



# Establish Energy Internship Program

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Collaborating with students can be an efficient and low-cost way to build greater capacity for clean energy efforts. Through an internship program, students can apply their academic knowledge and experiences to help the municipality implement clean energy projects, and the municipality can deliver practical experience and professional development to students. This strategy describes how municipalities can establish an ongoing internship program that will provide assistance with clean energy efforts and serve as a hands-on learning experience for students interested in the planning and implementation of municipal-led energy projects.

## Program Implementation Steps

### 1. Identify Internship Program Objectives and Goals.

A successful internship program should be objective-driven. Prior to establishing the program, work with the relevant staff and energy committee members to establish clear goals and deliverables. Consider:

- Immediate objectives and long-term goals of the internship program
- Position responsibilities (e.g., immediate projects, ongoing tasks, research projects)
- Benefits to the intern (e.g., experience, training, travel opportunities, conferences, performance reviews, networking)
- Desired intern position qualifications (e.g., experience, education, skills, professional interests, availabilities)
- Length of each internship
- Available funding source(s) for the position
- A municipal staff member to provide senior-level support and day-to-day supervision of the position

## 2. Design Internship Program.

- **Draft internship posting** – When drafting the internship posting, consider projects and ongoing tasks that can be fulfilled by an intern, and identify the responsibilities and qualifications necessary. Review the posting with other interested parties, such as the facilities department and the energy committee, to ensure priority projects and tasks are considered.
- **Review internship structure and time-frame** – Consider the various options for creating an internship. If there is a university nearby, an internship program is a great opportunity to increase municipality-university collaboration. Based on the objectives of the internship program, one or a combination of several internship models can be pursued. The following section describes four examples.

**Table 1: Internship Models.**

	<b>General Student Internship</b>	<b>Federal Work-Study</b>	<b>University-Specific Program</b>	<b>Nonprofit Program</b>
<b>Time Frame</b>	All year	Academic Year (September–June)	Academic Year (September–June) Summer (June – August)	Summer (June–August)
<b>Resources for Position</b>	Municipality (Paid or Unpaid)	University and Municipality	University	Nonprofit and Municipality

### **Federal Work-Study**

[Federal Work-Study](#) (FWS) is a federal government program created to provide assistance to students with financial aid. Universities receive federal reimbursement that pays for 50–100% of the cost for students to work at on-campus or off-campus jobs, and the municipality pays any remaining portion. An off-campus FWS position is confined to community service jobs in the non-profit sector. Municipalities can take advantage of the financial benefits of off-campus FWS programs at local universities to establish an ongoing student employment position.

*Setting up a federal work-study program:*

1. Look at university student employment websites to identify university requirements for creating an off-campus FWS position.
2. Meet with identified university staff to formally establish an ongoing FWS program.

### **Tufts University Tisch Scholars Program (University-Specific Program)\***

[The Tisch Scholars Program](#) at Tufts University is offered by the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service. The purpose of the program is to utilize institutional resources and build capacity in local communities through student-driven collaboration with local organizations in Soverville, Medford, and Chinatown. Participating student scholars work with community organizations, schools, government offices, or non-profits on community projects over the period of an academic year. The scholars may work on selected projects or design their own projects that use their academic skills to meet a community-defined need. Program expenses are funded by Tufts University.

*Setting up a Tisch Scholars project:*

1. Meet with Tisch College faculty to identify energy-related projects that will best meet the program's requirements.
2. Review the documentation and information required: [Tisch Scholars Program FAQ](#).
3. Draft an RFP for the identified projects.
4. Review the RFP with the Energy Committee to finalize the document.
5. Submit the RFP to Tisch College.

*\*This is a region-specific example of how a university internship program can be used as a resource. Check with any neighboring universities and colleges in your region to see if there are similar programs being offered.*

### **Environmental Defense Fund Climate Corps (Nonprofit Program)**

[EDF Climate Corps](#) is a summer fellowship program that connects graduate students with municipalities, universities, and companies to support energy efficiency planning efforts. Climate Corps fellows work directly with the host organization for a minimum of 10 weeks to develop a tailored energy plan that identifies the financial and environmental opportunities for energy efficiency investments. EDF typically pays for a majority of the fellowship (around \$12,500) for nonprofit and municipal clients and provides training and other professional support to the fellows. In return, municipalities are expected to deliver supervision, provide access to energy use data, commit to energy reduction, and submit updates on the implementation of energy efficiency measures.

*Setting up an EDF Climate Corps position:*

1. Identify how a Climate Corps position could help the municipality achieve goals and projects outlined.
2. Review the program information in detail: [EDF Climate Corps Details for Cities](#)
3. Identify the municipal staff member who will provide daily management and supervision of the fellow.
4. Prepare and update all energy records that can be used to both track energy consumption and benchmark reductions. Relevant records include: MassEnergyInsight account, building energy audits, purchase records, and facilities records.
5. Complete the Climate Corps host city application by late February.

## **3. Launch Internship Program.**

- **Distribute internship posting** – Once the program is finalized, advertise the position opening on the municipal website and at local universities.
- **Select intern** – Review applications, interview candidates, and select an intern. Complete any required documentation for the university.
- **Supervise intern** – Give assignments to the intern and provide guidance and supervision on an as-needed basis.

#### 4. Maintain Internship Program.

- **Update internship posting** – Prior to each semester, update the internship posting based on upcoming project needs.
- **Distribute updated posting** – Each semester, send the internship posting to all university and program contacts.
- **Monitor the program’s success** – On an ongoing basis, assess the effectiveness of the program. Meet annually with university contacts to assess the internship program structure (e.g., time frame, salary, student recruitment process) and conduct initial, mid-term, and final check-ins with each intern to review internship project goals.

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#### References

- Baskin, M., Fink, B., & Mullaney, B. “Student Residential Energy Efficiency in Medford.” Tufts University. June 2012. <http://stuff.mit.edu/afs/athena/dept/cron/project/EESP-Cambridge/Articles/Student%20Residential%20Energy%20Efficiency%20in%20Medford.pdf>
- “Federal Work-Study.” U.S. Department of Education. <http://studentaid.ed.gov/types/work-study>
- EDF Climate Corps. <http://edfclimatecorps.org>
- “Tisch Scholars.” Tufts University. <http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/students/scholars>