

The Municipal Fellowship program 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 the University of Massachusetts, Lowell**. The second cohort of fellows served from January through June 2026 and placed students directly within municipalities and regional planning agencies (RPAs) to support local clean energy and decarbonization efforts.

Nineteen fellows were selected and worked on a range of projects, including producing public-facing data dashboards about the benefits and progress of projects, researching lessons learned from clean energy transition projects from peer municipalities, and producing educational outreach materials for residents. 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: Institute for Global Sustainability

"Being placed with one organization and team for the full six months meant that it was easy to explore a decent depth and breadth of clean energy projects." – Beck Mutka, Spring 2026 Fellow

Key Outcomes

Fellows advanced into careers in sustainability or municipal work

After completing the program, students were hired into full-time roles such as municipal Sustainability Manager, transportation manager at a regional planning agency, and an engineer at National Grid. "It truly felt like a guided ... program for the renewable energy and sustainability industry," said fellow Hasna Rodriguez. "Our interest is forever peaked in this field."

Hosts received support and capacity to execute clean energy projects

Fellows produced concrete deliverables for organizations, including Supplemental Energy Reduction Plans, solar permitting analyses, and electrification implementation blueprints, and engagement materials. "It provided support and extra capacity for a rural town needing support," said Hampshire Regional Partnership's Municipal Energy Manager.

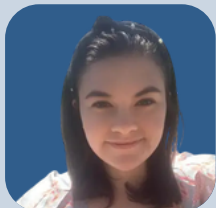
Fellows developed skills across clean energy and municipal practice areas

Fellows self-reported growth in project management, professional communication, and topics such as electrification, solar energy, and clean energy policy. Many developed hands-on skills in Excel, GIS, and data visualization. "We were able to experience and understand almost all of the challenges that come up in a real work environment," said fellow Amir Jamali.

Fellows built professional network connections in the clean energy sector

Most fellows reported that the fellowship expanded their professional network, connecting them with local governments, regional planning agencies, utilities, and state agencies. Hosts expressed interest in hosting future fellows: "We had such a wonderful experience ... we wanted to continue the work [our fellow] started," said Acton's Sustainability Director.

Kylie Raymond | Acton



Tufts University, MA in Urban and Environmental Policy & Planning

Kylie created a dashboard to provide resources for residents and developers looking to add solar panels to their homes and businesses, and support Acton in obtaining SolSmart designation to increase clean energy integration.

Audrey Potash | Ashfield



University of Massachusetts Amherst, MS/MRP in Sustainability Science

Audrey implemented community outreach strategies and produced education materials about solarization and then analyzed the results of a survey on the effectiveness of their materials. They shared their findings in a local newspaper.

Amir Jamali | Berlin



Worcester Polytechnic Institute, PhD student in Business Administration & Management

Amir created a database of buildings and a tool that forecasts their maintenance costs and capital planning to support long-term budgeting and phased project planning. He then linked the projects to aligned state funding opportunities.

Jaelyn Carr | Boston



Boston University, BA in Environmental Analysis & Policy, MS in Energy & Environment

Jaelyn analyzed and consolidated the outcomes of Zero-Over-Time plans for 50 buildings across the city to demonstrate who has benefitted from building decarbonization assistance programs and projected climate and financial impacts.

Astika Tyagi | Boston University & Bentley University



Boston University, MS in Data Science

Astika built a municipality-level adoption model of heat pumps to identify what factors explain heat pump uptake and find towns behaving unexpectedly. She found that heat pump adoption is concentrated in oil-dependent municipalities.

Rebecca Caruso | Boxborough



Northeastern University, MS in Environmental Science & Policy

Rebecca performed research on adopting specialized stretch codes for new construction. She researched and interviewed towns who have adopted the code, performed a cost and emissions analysis, and created educational materials to inform a future town vote on its adoption.

Tess Shotland | Framingham



Boston University, BA in Environmental Analysis & Policy, MS in Energy & Environment

Tess created a Climate Action Plan dashboard to inform residents about Framingham's progress on tree canopy coverage, emergency preparedness, and city composting programs, including graphs and visualizations that can be updated in real time.

Jasmine Seng | Franklin



University of Massachusetts Lowell, MS in Geoscience

Jasmine created an interactive story map to highlight Franklin's sustainability initiatives and make municipal projects accessible to residents, informing them of the environmental benefits and impacts on residents' everyday life.

Hasna Rodriguez | FRCOG



University of Massachusetts Amherst, BA in Economics

Hasna produced a research brief on ground source heat pumps for municipal staff, including case studies of school buildings that had implemented geothermal energy and a framework for evaluating geothermal opportunities in rural communities.

Eva Liu | Green Communities



Boston University, BA in Environmental Analysis & Policy and Economics

Eva identified common sections of municipal annual energy reports creating issues in reporting and regions with missing or inconsistent data and developed recommendations to make reporting more accessible for municipal staff.



Jonathan Forbes | HRSD

University of Massachusetts Amherst, BA in Environmental & Natural Resource Economics

Jonathan created a dashboard based on Massachusetts Energy Insight data for each member municipality and the Hampshire Regional High School to engage residents and gain community support for the clean energy transition.



William Sheppeck | Malden

Boston University, BS in Mechanical Engineering

William researched municipal clean energy peer coaching programs in 11 municipalities which help residents navigate clean energy upgrades. He then produced pilot outreach materials and guidance for designing a program for the City of Malden.



Beck Mutka | MAPC

Northeastern University, MS in Environmental Science & Policy

Beck organized the Metro Mayors Youth Climate Summit to engage young people with climate change and local action. They organized a Youth Climate Taskforce to get feedback on the agenda and produced resources on recreating this event.



Zach Cassidy | New Bedford

Walden University, PhD student in Public Policy & Administration

Zach researched options for using a current landfill for a solar farm, outlining cost estimates and potential benefits, including using community solar to overcome state municipal net metering caps. His research included a report with case studies.



Alexavier Pilacik | NMCOG

University of Massachusetts Lowell, BA in Environmental Science: Geoscience

Alexavier produced a solar decommissioning plan memo which was shared with the state and researched municipal aggregation programs in peer municipalities to identify options for implementing in Lowell.



Ashley Gast | Petersham

Clark University, BA in Environmental Science & Policy and International Development

Ashley supported the the preparation and submission of a Green Communities grant proposal to help electrify and weatherize municipal buildings, and completed several Mass Save analyses to strengthen the application.



Catherine Bult | PVPC

University of Massachusetts Amherst, MA in Public Policy & Administration

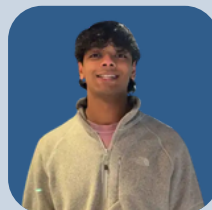
Catherine helped communities in regional school districts add school buildings to their Energy Reduction Plans by reviewing historical reports, identifying missing data, and requesting or calculating anything missing.



Nick Alphonso | SRPEDD

University of Massachusetts Lowell, MS in Environmental Studies (Atmospheric Science)

Nick created educational materials about electric vehicles for renters to increase adoption among non-homeowners. Materials included information on renters' "Right to Charge" and shared charger locations.



Nicole Fina | Wakefield MGLD

Tufts University, MA in Urban and Environmental Policy & Planning

Nicole developed an interactive dashboard for students and teachers to integrate concepts and data from the Municipal Gas and Light Department into their curriculum, co-ops, and workforce development opportunities for students.



Colin Ormond | CELT

University of Massachusetts Lowell, BA in Political Science

Colin supported the CELT Initiative's engagement efforts, event coordination, and program administration. He attended fellowship recruitment events, coordinated onboarding, and produced post-fellowship feedback forms.

