



ACLS Leading Edge Fellowship

Project:	Black History Along Cancer Alley
Organization:	Louisiana Bucket Brigade (New Orleans, LA)
Location:	Remote
Stipend:	\$60,000 per year, plus health insurance and professional development funding
Start Date:	September 2021

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

The Louisiana Bucket Brigade, founded in 2000, is an environmental health and justice organization collaborating with communities that neighbor the state's petrochemical plants and fossil fuel infrastructure. The heart and soul of what we do is supporting communities impacted by the petrochemical industry. Bucket Brigade's core partners are the communities facing the brunt of pollution and illness in Louisiana.

The disproportionate impact on Louisiana's African American community has its roots in prior centuries. As such, our work includes historic components. Over the years we have provided technical support in the areas of media, air monitoring, organizing, cartography, accident research and report writing. We also provide faith that we can win and a track record of doing so. To learn more, visit:

<https://labucketbrigade.org/>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The region between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana is referred to as Cancer Alley because of the carcinogenic emissions from the concentration of oil refineries, chemical plants and other petrochemical infrastructure. This region was the historic location of sugarcane and cotton plantations, and the footprint today reflects that legacy: many of the petrochemical facilities are on the same land where the plantations once stood. This land use pattern means that the petrochemical plants have eradicated or threatened Freetowns and other historic Black communities. They are also on or near burial sites of enslaved people, as evidenced by the cemeteries at the Shell Refinery in Convent and the recently discovered graves on the proposed site of Formosa Plastics.

The latter were discovered because of our collaboration with St. James residents, who insisted that graves were on the proposed site. Louisiana Bucket Brigade engaged a land use expert and a lawyer, who in turn engaged an archeologist to confirm what the residents had been saying. In December of 2019, St. James residents made the public announcement of the discovery of graves on the property, a fact that Formosa Plastics representatives knew but failed to disclose to parish officials while their land use application was under consideration. This was a travesty for the community, who deserved to know about their ancestry at the earliest possible moment.

The Leading Edge Fellow will collaborate with our partners to identify sites – both Freetowns and gravesites – in order that they might be protected, preserved and honored. The main reason that these petrochemical plants are allowed in Louisiana is because of the jobs that the projects create. In order to protect our partner communities from relentless expansion, our region needs a different economy. We believe that the region's powerful Black history provides a solid foundation to develop a cultural economy: numerous Freetowns and burial sites, the site of the largest slave revolt in history (1811), the site of a Mary McLeod Bethune school dedication and much more. The second component of the Leading Edge Fellow's work will be to explore how to create a foundation for a cultural economy via these

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strengths. This is a full-time commitment for the fellowship year, including dedicated time for professional development activities.

Responsibilities and tasks:

- Collaborate with partners to understand the current state of work in both cemetery and cultural economy areas
- Research best practices in these fields in other parts of the United States, including how other regions have transformed Black history into economic drivers in the cultural economy
- Identify or create a roster of Black history sites along Cancer Alley, including burial sites, museums, historic markers, tours etc., including their stage of development, i.e., newly sited or mature
- Understanding the African American Burial Grounds Network Act and working with relevant Congressional offices to include Louisiana sites
- Assist in developing proposals to fund the work
- Remain informed on all political aspects that can impact the project
- Produce a research and strategy plan that will direct the organization's efforts within a designated timeframe
- Produce documents and reports for the public as necessary

Qualifications:

- PhD in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences. Read more about eligible fields [here](#);
- Excellent research and interpersonal skills;
- Excellent organizational skills and detail-oriented approach;
- Willingness to work in a collaborative community organization environment, accountability to goals, and ability to work independently;
- Ability to work under time pressure, meet deadlines, and prioritize tasks;
- Alignment with LABB's mission and values

Preferred:

- Familiarity with the region of focus
- GIS skills
- Familiarity or fluency in Spanish and/or French

APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: <https://www.acls.org/Competitions-and-Deadlines/Leading-Edge-Fellowships>
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org)
- Application deadline: 9pm EDT, May 6, 2021

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