

**Summary of Practicum Experience:** Briefly describe the agency setting and the population served by the agency. Provide a short overview of your role within that setting.

The Affton Community Partnership is comprised of Affton community partners and residents and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. It is funded by a two-year Community Outreach Partnership grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The partnership seeks to develop projects within and focus on three key areas which include: 1) Welcoming New Americans to the Affton Community, 2) Supporting Affton's Older Residents, and 3) Building Capacity to Bring About Change.

The growing immigrant and refugee population in the Affton community has forced the Affton Community Partnership to address issues that have arisen due to the sudden change in demographics particular to this population. This shift in population has presented both an economically stabilizing influence and new challenges for the community. Therefore, the New Americans Task Force is seeking to bring about change by building the capacity of New Americans and "existing" Americans through developing new community partnerships, creating better lines of communication for New Americans and existing institutions and residents, and better preparing these individuals to effectively change with the concerns of an ever-changing demographic. This is being done through the work of three subcommittees: 1) Subcommittee for a Multi-Cultural Business Corridor, 2) Strong Neighborhood Networks subcommittee, and 3) Strong Schools-Community Connections subcommittee.

The partnership and community has recognized that Affton's population is rapidly shrinking, which can make it less attractive to start-up businesses and employers. On the

other hand, it has recognized the potential for New American businesses to be successful and stimulate the local economy, since this population has began shifting from the city to inner-ring suburbs, such as Affton, and have demonstrated entrepreneurial success already. Therefore, the subcommittee for a Multi-Cultural Business Corridor's aim is to identify, encourage, and support New American Entrepreneurs to start-up or relocate multi-cultural businesses in the Affton community. Action steps to reach this goal are working with partners to centralize and promote resources available for small business entrepreneurs, offering workshops and support for potential business owners, and identifying New Americans interested in establishing a business in Affton.

However, economic development is not the only area where the New Americans Task Force is focusing. It is also addressing social development needs of the community as well, which is where much of my practicum experience is focuses. As a practicum student, I will be working with individuals from the Affton community (as well as other interdisciplinary faculty from UMSL) not only from the Community Partnership Program's office but also from on-site locations within the community. While I will continue to collect and analyze data from community survey results, one of my primary practicum tasks will be to collaborate on all aspects in the development of a Bosnian Language and Culture curriculum that will be implemented into the Affton community through a Community Education Center model. The development of this class will include many facets from attending strategic meetings with the marketing department at UMSL to organizing meetings with Native Bosnians for guidance in developing the curriculum. The Bosnian language and culture class is one of the action steps outlined by the Strong Neighborhood Networks subcommittee in which the aim is to reach the overall

goal of building better lines of communication among neighbors and providing opportunities for residents to socialize across cultures. The New Americans Task Force is targeting specific individuals and organizations to participate in this course, which include: Affton residents (subdivision trustees), business owners/employers, schools, religious institutions, and social service that provide services for Bosnian New Americans. These specific populations within the community are being strategically targeted in hopes that by educating a few influential individual leaders within the community will have a more sustainable impact on the community's communication and social integration in the long run.

In addition to the development of the Bosnian language and culture class, I will have the opportunity to work on grant writing skills and will begin to implement programs and activities outlined by New American Task Force subcommittees during the first year and a half of the partnership. I will be working with the Affton Community Partnership through a variety of community building activities including but not limited to bi-monthly overall New Americans Task Force meetings, monthly New Americans Task Force subcommittee meetings, Affton Community Betterment Association Forums, as well as other community meetings and activities.

The Affton Community Partnership provides a unique experience at the micro level of social work in working one-on-one with diverse populations and individuals within the community. It also allows, me to gain a broad range of macro social work learning experiences through a variety of strategic planning and community development activities.

## Learning Objectives

**1. The student will integrate theoretical knowledge about organizations, management, and leadership into practice and apply related skills in the practicum setting.**

**Activities:** Student will be active in leading the creation of a Bosnian Language and Culture class (curriculum through implementation) including marketing tools and advertisement strategies, development of curriculum, and observation of classes offered in the community. In order to develop the curriculum, student will work one-on-one with individuals within the Bosnian community to influence and shape the development of the curriculum and course. Student will also participate in interdisciplinary Affton Community Partnership meetings to better understand and discuss the many facets of the grant and how community development is progressing.

**Evaluation:** Task supervisor will observe and provide constructive feedback during weekly meetings on leadership and management activities. Student will also consult marketing advisors for advice in advertisement strategies and development of tools.

**Learning outcomes:** Student will display effective knowledge of leadership and management best practices through activities. In addition, student will learn about the many levels of staff within community development as well as the complexities that arise in leadership and management positions.

**2. The student will integrate theoretical knowledge about communities into practice and apply related skills in the practicum setting.**

**Activities:** Student will be involved with the Affton Community Partnership – New Americans Task Force (NATF) in identifying community needs through the facilitation of NATF subcommittees (consisting of local residents and agency leaders in the metropolitan St. Louis region) as well as conducting needs assessments for grants. The Affton Community Partnership – New Americans Task Force is specifically focusing on the Bosnian refugee and immigrant population with regards to community integration and development as the Affton community has seen a rapid migration of this population to inner-ring suburbs of St. Louis City. In addition, student will apply the logic model of program development to the development of the Bosnian language and culture class.

**Evaluation:** Student will verbally discuss activities and community issues with supervisor during weekly meetings to monitor student's progress and assessment skills. Supervisor will review and give feedback to student's logic model analysis.

**Learning outcomes:** Student will learn effective strategies to mobilize local residents and leaders to bring about change within their community. In addition, the student will gain a deeper understanding of community organization and resident interaction and will be able to more effectively assess community needs and issues, specifically those with regards to rapid population shifts.

**3. The student will apply knowledge of social and economic policies relevant to the practicum setting.**

**Activities:** Student will attend local policy meeting hosted by the Affton Community Betterment Association as well as other organizations and institutional meetings. Student will also read on reports on community, state, and federal social and economical policies with regards to diverse population shifts and report these findings to subcommittees and supervisor. Student will be highly involved in the three NATF subcommittees are focused on social and economic development of the Affton community.

**Evaluation:** Student will record findings in writing as well as discussing student's activities within the three subcommittees.

**Learning outcomes:** Student will gain a deeper understanding of social and economic policies and how they affect the community allowing it to thrive or survive. In addition, student will develop insight into the relationship between residents, community organizations, and public policy.

**4. The student will understand and apply values and ethics relevant to social work practice in the practicum agency.**

**Activities:** Student will reflect the six core values in the NASW Code of Ethics as well as the principles behind them specifically by putting them into action through practicum activities including community organizing and development, education, funding (through application of grants), as well as research and community needs assessments. Student will explore values and ethical principal through one-on-one contact with individuals from diverse populations and positions of leadership within the community through the development of the Bosnian language and culture curriculum. Student will also review the NASW Code of Ethics periodically to refresh and maintain a high standard of knowledge of the values and ethics in the social work profession throughout the practicum.

**Evaluation:** Supervisor will visually supervise activities as verbally discuss issues as well as positive outcomes that may arise. Student will also consult other social workers with knowledge and experience particular to a situation that may arise.

**Learning outcomes:** Student will gain a deeper knowledge of the NASW Code of Ethics and be able to effectively communicate this knowledge through actions, written materials, and in word.

**5. The student will understand the impact of race, class, gender, religion, age, physical/mental ability, sexual orientation and ethnicity on practice and how one's own values and biases affect leadership and management in the practicum agency.**

**Activities:** During the practicum, the student will be interviewing, collaborating with, and facilitating subcommittees consisting of diverse populations including ethnic, religious, political, gender, and sexual orientation beliefs. Student will identify her own values and biases and how they help or hinder as she works with diverse residents within the community setting.

**Evaluation:** Student will journal reflecting on biases and values as issues arise.

**Learning outcomes:** Student will be able to recognize when own values arise and interfere with leadership and management within the context of community development and will learn how to work effectively and authentically with individuals of diverse beliefs (including religious and political beliefs).

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**6. The student will learn to evaluate social work practice in organizations and communities. This objective will be completed in conjunction with SW 6400 during the Fall/Winter (circle one) semester of 2009.**