City of Kalamazoo

Neighborhood Activator

SALARY	$79,070.00 Annually	**LOCATION**	Kalamazoo, MI
JOB TYPE	Full-time	**JOB NUMBER**	25-00067
DEPARTMENT	Community Development	**OPENING DATE**	06/04/2025
CLOSING DATE	6/24/2025 11:59 PM Eastern		

Description/Distinguishing Features

The Neighborhood Activator is a planner who excels at community organizing and collaboration. This forward-facing position is within the Planning Division of the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED) and reports to the City Planner. Kalamazoo is home to 22 distinct neighborhoods, each with its own character, history, and strengths—as well as evolving priorities and opportunities. This diversity brings energy and variety to the work, offering the Neighborhood Activator the chance to build relationships, support local leadership, and help shape community-driven solutions.

Examples of Duties

The Neighborhood Activator works closely with neighborhoods, community partners, and other City Departments primarily to:

- support neighborhoods in creating and sustaining organization or associations. This work has a large focus on fostering a strong communication network to support communication between the city and neighborhood leaders as well as neighborhood residents and businesses.
- leads the creation of Neighborhood Plans in alignment with Imagine Kalamazoo, working closely with neighborhood leaders, residents, businesses, and City departments. Responsibilities include community engagement, interdepartmental coordination, plan writing, and managing the plan approval process.
- supports neighborhoods in implementing their adopted plans by connecting them to relevant City departments, fostering community partnerships, and assisting with additional engagement or capacity-building. While not typically leading implementation, this role plays a key part in helping neighborhoods navigate City systems, sustain momentum, and access resources aligned with their goals.

As a result of the strong community relationships built by this position, the Neighborhood Activator also serves as the City's champion for outreach and engagement, lifting up the City's Public Participation Policy, and assisting City Departments with this work. The Neighborhood Activator is a very forward-facing position and is regularly out in the community to facilitate and participate in community activities that support neighborhoods. These meetings may occur in the evening and occasionally on the weekend. Strong public speaking skills, media confidence, excellent organization, active listening, and clear written and verbal communication are essential for success in this role.

The Neighborhood Activator works closely with all Planning Division and CPED staff and other City Departments, especially Parks & Recreation and Public Services. As Kalamazoo is an education city, the Planning Division regularly partners with Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College for projects, service learning, and internships. The

Neighborhood Activator regularly partners with students for volunteering, neighborhood projects, and engagement activities and may oversee the work of interns or AmeriCorp service members.

Essential Qualifications

- A bachelor's degree in urban planning, geography, urban design, or related field; master's degree preferred.
- 3-5 years minimum experience in urban planning involving regular community organizing or engagement activities. Project management experience is a plus.
- Confidence in public speaking before community members and internal staff teams.
- Strong listening and conflict resolution skills.
- The ability to facilitate events, specifically outreach and engagement in neighborhoods.
- Working knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite; working knowledge of GIS a plus.
- A willingness to develop new techniques, lead projects in new practice areas, or oversee the use of new tools.
- Understanding of the concepts from Congress of New Urbanism, Smart Growth America, Project for Public Spaces, and other similar best practices

Acceptable Training and Experience

Skill in:

- Using computers and related software applications including: GIS, Adobe Suite, Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator
- Developing and administering the budget
- Gathering and interpreting data
- Preparing reports
- Conducting research
- Solving problems
- Resolving community challenges
- Preparing marketing materials
- Preparing and giving presentations
- Community organization and/or public engagement experience
- Developing government programs
- Writing grants and other reports/documents
- Preparing proposals
- Conflict resolution and mediation
- Project management
- Public speaking

The City of Kalamazoo is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We are committed to creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive organization where different perspectives and experiences are welcomed and encouraged. Studies have shown that women and people of color, are less likely to apply for jobs unless they meet all of the qualifications listed. The City of Kalamazoo is most interested in finding the best candidate for the job, and that candidate may be one from a less traditional background. If you have transferable experience, please tell us about it. This approach will give each current and potential employee the opportunity to learn, grow and contribute to the City of Kalamazoo.

Employer

City of Kalamazoo

Address

241 W. South Street

Kalamazoo, Michigan, 49007

Neighborhood Activator Supplemental Questionnaire

*QUESTION 1

Do you have a Bachelor's degree in urban planning, landscape architecture, urban design, or related field?

◯ Yes

◯ No

*QUESTION 2

Do you have working knowledge of GIS?

◯ Yes

◯ No

*QUESTION 3

Do you have 3-5 years minimum experience in urban planning, involving regular community engagement activities?

◯ Yes

◯ No

*QUESTION 4

Do you have working knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite?

◯ Yes

◯ No

*QUESTION 5

Do you havea project management experience?

◯ Yes

◯ No

*QUESTION 6

Do you have strong listening and conflict resolution skills?

◯ Yes

◯ No

*QUESTION 7

Do you have confidence in public speaking?

* Required Question