La Piana Consulting
Associate Consultant – Job Description

About La Piana Consulting

Founded in 1998, La Piana Consulting is a national management consulting firm dedicated to strengthening organizations for greater social impact. We are on the cutting edge of thinking and methodology related to nonprofit strategy, business planning, and partnerships. We work to improve nonprofit leadership and management so that these essential organizations can have the greatest positive impact on society. Our clients include local and national nonprofits and foundations working on issues ranging from social justice and the environment to health services and youth development.

We are a virtual organization with 15‒20 staff who work remotely from their own home offices around the country. Our team includes full-time consultants who travel extensively for work with clients (in non-pandemic times), plus a few non-consulting positions that are responsible for firm operations. We value a culture of personal connection among our staff and host regular video calls and several in-person staff meetings per year (to be reinstated when deemed safe to travel and gather again). Please visit our website to learn more about our firm’s clients, resources, history, and team.

Role of the Associate Consultant

As an Associate Consultant (AC), you will participate as a member of consulting teams on a wide range of client projects, often serving as the project manager while also conducting research, developing materials, and providing additional team support.

You will work virtually from your own home office and report to a Partner for supervision and support. You will also be accountable to each client project’s Lead Consultant — who is often not your direct supervisor — on client work. Work is often required outside of normal business hours (i.e., evenings and weekends) to meet client demands, but a flexible schedule during the workday is part of our culture. ACs travel much less than our more senior consultants, but some travel (post-pandemic) may be required for client meetings.

Responsibilities of the AC will include, but may not be limited to, the following areas and items.

Project Coordination and Support

- Plan and participate in meetings as a member of the consulting team for projects with nonprofit clients (e.g., strategy development, business planning, governance, partnerships, etc.)
- Schedule and plan logistics for project interviews, focus groups, and other meetings with clients and staff — to be conducted in person and via telephone / video conferencing — using Outlook, Zoom, Doodle, and/or other tools and technologies
Monitor deadlines, tasks, and deliverables for client projects in partnership with Lead Consultants; develop and update work plans as appropriate; and identify the impact of work plan changes to project schedules, capacity, and budget

Create and monitor folders in cloud-based shared document system (Microsoft SharePoint) for sharing and archiving project files

Ensure consistency across project teams in use of document sharing tools, materials, and general project information

Attend and take notes at client meetings both in person and via phone / video conference, as needed (some travel will be required)

Perform miscellaneous tasks as assigned by the AC’s supervisor, to be determined as needed and as workload permits

Materials Development

Draft written materials and communications including memos, interview guides, handouts, worksheets, agendas, project work plans, proposals, surveys, presentations, minutes, etc.

Review, edit, and format reports, documents, and presentations generated by project teams

Create charts and graphs using financial data within Excel spreadsheets

Develop graphics to be used in client communications, presentations, and reports

Research

Develop, administer, and analyze online surveys and assessments using Qualtrics software

Conduct other primary research (e.g., interviews, focus groups) and secondary research (e.g., using online sources) for clients in support of strategy development, business planning, and other projects

Develop analysis and first drafts of findings reports for surveys, interviews, and other research

Desired Qualifications

The Associate Consultant position requires superb communication skills and mastery of common technology tools. A successful AC will be engaged, diplomatic, patient, and helpful; will proactively communicate challenges in order to solve problems; and is able to take direction as well as take initiative and work independently. The position is accountable to multiple individuals both within the firm and with multiple clients, resulting in a dynamic workday that requires numerous pivots from one project to another and the ability to work with different Lead Consultants and a wide range of teammates. As such, the job is often demanding and high pressure, with multiple demands and deadlines competing for attention.

We are looking for these qualities in new team members:

- **Personal Drive:** You want to make a difference — at work and in the world. Your work history demonstrates your eagerness to engage deeply as well as your tenacity, sticking with a challenge until you succeed.
Practical Experience: You know what it takes to support a successful team working with demanding clients. You have a solid understanding of common office procedures and technology tools and a commitment to practical solutions.

Thinking on Your Feet: You are able to quickly grasp the essence of a situation, balance competing demands, and produce high-quality work under pressure.

Commitment to Racial and Gender Equity and Inclusion: You understand the impact of systemic racism and gender bias, and you are able to engage with others productively around these issues, wherever they are in their personal journey.

If you are strong in each of these qualities, you may be a good fit for this role, regardless of your specific work experience or academic history. Our team comes to the work with widely varied backgrounds, but shares a common commitment to the social sector, to one another, and to our firm’s success.

Preferred Background

We look at the totality of an applicant’s qualities and skills when we hire. Specific experience and skills we consider include:

- Bachelor’s Degree
- Minimum of 4–6 years professional experience, preferably working as a Project or Research Assistant / Coordinator or an Administrative / Executive Assistant in a fast-paced environment
- Experience in the nonprofit sector is highly desirable
- Excellent written communications skills; clear and concise writing, as well as editing skills, are of particular importance
- Excellent oral communications skills, including a strong customer service orientation and the ability to communicate effectively to both technical and non-technical audiences
- Ability to identify and quickly comprehend research questions, and then independently pursue relevant information from secondary sources
- Capacity to handle multiple tasks, remain flexible, prioritize appropriately, and manage workflow for oneself and others; readiness to pivot from one project to another without missing a beat
- Must be a Power User of MS Windows and MS Office (Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Other software skills preferred:
  - advanced online survey tools (Qualtrics preferred)
  - cloud-based file storage systems (SharePoint preferred)
  - customer relationship management (CRM) systems (Salesforce preferred) and/or other databases
- Interest in consistently learning new tools and technologies, and applying those concepts to the needs of colleagues and the firm
- Self-motivated and able to work independently as part of a geographically-dispersed team, while being responsive to direction and knowing when to seek guidance
Compensation
La Piana Consulting offers a generous compensation package including a competitive salary (dependent upon experience and location); generous health, dental, and retirement benefits; and liberal paid-time off (PTO).

We outfit all staff’s home offices as needed (including a laptop, monitor, keyboard, printer/scanner, ergonomic desk chair, office supplies, etc.); provide monthly stipends for telecommunications (cellular phone plan, wireless internet, etc.); and cover all travel expenses for staff meetings and other required travel.

Starting salary for the Associate position is $60,000 to $70,000 depending on experience and location.

To Apply
To be considered for the Associate Consultant position, please send your resume and cover letter to careers@lapiana.org with the subject header “Associate Consultant position.”

We will review submissions as they are received and will contact applicants to request more information and/or to schedule interviews as appropriate. We seek to fill the position as soon as possible, and it will remain open until filled. No phone call inquiries about the position will be accepted.
Striving Toward Justice

La Piana Consulting is a leading national strategy firm helping the social sector navigate change. Our work provides us with an opportunity to help the people and organizations driving positive social change to be their best, to use their resources wisely, to create equitable workplaces where colleagues can thrive, and, as a result of their organizational health and strategic alignment, to make measurable progress on the critical missions we all rely upon them to advance.

In order to be effective in this role, we have developed a racial equity framework. What this means is that, while we are far from perfect, we strive toward justice. We live in a country founded on white supremacy and we are all complicit in upholding it. From centuries of inhaling air filled with racism and other social toxins, we have become conditioned to accept the status quo, if we see it at all, rather than to disrupt it. As a result, racial disparities exist in every aspect of life, stemming from our country’s default toward whiteness as the norm for all conventions. We recognize that race and racism do not exist in a vacuum; identities are intersectional and overlapping. Applying a racial equity frame to our work also informs our efforts to counter other forms of discrimination.

Racial Equity is Advanced When:

- Racial identity does not limit one’s success, participation, voice, access to power and professional growth, or sense of belonging at an organization.
- Leaders have an awareness of an organization’s history and an understanding of its connection to the broader U.S. history of oppression and inequity.
- Organizational processes and systems are intentionally designed to promote equity.

Our Foundational Beliefs:

- Positional leadership in any organization is a privilege, an obligation, and a duty, but leadership also exists throughout the organization, regardless of title.
- Achieving influence without authority is a necessary skillset in the workplace that may be more difficult for some groups to navigate depending upon who they are and who is in charge.
- Work styles are influenced by personal and cultural identities.
- Effective leadership teams openly and frequently discuss and work toward agreement on relationships, power, decision rights, delegation, and span of control.
- Implicit or explicit bias can inhibit full participation from all organization members. People default to familiar hierarchical models, but organizational structures and systems are a result of design decisions and can be changed.