Public Health Studies Partnership Opportunity

Please complete the information below to the best of your ability. Providing as much detail as possible will greatly assist in narrowing down the pool of appropriate applicants for your opening.

1. Name of Organization or Department: School of Public Health, Department of Environmental Health and Engineering

2. Student Position Title: researcher

3. Number of positions: 1

4. Application details (what would you like your applicant to provide you with?):
   - Cover letter: ☒ Yes ☐ No
   - Resume: ☒ Yes ☐ No
   - References: ☒ Yes ☐ No How many references: 2

Other information: Students should have an interest in companion animals, especially dogs.

Contact Information (who should the applicant contact?):

Name: Paul Locke Title: Associate Professor

Method of contact: email (plocke@jhu.edu)

Email preferred? ☒ Yes ☐ No

5. Brief context of the assignment – please include any relevant web links or other sources that students can research on their own to learn more about your organization and its work.

Each year thousands of Baltimore communities' pets end up at county/city open admission shelters. The vast majority of these pets are either abandoned or given up by low-income or middle-income families because they cannot afford to care for them or are losing their family home, apartment, or job and must move to a place that does not allow, or charges a security deposit for, having a pet. Many of the people giving up their pet(s), do not have knowledge of or know how to access resources to help them protect their assets and/or provide a "bridge" until they can get on "stable
footing” again.

We propose a study that would examine whether it is possible to use this visit to the county/city shelter as an intervention point for people who are (1) close to losing their homes; or (2) having trouble with their landlords. Such an intervention would allow us to identify families at risk and intervene BEFORE they were evicted, or before landlord/tenant problems became severe. It would also reduce the number of animals "turned in" to the shelters. While the study design is not yet finalized, we anticipate that it could involve identification of persons who are about to turn their pet over to the shelter, and could also include an interview and opportunity to talk about why they believe they can no longer care for their pet(s). It would allow the pet owner to reassess that decision with knowledge of the resources that they can access to save their home, and/or apply for temporary cash assistance and/or food stamps, or other forms of help that would allow the citizen to keep their home and pet.

6. Primary duties/responsibilities:

   Research and analysis

7. Proposed start date: As soon as possible

8. Required number of hours per week: Unknown at present

9. Duration of the assignment (there are 15 weeks in a semester): At least one semester; maybe longer if there is interest in continuing the project.

10. Preferred schedule – in order to work with students’ course load, flexibility is advantageous; a range of options is appreciated, but please be specific about any event or attendance requirements that are not negotiable. Please state hours of operation.

    The project hours are flexible. Students would have to be available during shelter business hours for some of their research.

11. Specific skills/experience you are looking for – preferred vs. required will be helpful here. Feel free to state a preference for particular topics the student should have some familiarity with, or the level(s) of student (sophomore, junior, senior) you’d be open to hiring.

    Preferred level of student (select all that apply):
    
    - [X] Freshman  - [X] Sophomore  - [X] Junior  - [X] Senior

    Skills (computer, graphic design, language, organizational, editing, etc.):

    Required:
Must be fluent in English and a good communicator

Preferred:

Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data

12. Available compensation - this could include transportation reimbursement, a range of pay commensurate with experience, or none. If uncompensated, students may be able to earn credit, but this will depend on the student’s individual circumstances and academic progress.

Students can earn credit, or be compensated at an hourly rate of between $10 and 12 per hour.

13. From your perspective, what do you see as the key potential learning gains for the student?

Enhanced interviewing skills; ability to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data; better understanding of what a public health intervention is, an opportunity to participate in a local, Baltimore-based project.