
IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE AND REDUCING CARBON FOOTPRINT

Department Name

(This should be full title of department – no abbreviations.)

The name of city/county is not needed with the department name since it is noted in line below.)

DeKalb County, GA

Fellowship Dates:

October 23, 2023–October 21, 2024

DeKalb County, GA, has an opportunity to become a model for southern communities seeking to reduce their climate impact. The County government seeks to reduce energy use, adopt electrical vehicles and add solar power. A community-wide composting program would reduce landfill use and create opportunities to address environmental justice issues. The FUSE Executive Fellow will spearhead these efforts, building support across local stakeholders and developing policies and plans to implement these green practices.

Salary: Executive Fellows are FUSE employees and receive an annual base salary of \$80,000. Fellows can also access various health, dental, and vision insurance benefits. Compensation for this year of public service is not intended to represent market-rate compensation for the experienced professionals in our program.

ABOUT THE FUSE EXECUTIVE FELLOWSHIP

FUSE is a national nonprofit working to expand social and economic opportunities, particularly for communities that have been limited by a history of systemic and institutionalized racism. FUSE partners with local governments and communities to more effectively address pressing challenges by placing experienced professionals within city and county agencies. These FUSE Executive Fellows lead strategic projects designed to advance racial equity and accelerate systems change. Since 2012, FUSE has led over 250 projects in 40 governments across 20 states, impacting the lives of 25 million people.

When designing each fellowship project, FUSE works closely with government partners and local stakeholders to define a scope of work that will achieve substantive progress toward regional priorities. FUSE then conducts an individualized search for each project to ensure that the selected candidate has at least 15 years of professional experience, the required competencies for the role, and deep connections to the communities being served. They are data-driven and results-oriented and able to effectively manage complex projects by developing actionable roadmaps and monitoring progress to completion.

Executive Fellows are hired as FUSE employees and embedded in government agencies for at least one year of full-time work. Throughout their fellowships, they receive training, coaching, and professional support from FUSE to help achieve their project goals. FUSE Executive Fellows bring diverse perspectives and new approaches to their projects. They build strong relationships with diverse arrays of stakeholders, foster alignment within and across various layers of government, and build partnerships between governments and communities.

PROJECT CONTEXT

DeKalb County, GA, with a diverse population of more than 750,000 people, is part of the Atlanta metro area. The county is home to Emory University and the headquarters of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among other institutions. DeKalb County is also known for its natural sites, such as the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve, as well as important African-American and Native American historical sites. The county also has significant natural forested areas that are threatened by development.

The county government has a number of opportunities and potential funding sources that would enable it to reduce its climate impact, invest in preserving existing natural resources for the future, and start addressing longstanding issues related to environmental racism. While the community as a whole will support these measures, the current county government structure and governance may make some of these opportunities more difficult to achieve.

DeKalb County will partner with FUSE to build support for policies and plans that would significantly improve the county government’s and community’s climate resilience. The FUSE Executive Fellow will work with a wide variety of stakeholders in local government to develop and implement specific policies to reduce the county’s carbon footprint through energy efficiency, fleet electrification, and solar energy. The Executive Fellow will also advance policies and develop a plan to expand the county’s waste management services while benefiting segments of the community that have been disproportionately impacted by past waste management decisions. DeKalb County has an opportunity to create a more environmentally responsive local government and serve as a model for how local government can improve community resilience.

PROJECT SUMMARY & POTENTIAL DELIVERABLES

The following provides a general overview of the proposed fellowship project. This project summary and the potential deliverables will be collaboratively revisited by the host agency, the fellow, and FUSE staff during the first few months of the fellowship.

DeKalb County has several opportunities to reduce its carbon footprint, protect and preserve existing natural areas, improve the way biodegradable waste is managed, and create new opportunities for the community. There will likely be federal grants, and perhaps other sources of funding, for some of these initiatives. However, the County doesn’t have a staff member who has the time, expertise and skills required to drive these initiatives forward.

The FUSE Executive Fellow will gather support from stakeholders within DeKalb County government and the region to develop policies and plans for the following initiatives:

- **Energy efficiency and electrification.** Numerous opportunities exist for the County to reduce its carbon footprint. That would include converting the county public service fleet to electric vehicles and setting up vehicle chargers in key locations; implementing power management controls and processes to reduce energy use inside county buildings; and potentially installing solar energy panels. Currently,, county facilities and energy use are managed on a department-by-department basis. The Executive Fellow will develop and implement a plan to consolidate energy management to facilitate electrification. This will require gathering input and building support across many county government offices and departments, while also developing a strategy to deliver cost savings and environmental benefits.
- **County wide composting.** The county owns and manages its own landfill but does not offer composting services. Composting services would reduce the carbon footprint of waste management, provide additional value to county residents, and produce revenue for the county’s waste management function. The Executive Fellow would be responsible for developing a plan to offer composting, including the financial and operational aspects. Because composting services would provide additional revenue to the county, including from major commercial clients, the resulting funds could be used to reinvest in communities adjacent to the landfill.

The Executive Fellow will work with stakeholders within DeKalb County government and the community, and also with key stakeholders from the greater Atlanta metro area. As the Executive Fellow explores funding opportunities — especially federal grants — it will be important to demonstrate that DeKalb is working with the broader and avoiding duplicative services with other entities, such as smaller towns in the county, the City of Atlanta and the State of Georgia.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS (This should only list the Executive Sponsor & Project Supervisor and must include their title and full name of department – no abbreviations.)

- **Executive Sponsor – Full Name, Title; Full Name of Department**
- **Project Supervisor – Full Name, Title; Full Name of Department**

QUALIFICATIONS

In addition to the qualifications listed below, a background in **environmental policy practices and local government** is strongly preferred for this project.

- Synthesizes complex information into clear and concise recommendations and action-oriented implementation plans.
- Develops and effectively implements both strategic and operational project management plans.
- Generates innovative, data-driven, and result-oriented solutions to difficult challenges.
- Responds quickly to changing ideas, responsibilities, expectations, trends, strategies and other processes.
- Communicates effectively both verbally and in writing, and excels in both active listening and conversing.
- Fosters collaboration across multiple constituencies in order to support more effective decision making.
- Establishes and maintains strong relationships with a diverse array of stakeholders, both inside and outside of government, and particularly including community-based relationships.
- Embraces differing viewpoints and implements strategies to find common ground.
- Demonstrates confidence and professional diplomacy, while effectively interacting with individuals at all levels of various organizations.

FUSE is an equal opportunity employer with core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We encourage candidates from all backgrounds to apply for this position.