

Position Title: Temporary Community Organizer

Position Type: Independent Contractor, no benefits provided

Organization: Pennsylvania Debt Collective

Start Date: Late June 2020

Duration: 12 weeks, possibly renewable

Salary: \$25/hour

Hours: 30/week, remote, flexible working hours

Note: ***this salary is provided by a third-party grant (thanks to the Bread & Roses Community Fund!); if more salary becomes available, we'd like someone who is open to a longer contract -- potentially a full-time, permanent position***

Organizational Summary:

[The Debt Collective](#) is a membership-based organization committed to a radical restructuring of the current economic system, promoting analysis and education about the coercive role of debt in capitalist society, and providing tools to assist people in resisting unjust debts. We fight for policies that cancel debts, provide universal social goods (ie, education, healthcare & housing), repair and redress historical injustices (ie, reparations) and take back public control over our money.

The [Pennsylvania \(PA\) Debt Collective](#) is a pilot local chapter of the Debt Collective. Our goal in Philadelphia is to build a base of debtors to fight for debt cancellation, debtors rights, access to social goods, and equitable and progressive city funding. We are currently developing campaigns around student debt, utility bills, school lunch debts and city municipal debts. We utilize a range of tactics, including canvassing, community organizing, offering debt clinics to dispute debts, political education, legal and media strategies, and direct action.

Position Summary

Our unjust and racist economic system is designed to funnel money to the rich and put the majority of people in debt just to meet our basic needs. The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated this process, reinforcing existing inequalities and pushing people further into unpayable debts as the city prepares for further cuts in social services.

The temporary organizer will develop and execute a strategy to build debtor power in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania to push back against this process. Through community organizing, political education and coalition building, they will work with local debtors, organizational partners, Debt Collective organizers, and volunteers to design campaigns and strategies to cancel debt (especially COVID-19 related debts) and win progressive gains.

The temporary organizer will also be asked to build infrastructure and recruit members and volunteers for this local chapter. This will include regular meetings with the national Debt Collective to integrate and balance local needs with national and organizational priorities.

Key Areas of Responsibility

- (1) Develop strategy for building a local debtors union and campaigning for debt relief (50%)
 - Canvass with partner organizations to build membership and determine community needs and capacity for grassroots campaigns
 - Research and develop COVID-19-related debt relief campaign(s)
 - Organize locally to build a base of student debtors and others affected by student debt as part of the Debt Collective's higher education campaign
 - Organize town halls, speakouts, testimonials and 'debt assemblies'
 - Develop political education to build critical community-wide awareness of how debt, economics and finance function at a local level
 - Organize 'debt clinics' to allow community members to dispute different forms of debt (in partnership with local organizations)
 - Help build membership, pursue grants and collect dues for the Debt Collective
- (2) Recruit and manage volunteers (20%)
 - Assemble and support a group of local volunteers to assist with base-building and campaign development and execution
 - Empower and educate volunteers on basics of understanding debt and political organizing
- (3) Represent PA Debt Collective and build institutional relationships (15%)
 - Represent PA Debt Collective at coalition meetings, community events, meetings with politicians, etc.
 - Build strong relationships with partner organizations and like-minded community organizations and social movements
- (4) Build social media following (15%)
 - Develop PA Debt Collective social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Skills & Qualifications

- Demonstrated community organizing skills, strategizing, and execution of organizing campaigns
- Local knowledge of Philadelphia neighborhoods, social issues, and community connections
- Deep commitment to social, economic and racial justice
- Strong writing, editing and verbal communication skills
- People skills - the ability to build relationships and coalitions, from the grassroots to public officials
- Persistence, motivation and drive
- Basic time management and project management skills
- Willingness to work evenings and weekends as necessary
- Basic computer competency - word, spreadsheets, online meetings, social media
- Preferred: knowledge and understanding of debt, finance and economic justice

Note: debt and finance can be difficult to understand and quite complex. We can provide training on this technical information to the right applicant.

Expectations

The temporary organizer will be expected to model the following traits:

- Foster and maintain open communication and collaboration and actively engage in the exchange of ideas and maintaining constructive relationships
- Initiative and creativity in all aspects of the position
- Lead by example by maintaining a high standard of professional ethics and conduct at all times
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all duties, responsibilities, and skills required.

Application

Debt disproportionately affects the most marginalized people in society — including people of color, people from working class backgrounds, women and LGBTQ people. These communities are centered in this work. People with these identities or who are members of other marginalized communities are strongly encouraged to apply for this position.

To apply, please send a resume along with a brief paragraph describing your interest in the position to: padebtcollective@gmail.com