

HUDSON VALLEY INITIATIVE SUMMER POSITION

The **Hudson Valley Initiative (HVI) at Columbia GSAPP** seeks a candidate for a part-time summer position to **develop a toolbox for Vacant Lots in Newburgh, NY**.

Deadline Extended: March 1st, 2019

Note: This position requires a 2-step application process.

The chosen candidate will be nominated by the Initiative to the [Barnabas McHenry Hudson River Valley Awards 2019](#) and will have an opportunity to finalize his/her application together with the director of the Hudson Valley Initiative for submission to the [Open Space Institute](#) by March 8th, 2019.

Final decisions will be made by April 2019.

The successful applicant will receive **up to \$3,500 for a part-time summer position** (20h/week June 3rd - August 23rd) and will work with the [Hudson Valley Initiative](#) at GSAPP and on site in Newburgh.

BACKGROUND

There are close to 100 vacant lots in the City of Newburgh, a city in the Hudson Valley with a population of 28,000. Once a transportation hub and industrial center with brick yards, foundries, shipyards, tanneries and paper mills, it suffered decline common to many small cities in the Hudson Valley as the result of de-industrialization and urban renewal.

Newburgh has seen a lot of promising investment in recent years with businesses moving in and properties being restored. However, the enormous amount of vacant properties, both vacant land and empty building shells pose a threat to neighborhood safety and health, and severely impact property values and as a result the tax roll. Numerous studies have shown the positive health and safety impacts in cities that have developed robust policies and guidelines to encourage the temporary or long-term cleaning or activation of these sites¹. As part of a comprehensive Open Space Plan, the City of Newburgh wishes to implement similar policies and has asked the Hudson Valley Initiative at Columbia GSAPP to develop a “toolbox” for city-owned vacant properties, with an initial focus on vacant land.

HVI began initial work on this project in 2018 including the design for a pilot site on South Street in Newburgh that will be used and programmed to solicit feedback from residents.

¹ <https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-releases/2016/october/adding-windows-to-vacant-house>

SCOPE

The successful candidate will contribute to the development of the toolbox by assessing the existing conditions and potential of city-owned vacant properties, conducting a review of similar policy documents in other cities such as [Detroit](#), [Pittsburgh](#) or [Philadelphia](#) among others.

The candidate will develop policy proposals that address how interested residents, organizations or businesses:

- Gain legal access to city-owned property (vacant and building shells)
- Develop a framework for community outreach and consensus
- Develop a plan for improvements, programming and maintenance

In addition, the candidate will propose or participate in outreach sessions at the pilot site in Newburgh in order to incorporate community input into the final document.

He/she will work closely with the director of the Hudson Valley Initiative, staff at Scenic Hudson and the City of Newburgh to review drafts, attend meetings and support the larger initiative for Newburgh's Open Space Plan.

The final outcome of this research will be a document to be published on the City of Newburgh's website that will illustrate process, and examples of activating vacant properties in Newburgh's neighborhoods.

Candidates must be students during the expected work period, and must be eligible to work in the United States (on campus); must demonstrate excellent written and verbal communication skills and knowledge of GIS and Adobe Creative Suite.

TO APPLY

Submit a letter of interest to kk730@columbia.edu no later than March 1st, 2019.

Include:

- Explain the importance of this project to you
- Explain why you are qualified to do this project
- A resume and 5 work samples

Don't hesitate to reach out with questions.