KIP:D) is an initiative to spur and support transformative projects that tap the vision and creativity of Detroiters to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods. In 2014, The Kresge Foundation launched the KIP:D program to support nonprofits in their work to improve the quality of life and strengthen the fabric of community. To date, KIP:D has committed \$11 million to advance resident priorities through transformative projects that build on the assets and distinctive attributes of neighborhoods.

Hope Park Neighborhood Land Use and Vision Project (“Hope Park Project”)



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If the Hope Park Project goes to plan, residents will control the decision-making and planning for the future of space open to community use in their neighborhood.

A neighborhood steering committee will drive the Hope Park Project from start to finish. The committee will be the link between design professionals at Detroit Collaborative Design Center and Hope Park residents.

The committee will approve the final conceptual design and plan for every part of the project, including VEJ’s Hope House & Garden. The entire project should be complete by Winter 2022.

VEJ will serve as the “back office” and “home base” for the Hope Park Project. This includes administrative support, financial management, funding, organization, and personnel. VEJ will be responsible for managing the Kresge KIP:D grant and submitting the reports the grant requires.

Job announcement

Hope Park neighborhood project director (1099 contract -- 20 hours per week)

The Hope Park neighborhood project director (“project director”) will be responsible for the successful outcome of the community engagement portion of the Hope Park Project.

He or she will be responsible for the following:

1. Recruit, form, organize, and support the neighborhood steering committee that will be the catalyst for neighborhood engagement in the project and the final approval of the Hope Park Neighborhood Land Use and Vision Concept.
2. Serve as the point person between the Detroit Collaborative Design Center, Hope Park neighborhood steering committee, Hope Park residents, and Voices for Earth Justice. Coordinate activities among these stakeholders to keep the project moving toward its successful completion.
3. Serve as the “face” and “voice” of Voices for Earth Justice to the Hope Park neighborhood. Serve as the “face” and “voice” of the Hope Park neighborhood to Voices for Earth Justice.
4. Form good working relationships with Hope Park residents to maximize their inclusion and involvement in the Hope Park Project from start to finish.
5. Work with VEJ’s executive director to make sure the project is on budget, meeting its objectives, and reporting out to The Kresge Foundation in a timely manner.
6. Plan for incorporating existing Voices for Earth Justice programs into Hope Park Project engagement and outreach efforts.
7. Conduct neighborhood outreach in any form that is most effective at achieving the goals of the Hope Park Project. This may include, but is not limited to, hosting community meetings (in person or virtual).

The current project budget calls for the project director to work 20 hours per week (on average) at \$20 per hour over 38 weeks. Most of the work will occur between April and November 2021 with maximum hours in the summer and fall.

The project director will report to VEJ’s executive director.

The project director should bring the following qualities and skills to the job:

- Deep and wide network in Detroit, especially in northwest Detroit neighborhoods (Brightmoor and Old Redford preferred). Preference will be given to candidates who live or work in the neighborhood.
- Professional references who will verify a proven record of community organizing and community project management in Detroit. We’re looking for someone who knows how to gather a crowd and help them work together to get things done!
- Experience working on other grant-funded or nonprofit community projects in Detroit is a plus.
- Ability to communicate well with diverse stakeholders, from designers to funders to managers to neighborhood residents of all kinds, is crucial!
- Proficiency in using cloud-based data management and project management tools. VEJ operates in a Google office environment and uses the Little Green Light database tool.
- VEJ is looking for someone who could grow into a permanent leadership role beyond this project.

Please submit a cover letter, resume, and three references to bt@voices4earth.org by **Monday, April 5**.

Frequently cited statistics show that women and underrepresented groups apply to jobs only if they meet 100% of the criteria. VEJ encourages you to break that statistic and apply!