

JOB DESCRIPTION

Research Assistant



Background

Company Overview

The Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED) is a 501(c)(3) association for the nonprofit affordable housing and community economic development sector in the District of Columbia, with more than 160 organizational members. CNHED's mission is to advance community development solutions that address the inequity of under-resourced communities in the District of Columbia. CNHED's strength is in its convening power, highly successful advocacy, robust communications and information sharing, and equipping its members with tools and resources for their work. CNHED's organizational members include nonprofit and for-profit affordable housing developers, housing counseling and service agencies, community economic development organizations, workforce and business development entities, lenders, intermediaries, and government agencies.

Project Overview – Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) Research Study

The District of Columbia's Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) was created as part of the Rental Housing Conversion and Sales Act of 1980. While TOPA has been in existence for over forty years, no one has produced a systematic study of its impacts and outcomes. The Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED) will produce such a study of TOPA and its antecedents from 1975-2020.

The primary focus of this study will be to evaluate the extent to which the TOPA-related purposes of the Rental Conversion and Sales Act have been fulfilled and to provide recommendations for how the District can improve the ability of tenant organizations to successfully exercise their TOPA rights to achieve these purposes, which are to: (1) discourage the displacement of tenants through conversion or sale of rental property, and to strengthen the bargaining position of tenants toward that end without unduly interfering with the rights of property owners to the due process of law; (2) preserve rental housing which can be afforded by lower income tenants in the District; (3) encourage the formation of tenant organizations; and (4) balance and, to the maximum extent possible, meet the sometimes conflicting goals of creating homeownership for lower income tenants, preserving affordable rental housing, and minimizing displacement.¹

The study will contain three components: (1) legislative, regulatory, legal, and policy history of TOPA and its antecedents (1975-2021); (2) descriptive analysis of TOPA properties, property owners, tenant organizations, and outcomes (2006-2020); analysis of TOPA history and outcomes and recommendations for improvement.

Position Summary

The CNHED seeks energetic, experienced research assistants to join our team. Under the direction of the Senior Vice President for Housing Policy, Research, and Development, the Research Assistant will assist in: (1) developing databases of properties that received TOPA notices and the outcomes of such, properties that have received federal or local affordable housing funding, and properties that have been impacted by certain rent stabilization programs; (2) analyzing these databases to

¹ <https://code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/sections/42-3401.02.html>.

determine how existing laws, regulations, policies, programs, and funding sources have shaped different categories of TOPA outcomes; (3) conducting interviews and focus group.

The study will last 12 months (May 2022-April 2023). Research assistants must make at least a 3-month commitment and work at least 20 hours/week, with the possibility to work up to 40 hours per week.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

- Gather data from District of Columbia records for the creation of databases
- Analyze data
- Assist in conducting interviews and focus groups
- Assist in developing a report detailing TOPA outcomes research, the analysis of TOPA outcomes patterns, and recommendations for improving affordable housing and anti-displacement outcomes.

Skills Set Sought

- Exceptional research and data gathering skills and attention to detail
- Excellent writing and presentation skills
- Ability to take initiative, problem-solve, and think strategically, both independently and in a team environment
- Ability to set, manage, and meet multiple deadlines simultaneously
- Demonstrated quantitative research skills, with additional qualitative research skills preferred
- Experience using data analysis tools and software packages (R, Python, ArcGIS, or other tools and research processes) a plus
- Knowledge of (affordable) housing development policy and practice a plus

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required
- Minimum of 2 years relevant experience
- A graduate degree or active enrollment in a graduate degree program in public policy, urban planning, history, law, or another relevant field preferred

Compensation and Benefits

- \$20-\$30/hour, depending on qualifications and experience
- No benefits provided

To Apply

Please email a resume (with "**Research Assistant**" in the subject line) along with cover letter of interest to jobs@cnhed.org. No phone calls please. The positions are open until filled. References will be required. CNHED is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage people of color, women, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities to apply.