

**Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA)
Bonner Internship Program**

Lauren Wasserman

Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA)

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- [Aziz Ali Bey](#), 1st Vice President
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About NIA

Ms. Octavia Sutphin, the founder, and president of NIA lived in the city for most of her life. “NIA was formed in 2003 to empower community residents through the stimulation of economic growth. The City of Trenton communities were, and remain today, as communities of despair, overwhelmed with a chronic unemployment rate.” We recognize that the Trenton communities are overwhelmed with dilapidated housing, neighborhood disinvestment, absentee landlords, and abandoned and boarded up properties along with vacant lots. These distressed areas contribute to high-crime, affording us security deficient, high-crime communities. The mission of NIA is “Changing Lives By: Opening Doors and Building Communities”. NIA is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization that believes in empowering and supporting the residents of Trenton. Our current projects, the City of Trenton’s Redevelopment Project, Illegal Dumping Campaign, and Comprehensive Community Violence Prevention Strategy (CCVPS) are all working towards uplifting the communities and preventing violence and blight. CCVPS is our newest project and is still in its beginning phases. NIA is dedicated to working with the community and looks forward to continuing to serve its community for years to come.

Current Projects & Programs

- City of Trenton’s Redevelopment Project
- Illegal Dumping Campaign

Project Goals

- Comprehensive Community Violence Prevention Strategy
- Fight The Blight
- Food Pantry
- Second Chance Residential Facility
- S.E.E.D.S (Social Education and Economic Development)

Monthly Newsletter

- [NIA Newsletter, Issue 1](#) (4/14/21)

Contact Information

- Mail: P.O. BOX 3581, Trenton, NJ 08629
- Email: NIAofTrentonNJ@gmail.com
 - More contact information can be found at: niaofnj.org/contact-us

Current Projects & Programs

City of Trenton's Redevelopment Project

NIA was initially founded to assist the 200-300 block of Rutherford Avenue; however, we have since expanded our scope to broaden NIA's reach with helping the City where we can. At present NIA leads the task force to combat Illegal Dumping, thankfully with the assistance of your Public Works Dept., and TCNJ. NIA's initial focus has been to reclaim the 200-300 block of Rutherford Avenue, and its surrounding area, empower the residents, stimulate economic growth, and sustain resident's safety.

Ms. Octavia Sutphin, the founder and president of NIA states, "We had been fighting to overcome dilapidated housing, neighborhood disinvestment, absentee landlords, abandoned and boarded up properties along with vacant lots that continue to distress this community with the threat of blight and eminent domain for so long. The up-standing residents have just given up, and most have either died off waiting, or left the community. And blight is no longer a threat, the entire area is now encompassed with the blight feared."

In June of 2005, NIA met with Director Tenisha Laird where, for the second time, NIA presented our request for revitalization of our community to the Division of Housing Production. At the time, we had a development company located in Camden willing to assist us on our proposed project and construct a revitalization proposal. Following, NIA submitted a preliminary narrative as well, with our SWOT Analysis, per Annette Lartique, West Ward Councilwoman's suggestion of that time.

Due to bureaucracy, our vision continued to move further away from our grip, it appeared it was not in the City's best interest; therefore, the community continued to depreciate, as the rebuilding of neighboring streets and communities manifested all around us. In 2009, upon learning of Capital Health's (Mercer Campus) move to Hopewell, Ms. Sutphin reached out to Dennis Dooley, Vice President of Capitol Health Systems, Planning & Development Dept., to initiate dialogue for our concern of the major stakeholder leaving the community, and the arrival of a voided area, of enormous proportion. This did spawn dialogue between Doug Palmer, Dennis Dooley, and NIA's Board Members at the time. Under Doug's direction, from this dialogue Capitol Health Systems paid for Heyer, Gruel & Associates to do a comprehensive plan for the Bellevue-Rutherford Neighborhood.

Upon completion of the plan, the bottom line was that this area needed to be designated as a redevelopment area. In September of 2010, NIA was asked to be on the Review Committee for Bellevue/Rutherford Redevelopment Plan and took part in selecting Clark Caton Hintz as the firm to provide the "In need of Redevelopment" report. NIA received their draft in October of 2014 and attended the Planning Board Meeting to explain the contents of the draft. At the meeting, we learned the Bellevue-Rutherford Area plan had been in a redevelopment zone all along, the "Central West Redevelopment Area".

Ms. Sutphin, as a long-time community member and activist states, "As a property owner/landlord in that community, I don't understand how these slum lords can thrive in our communities subjecting residents to reside in such deplorable dwellings. In June of 2006 a dilapidated property, 218 Rutherford, literally collapsed. How many more properties on our block are just going to collapse, and God forbid if someone gets hurt or dies because of these unsafe dwellings?"

NIA, an organization dedicated to assisting the residents of Trenton, plans to move forward regardless of the pushback. We are currently meeting with the City and the hospital owner to continue with our project. We are planning to hold community meetings to gather input and to include those impacted in the project.

Current Projects & Programs

Illegal Dumping Campaign

In 2015, NIA began the Illegal Dumping Campaign which cleans-up illegal trash dumping in Trenton. Illegal dumping poses several threats to the city, environment, wildlife, and citizens, in addition to creating other long-term issues. Contractors dump large piles of unwanted waste, such as construction and demolition debris, leaving behind threats to human life and the environment. Illegal Dumping can be detrimental to people who are exposed to the abandoned, dangerous chemicals. Injuries can easily occur from exposed edges, materials, and rusted nails. Large piles of waste create a decrease in property values and keeps community members from enjoying their home and community. Large dumps also commonly attract rodents and unwanted insects to residential areas. Flyers are sent out to community members and posted on our social media (@NIAofNewJersey) to promote the events.

2021 Illegal Dumping Flyers

- [4/10/21](#)
- [4/24/21](#)
- [5/8/21](#)

As of May 2021, NIA has cleaned up over 45 illegal dumping sites throughout the city. A variety of people volunteer with us: Trenton residents, The College of New Jersey Bonners and students, Rider University Bonners, local politicians and activists, local businesses, Trenton Police, and more! Following each session, Ms. Sutphin and others lead a reflection to drive home the point to community members. NIA asks about their experience, what they expected, what they are feeling and experiencing, and how they plan to incorporate what they've learned into their lives.

In addition to physically cleaning up the sites, NIA has played an active role in educating the community on the dangers of illegal dumping. We were featured in a PBS Documentary "[Here's The Story: The Green Amendment | Season 2020 | Episode 3](#)". We post photos of our clean-ups on our website which can be found on our website under "NIA's Gallery": <https://niaofnj.org/nias-gallery>. Additionally, following each clean-up NIA sends a thank you letter with a mini photo-album from the day.

2021 Clean-Up Photo Album

- [4/10/21](#)
- [4/24/21](#)

Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA) Bonner Internship Program

About Me

I am currently a senior Bonner Community Scholar studying Political Science and Sociology. Throughout my time in Bonner, I have served at a variety of sites. I began at the Academic Sports Academy (ASA) and was serving there for two years before being switched to Boys and Girls Club for the following year. I served there for my first three years in Bonner, in addition to other sites here and there including Meals on Wheels, Rescue Mission, Fernbrook Farm, TCNJ Campus Garden, and the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK). As a Bonner, we led Community Engaged Learning (CEL) days for the first year and transfer students to complete their TCNJ service requirement. I began serving with NIA my sophomore year as a part of the CEL requirement and led service days partnering with NIA. After serving with NIA for almost two years, I proposed as a junior that for my senior year, I could solely serve with them as an intern and assist with their projects. At that point, we had formed a close relationship and I had helped with many of their initiatives. I was the first intern and college students they had partnered with and we were able to greatly push forward with our plans because of the extra assistance and time I was able to dedicate to the organization. The community partners are all extremely passionate about their work and I wanted to fully support them.

A few months into working with NIA, I decided that for my legacy project, I wanted to provide other Bonners with the amazing opportunity that I had been granted. Up until this point, NIA's relationship with Bonner was only through CEL days, which occurred only a handful of times throughout the semesters. My hope is that Bonner's relationship with NIA will continue to grow as more Bonners become involved in their projects and community work. I created two concrete internship positions, Communications and Administrative Intern, for Bonners to apply for as upperclassmen. Both positions are broken down into more details on the following pages. Bonners who become NIA interns will not only improve upon their skills, but also develop new techniques and immerse them in new experiences. Each role has their tasks but can be molded to fit the student and their skill sets and interests.

To introduce Bonners to the new opportunity, NIA members and I presented to Bonners for them to learn more about what we do, our projects and how we can incorporate them into our organization.

Presentation

- [NIA PowerPoint Presentation for Bonners](#)
- [COSA Slideshow Presentation](#)
- COSA Recorded Presentation (hyperlink coming soon)

Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA) Bonner Internship Program

Communications Intern

Requirements

- Can apply after being in Bonner for 2 years (4 semesters)
- Must be in good standing with the Bonner Program
- Ability to serve at least 3-5 hours each week, but more is always welcome
 - Once a week, attend a 1-hour NIA Meeting with all of the team
 - Once a week, attend a 30-minute 1-on-1 meeting with your supervisor

Qualifications

- Current Bonner Community Scholar
- Knowledge of social media platforms
- Knowledge of Google Applications, Microsoft Applications, Graphic Design Program (i.e. Canva), and Video Conferencing Platforms
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, timeliness and dependability
- Basic researching abilities
- Ability to stay organized, manage time, and willing to take initiative
- Presentation and public speaking skills
- Positively contributes to the team, is willing to critically think, and participating in thoughtful, meaningful discussions with other members
- Creative and willing to share new and innovative ideas

Responsibilities

- Take detailed minutes at every meeting
- Assist in running the NIA social media accounts and create content/informational posts
- Design flyers, graphics, evites, information material, and any other marketing materials
- Aid in organizing community meetings
- Monitor and respond for the NIA email account in a professional manner
- Aid in writing general information for NIA
- Assist in other NIA related tasks

Application

All applications must be submitted by May 30th, 2021 to be considered for the position. Please send an email to Lauren Wasserman at NIAofTrentonNJ@gmail.com with answers to the following questions. Each response should be between 200-300 words.

1. Please describe your relationship with Trenton thus far in your Bonner career. How have the connections you made impact you and your growth?
2. What qualities do you possess that will be beneficial to NIA and our initiatives? And how will they improve our team?
3. Why do you want to be NIA's Communications Intern and what makes you the best fit for the role? What do you hope to gain from the position?

Contact

Lauren Wasserman
 NIA's Business Administrator
NIAofTrentonNJ@gmail.com

Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA) Bonner Internship Program

Administrative Intern

Requirements

- Can apply after being in Bonner for 2 years (4 semesters)
- Must be in good standing with the Bonner Program
- Ability to serve at least 3-5 hours each week, but more is always welcome
 - Once a week, attend a 1-hour NIA Meeting with all of the team
 - Once a week, attend a 30-minute 1-on-1 meeting with your supervisor

Qualifications

- Current Bonner Community Scholar
- Knowledge of Google Applications, Microsoft Applications, and Video Conferencing Platforms
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, timeliness and dependability
- Strong researching abilities
- Ability to stay organized, manage time, and willing to take initiative
- Presentation and public speaking skills
- Positively contributes to the team, is willing to critically think, and participating in thoughtful, meaningful discussions with other members
- Creative and willing to share new and innovative ideas

Responsibilities

- Assist in research grants, policies, data/statistics and related information
- Aid in writing reports and compiling research
- Update the NIA webpage when needed
 - Create and update the Illegal Dumping Campaign Calendar
 - Add photos to the gallery
 - Organize and update resources to ensure the information is relevant
- Aid in organizing community meetings
- Assist in other NIA related tasks

Application

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1. Please describe your relationship with Trenton thus far in your Bonner career. How have the connections you made impact you and your growth?
2. What qualities do you possess that will be beneficial to NIA and our initiatives? And how will they improve our team?
3. Why do you want to be NIA's Administrative Intern and what makes you the best fit for the role? What do you hope to gain from the position?

Contact

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