

Advocates for Community Alternatives



www.advocatesforalternatives.org

Position Description – Science Adviser

Advocates for Community Alternatives (ACA), based in Accra, Ghana, is recruiting a scientist to advise our program staff on environmental, health, and geological matters, to consult with our communities, and to build a network of science expertise providers for communities in West Africa. *This is a full-time, one-year position with the possibility of renewal, to be filled as soon as possible.*

Established in April 2016, ACA helps West African communities that are threatened by the destructive impacts of extractives-led development to take control of their own futures. We do this by working with communities to design their own sustainable development plans and to advocate to achieve those plans. We also build networks of lawyers and other experts to help communities' plans come to fruition. ACA has projects in communities in Ghana's Bono East and Eastern Regions, in addition to collaborating and supporting programs for the Public Interest Lawyering Initiative for West Africa (PILIWA), a network of lawyers and legal advocates in nine West African countries.

Role

Most of the cases and community contexts in which ACA works entail technical and scientific problems, and our ability to help partners and clients will be strongly enriched by scientific expertise. The technical needs may include, for example (1) measuring the environmental impacts of industrial agriculture, (2) analyzing the health impacts of prolonged exposure to pollutants, (3) understanding the hydrological impacts of open-pit mining operations, and (4) assessing soil conditions to advise communities on crop choices.

The Science Adviser is responsible for addressing the technical and scientific needs of ACA and, at ACA's direction, helping address those of their community partners and the members of the PILIWA network. The Science Adviser will be responsible to ACA's Executive Director, but her day-to-day work will be coordinated with the ACA's Community Programs Director or our Legal Coordinator, depending on the particular task.

Specifically, he or she will undertake the following:

1. Advise, interpret, and explain
 - Read, explain, analyze, and critique scientific and technical documents (environmental assessments, results of scientific studies, medical records, geological/geo-morphological data, etc.) for the benefit of ACA and its partners. This includes consulting with other scientists regarding scientific and technical documents and data in which the applicant does not hold a strong specialty, to achieve a translatable understanding;
 - Create presentations, documents, and more that provide a translatable understanding of the scientific issues at hand, collection methods, and analysis, if needed;

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- Travel to and meet with partner and client communities across West Africa to listen to community needs and then advise on the observation, collection, measurement, and analysis of scientific evidence for the purpose of technical studies and litigation;
- Assist ACA and partners to design and implement studies and enquiries to support community advocacy and litigation strategies;
- Work with communities to identify and pilot low-cost innovative low-cost scientific recording and measurement tools to promote citizen-science efforts; and
- Organize citizen-science workshops with external partners that educate broader communities on relevant scientific topics and skills.

2. Build a science network

- Identify and recruit scientists and institutions to provide expertise in the public interest;
- Develop a public-interest training program for scientists;
- Build partnerships with West African technical institutions (universities, centers, labs) to spread education and awareness of citizen-science needs; and
- Seek grant opportunities and write grant proposals to extend and perpetuate the ACA Science Advisory Service.

Required Qualifications

- Graduate degree (Master's or higher) in environmental science, medicine, or geology
- At least five years' post-graduate research *or* five years' field or lab work in relevant scientific field
- At least one peer-reviewed publication in relevant scientific field
- Fluency in French and English
- Willingness to live in Ghana or other West African base of operations
- Willingness and ability to travel widely across up to nine West African countries, including to remote, rural areas lacking electricity and paved roads.

Preferred Qualifications

- Authorization to reside and work in Ghana or other West African country
- Professional experience working in less-developed, rural communities
- Human rights fieldwork experience
- Experience working with media (including social media)

Compensation

This is a one-year contractual position that is compensated at the flat rate of USD 2,500 per month, to cover benefits as well.

Application Procedure

Submit to ACA's Executive Director, Jonathan Kaufman, at jonathan@advocatesforalternatives.org, with the subject header "ACA Science Adviser Job Application," the following:

- Cover letter explaining interest and relevant experience
- Resume/CV and list of relevant professional publications
- List of three professional references

If the application moves to the interview stages, each interview will be by teleconference.

Application Deadline

February 20, 2020