Sustainability Fellowship
Health Benefits of Climate Change Mitigation Activities
Vermont Department of Health
Burlington, VT

About the Sustainability Fellows Program:
UNH Sustainability Fellowships pair exceptional students from across the U.S. with municipal, educational, corporate, and non-profit partners in New England to work on transformative sustainability initiatives each summer. Sustainability Fellows undertake challenging projects that are designed to create an immediate impact, offer a quality learning experience, and foster meaningful collaboration. Fellows work on-site with their mentors at partner organizations for 10 weeks, supported by a network of Fellows, partners, alumni, and the UNH Team. Graduate students, exceptional undergraduate students, and recent graduates from any accredited college or university are eligible to apply.

A detailed description of one Fellowship follows. To learn more about the other Fellowships offered this year, and for application instructions, see: www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows.

About the Fellowship:
The fellow placed at the Vermont Department of Health will have the opportunity to work with two programs, the Climate & Health Program and the Environmental Public Health Tracking Program. Both are housed within the Division of Environmental Health and receive funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The focus of the Climate & Health Program is to identify climate-related health risks in Vermont, develop adaptation strategies to reduce climate-related health risks, and promote climate change mitigation strategies that provide health co-benefits. The Environmental Public Health Tracking Program brings together environmental and health related information to support actions that improve public health.

This project will focus on health promotion by supporting development of climate change mitigation strategies that provide near-term health benefits. The project goal is to promote better health for Vermonters through climate change mitigation strategies, and to attract additional funding to support climate change mitigation strategies that provide health benefits. The specific project will be tailored based on the fellow’s skills and interests, but will focus on one or more of the following activities:

- Support and expand partnerships with home weatherization programs that reduce home energy consumption while providing health co-benefits
• Assess benefits and opportunities for health improvement through physically active transportation modes
• Improve delivery of an ongoing Energy-Saving Trees Program to better reach under-served households in urban communities
• Interview and document stories of individuals who have experienced health benefits through climate change mitigation activities
• Compile research on how the health sector does or could fund climate change mitigation strategies with health benefits

Outcomes:
Project deliverables will depend on the specific project focus but will likely include:

• Summary handout, graphics, or other communications materials that can be shared with program partners, funders, and other decision-makers
• Technical report documenting research, case studies, interviews, evaluation findings, analysis results, and/or recommendations
• Presentation summarizing the findings and recommendations from the project
• An example of the work done by the UNH Sustainability Fellow at the Vermont Department of Health in 2018 can be found in a two-page summary and in a more detailed technical report

Impact:
The fellow will gain a better understanding of the relationship between climate change and health, and build skills in data collection and analysis, case study research, program evaluation and improvement, outreach and communications, and collaboration with program partners. Specific products will vary by project focus, though will likely include data summaries, communications products, and other summary reports/documentation.

The outcome of this project has the potential to expand funding and delivery of climate change mitigation strategies in Vermont that also help promote better health for Vermonters through improved indoor and outdoor air quality, increased active living, and better environmental health. This project can also serve as a model for other states, including the 17 other grantees of the CDC Climate & Health Program.

Desired Qualifications:
• An academic background in public health, environmental science, community planning, public policy, energy systems, or other related fields
• Basic understanding of the relationship between climate change, human health, and environmental sustainability
• Basic understanding of health equity and the needs of underserved populations
• Experience with conducting research and data analysis
• Experience with program development, evaluation, and improvement
• Ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing
• Ability to work well independently and collaborate with a small team of health professionals and external partners

Work Location: Vermont Department of Health, 108 Cherry Street, Burlington, VT
Mentors: Lauren Prinzing, MPH, Epidemiologist, Vermont Department of Health; Jared Ulmer, MPH, Climate & Health Program Manager, Vermont Department of Health

Compensation: $6500 summer stipend
(taxable and paid on a two-week payroll cycle over the course of the fellowship term)

Expectations:
Fellows are expected to be primarily dedicated to their assigned projects throughout the summer, and also participate in a variety of networking activities, professional development opportunities, and presentations coordinated by UNHSI. Specifically, Fellows are expected to:

• Attend a mandatory orientation at UNH prior to the start of the fellowship term, May 28-30, 2019. (Travel scholarships may be available for students traveling from outside New England.)
• Work full-time on-site at the partner organization for 10 weeks, for a total of 400 hours, June 3 - August 16, 2019 (an eleven-week period, allowing for one week off, as mutually agreed upon with supervisor).
• Complete a fellowship project according to the work plan (with adjustments as necessary).
• Participate in weekly webinars or advisory group meetings.
• Present work at mid-term and final poster sessions at UNH on July 12 and August 9. (Travel support available.)
• Engage in additional professional development, networking, and advisory activities as offered.
• Provide and receive feedback at the end of the fellowship.

Apply by February 7 at www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows.

Questions may be addressed to megan.carney@unh.edu.