



The Sustainability
Institute

Sustainability Fellowship **Climate Solutions New England (CSNE): Community Solar as an Integrated Solution to Climate Change – Durham, NH**

Climate Solutions New England (CSNE) is researching, and working to promote, Integrated Solutions to climate change (see xxx) . One such potential solution is Community Solar (CS), or “solar gardens.” Community Solar installations are solar-electric systems that, through voluntary programs, provide power and/or financial benefit to, or are owned by, multiple community members. CS advocates are driven by the recognition that the on-site solar market comprises only one part of the total market for solar energy.

CSNE seeks a Sustainability Fellow to research and create case studies on a variety of community solar projects, and to evaluate the ways in which different approaches seem to more or less closely align with both the criteria and outcomes we’ve identified for Integrated Solutions, as well as the ways in which the most Integrated models can be better supported in New England. Through interviews, surveys, meetings and desk research, this Fellow will connect with those who are working to further CS as a climate solution, to gain a greater understanding of the opportunities and barriers—particularly in terms of promoting more environmental justice, increasing community cohesion and social capital, and enhancing resilience.

Specific duties of the fellow, under the management and oversight of the CSNE core team of UNH faculty and staff, and mentorship of the CSNE network, will include:

- Research the current state of the field for various forms of CS development, including utility-sponsored, special purpose entity, and non-profit “buy a brick” models. This will also include a literature search of both peer-reviewed and grey literature.
- Meet/speak with representatives or stakeholders of at least 4 different CS projects, (including energy providers, financiers, public sector officials, advocacy groups, and consumers) to gather information on their CS experience and assess results.
- Assess the business case for CS; this necessitates examining the total outlay and investment for the chosen CS projects and determining the net costs or savings of CS projects.
- Research and co-author a series of case studies/briefings, to serve as a resource for those who want to develop CS projects in New England, from community organizers or solar energy advocates to government officials or utility managers. This should include recommendations for dealing with the different policy and market conditions in each state, as well as unanswered questions and suggestions for further research.

This is a multi-disciplinary project that involves energy, policy, law, environmental justice, economic development, and communications. The chosen Fellow will gain a thorough and nuanced understanding of the current state of the solar industry in general and community solar in particular; will have tangible research and outreach materials to add to his or her academic and/or professional portfolio; and will have opportunities to widen her or his professional networks through working closely with energy and policy experts and advocates from around New England.

Location: UNH Sustainability Institute, Durham, NH

Time commitment: 40 hours per week, June 6-August 19, 2016

Compensation: \$6000 stipend

Desired Qualifications:

- Enrollment in an undergraduate or graduate degree program: sustainability, policy, environmental economics, public administration, law, journalism, English, communications, sociology, business or related field
- Demonstrated proficiency in critical thinking, and qualitative analysis
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills
- Interviewing experience desirable
- Familiarity with energy policy and renewable energy helpful
- Creativity, attention to detail, and a high level of initiative

UNHSI Sustainability program eligibility:

Graduate students, exceptional undergraduate students, and recent graduates are eligible. We will encourage, but not require, an academic sponsor or reference for each fellow, and where possible we will ask that course credits are awarded.

Supervision, Training, Mentoring and Evaluation

This fellow will receive supervision from a committee of local and national experts in energy policy and finance, as well as mentoring and professional development offerings from UNHSI.

Fellows will be expected to participate in three MANDATORY events:

- A three-day, two-night orientation in Durham, NH, June 1-3rd. Lodging and food are provided; Fellows are responsible for any associated travel costs.
- Midterm project presentations to UNHSI staff, faculty and relevant project partners (can be done remotely).
- A summative evaluation and feedback session at the end of their placement.

Apply by February 23rd at <https://www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows>