CELT Clean Energy & Environment Legacy Transition

Municipal Fellowship

Fall 2025 Cohort Impact

The Municipal Fellowship is sponsored by the Clean Energy and Environment Legacy Transition (CELT) Initiative, a project of the **Institute for Global Sustainability at Boston University** and the **Rist Institute for Sustainability and Energy at University of Massachusetts, Lowell.** The first cohort of fellows served from June through November 2025 and marked the program's launch of placing students directly within municipalities and regional planning agencies (RPAs) to support local clean energy and decarbonization efforts.

Nine fellows were selected and worked on a range of projects, including greenhouse gas emissions tracking, climate action planning, energy efficiency outreach, and grant writing support to access funding. Across placements, fellows helped fill capacity gaps by providing dedicated research, coordination, and implementation support, allowing municipalities to advance critical clean energy initiatives and students to gain hands-on experience in clean energy and local government.

Photo credit: Rist Institute for Sustainability and Energy

Key Outcomes

Fellows were prepared for a career in sustainability or municipal work

Fellows reported that their experience was a valuable introduction to working in professional settings and learning about municipal operations. They were exposed to diverse career paths within the energy and sustainability fields and had meaningful networking opportunities with professionals and peers.

Fellows developed skills across key competency areas

Fellows self-reported that the fellowship allowed them to develop skills in project management and professional communication. Many fellows also developed project-based skills such as grant writing and using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, and greater knowledge of clean energy policy.

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Most hosts applied to extend the fellowship

Fellow hosts requested extensions: Salem requested an extension to complete a grant application, while Ashfield, Berlin, NMCOG, and the Rist Institute applied for a new fellow in the second cohort. Non-renewal reasons were based on capacity, not program quality.

Fellows had a positive impact in their placements

From surveyed Fellows and placement Points of Contact (60% response rate), all felt the fellowship met or exceeded expectations and felt the work had a measurable impact on local clean energy initiatives. Hosts described their fellows as self-starters, enthusiastic, and high-quality contributors.

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Fall 2025 Fellows

Paige Kelley | Arlington

Boston University, Master's of Public Health & Program Management

Paige worked on Net Zero Action Plan updates, community outreach for electric vehicle charging and Electrify Arlington, and created an interactive dashboard of neighborhood-scale electrification data.

Teniel Rhiney | Ashfield

University of Massachusetts Amherst, PhD student in Anthropology

Teniel helped with community outreach for "Solar for All" and assisted in writing Municipal Energy Technical Assistance and Climate Leaders grants. She also performed research on geothermal energy and streetlight conversion projects.

Elias Rodriquez | Athol

University of Massachusetts Lowell, BS in Mechanical Engineering

Elias worked with the Department of Planning and Development to produce a cost estimator for the electrification of new buildings and vehicles, and conducted a study to plan for the expansion of electric vehicle charging stations.

Omid Mahdavi | Berlin

Worcester Polytechnic Institute, PhD student in Mechanical Engineering

Omid developed a decarbonization roadmap and energy savings prioritization plan, performed an HVAC system analysis, and produced a Green Communities grant application for a school electrification project.

Ashanti Mclean | Needham

University of Massachusetts Boston, BA in Environmental Studies & Sustainability

Ashanti developed the Electrify Needham program, and guidelines for municipal sustainable buildings as well as performed research for calculating embodied carbon in municipal construction projects.

Amy Bickford | NMCOG

Framingham State, BA in Environmental Science & Policy

Amy helped to implement a regional bicycle and pedestrian project and a Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation grant while assisting with an energy siting study to understand the power needed to support future housing growth.

Victoria Lai | Salem

Boston University, Master's in Business Administration

Victoria led electric vehicle infrastructure planning and developed a public-private partnership plan to advance clean energy initiatives. She also helped in applying to grants to advance projects on energy-efficient buildings and resilient communities.

Nashra Ali | Springfield

University of Massachusetts Amherst, MS in Business Analytics

Nashra worked within the Water & Sewer Commission to help with grant writing and developing a Wastewater Energy Recovery initiative. She also assisted in managing the Commission's energy portfolio.

Carley Castro | CELT

University of Massachusetts Boston, BA in Communications

Carley provided general operational and administrative support to the fellowship program for the leadership at the Rist Institute. She also led the fellowship's social media, marketing, and communications efforts.

Learn More!

Use this QR code to find more information about the CELT Municipal Fellowship

Here you can find the student and the host application forms and learn more about our past fellows. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Email MACELT@uml.edu with questions about the program.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Boston University Institute for Global Sustainability

UMASS LOWELL

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