Sustainability Fellowship
Energy Efficiency for Rural Small Businesses
Resilient Buildings Group
Concord, New Hampshire

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 during the summer, 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 Host Organization:
Resilient Buildings Group’s mission is to scale-up the number and quality of high-performance, low-energy-use, resilient buildings in New England. Resilient Buildings Group (RBG) envisions a region in which new and existing structures become resilient, high-performance buildings: energy efficient, comfortable, durable, cost effective to operate, healthy, and safe.

RBG has become increasingly involved with utility energy efficiency programs over the past two years. The funding for these programs has increased annually resulting in higher energy savings targets and the goal to engage with more customers. RBG has been effective in communicating the benefits of the programs to many stakeholders including customers, trade allies, municipal leaders, and members of community organizations.

About the Fellowship:
NHSaves is a collaboration of New Hampshire’s electric and natural gas utilities working together to provide NH customers with information, incentives, and support designed to save energy, reduce costs, and protect our environment statewide. Liberty Utilities is one NH utility that distributes both electricity and natural gas to NH residents. Customers
support the energy efficiency programs through a charge on their bill. For natural gas customers this is through the “Local Distribution Adjustment Charge” (LDAC) and for electric customers this is through the “Systems Benefit Charge” (SBC).

Energy use is disproportional among users resulting in a small percentage of customers using a large percentage of the energy consumed. It is also true that much of the energy use is focused in dense urban areas. For energy efficiency programs this means that it is more feasible and efficient to focus implementation on large customers and in cities or towns with a high population. The problem with this is that small business customers in rural areas are less likely to participate in energy efficiency programs, despite the potential to reduce operating cost, ultimately helping their bottom line.

This position with the commercial & industrial energy efficiency program will study ways in which we can address this issue. The Fellowship will consist of a research piece and a planning piece. Through surveys, site-visits, and engagement with local organizations, the Fellow will identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for rural small business engagement with energy efficiency programs. The results will be documented in a report, which will then be used to create a plan for targeting the rural small business customer segment. This plan will serve as a guide to better engage these customers throughout New Hampshire.

**Outcomes:**

1. Develop case studies, info-graphics, and other educational resources promoting energy efficiency literacy.
2. Create municipal profiles documenting information gathered via outreach for the following communities; Alstead, Cannan, Charlestown, Enfield, and Walpole (electric territories), as well as Belmont, Franklin, Gilford, Laconia, and Tilton (natural gas territories).
3. Develop a plan to generate interest in energy efficiency through outreach to small business leaders and local organizations.
4. Document organizations that have the social capital to advance efficiency in rural communities.

**Impact:**

Two parts:

1) This fellowship will give the candidate an understanding of energy efficiency issues in the commercial sector and an opportunity to develop skills required for program implementation. These skills include: customer support, community outreach, energy analysis, stakeholder analysis, and program planning. The fellow will end the program with a deep understanding of why utility energy efficiency programs exist and how they work to benefit customers and the distribution system as a whole.
2) This project will result in a plan that identifies best practices for engaging rural communities in energy efficiency. This demographic is harder to reach which results in lower utilization of NHSaves initiatives. A well-designed plan will provide utility program administration with additional resources to design a program that better targets this customer segment, and ultimately a mechanism to increase energy efficiency – and decrease associated emissions – throughout the state.

**Desired Qualifications:**
- Academic background in Business, Economics, Marketing, Environmental Science, Planning, or related fields
- Experience in community development and outreach
- Strong communication and listening skills and the ability to understand the variety of challenges that rural businesses face
- Interest in energy, and in particular, interest in a career in the energy industry
- Self-starter; ability to take initiative and contribute actively to designing work plan, organizing meetings and calendar of activities, etc.
- Mission-driven
- Desire to be a part of a teamwork-focused environment that helps customers understand their energy usage and how to reduce it.
- Reliable transportation - due to the nature of the project, it is preferred that the candidate has their own transportation. However, candidates without transportation will be considered if they can demonstrate a plan for effectively engaging communities remotely.

**Work Location:** Resilient Buildings Group, 6 Dixon Ave. Concord, NH 03301

**Mentors:**
Matt L’Heureux, Energy Efficiency Program Implementor, Resilient Buildings Group
In partnership with Liberty Utilities’ NHsaves programs

**Compensation:** $6500
(taxable and distributed on a two-week payroll cycle over the course of the fellowship)

**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 26-28, 2020.** (Travel scholarships may be available for students traveling from outside New England.)
- Work full-time on-site at the partner organization, **June 1 - August 14, 2020**
• Complete 400 hours of work, including work at host site as well as UNHSI activities, between May 26 – August 14, 2020.
• 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 10** and **August 7**. (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 10** at [www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows](http://www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows).

**Questions** may be addressed to [megan.carney@unh.edu](mailto:megan.carney@unh.edu).