

Summer 2021 Sustainability Scholars Program Internship Opportunity

The UBC Sustainability Initiative (USI) is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on funded sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the mentorship of a partner organization, and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing sustainability across the region.

- Visit the [Sustainability Scholars Program website](#) to learn [how the program works](#) and to [apply](#).
- Be sure to review the [application guide](#) to confirm your eligibility before applying.

Applications close at midnight on Sunday January 31, 2021.

Research project title:

Post-Pandemic resilient community planning using a diversity and equity lens: Practical ways to help the DTES community prepare for, respond to, and recover from pandemics and other social, economic and environmental shocks

Project description

It is indisputable that the COVID-19 pandemic has had severe impacts on most, if not all, sectors across BC, Canada, and the World. While this impact has reached everyone in BC, there are communities where the impact has been much harder and more robust, Vancouver's Downtown East Side (DTES) is one of these communities.

This is an assessment project that will investigate ways that the DTES community can increase its resilience to future pandemics and other social, economic, and environmental challenges and changes that might occur while also addressing how best recover from the current pandemic. This assessment will be done through both equity and diversity lens. In other words, this assessment examines various problems caused by pandemic-control interventions, and recommends specific ways that the DTES can better prepare for, respond to, and recover from pandemics and other shocks.

At this time, there is no focus on such assessment especially for the DTES. We believe it is crucial that the current response to the pandemic moves in parallel with solid planning for the recovery phase and then to the resilient phase, as this is the only way to ensure our response is sustainable and will have a positive impact in the long-term.

People experiencing homelessness or inadequate housing, and the organizations that serve them, face special and very serious challenges during times of emergencies.

Disasters are unpredictable. Major pandemics are rare and highly variable events, making them difficult to forecast. It would be a mistake to prepare for just one risk, such as a major pandemic, and ignore other disasters. For these reasons, our project aims to approach this issue broadly; by considering how lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic can be generalized to help individual households and communities in the DTES prepare for diverse health, environmental and economic shocks, including but not limited to infectious disease risks.

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The main two questions that this assessment is aiming to answer are:

1. How can we plan a DTES post-pandemic recovery in a way that builds communities that are resilient to future economic, social and environmental shocks, including pandemics and other disasters?
2. What strategies should organizations like Atira consider for planning a resilient post-pandemic community in DTES?
3. What lessons learned from the COVID-10 Pandemic can be used to build upon for future planning?

The Scholar will work with the mentor and Atira staff to identify lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic work in the DTES, explore which areas can be further developed and strengthened, and which areas are not possible to continue, identify major risks facing the DTES, and propose a resilience framework for the DTES in response to future shocks.

The scholar will need to speak with a variety of stakeholders including Atira, other similar organizations, relevant government organizations, and people from the DTES to ensure a participatory approach for the assessment.

It is expected that the scholar will use a multi-method approach combining both quantitative (i.e., survey research) and qualitative (i.e., conduct interviews) research methodologies. This comes in addition to a solid desk and literature review. The Scholar will also need to ensure all tools used are culturally sensitive with clear diversity and equity understanding. We need to make sure that our planning identifies the specific needs of the most vulnerable and that we are actively involving them in the planning process.

Deliverables

The Scholar will deliver a final report summarizing and consolidating their research, alongside a final presentation made to Atira and key stakeholders. The report should include:

- An assessment report analysing the DTES post-pandemic through a resilient community planning approach with a diversity and equity lens. The assessment should include:
 - a summary of the post-pandemic issues currently faced by the DTES
 - recommendations and a framework on how best to support resilient community planning with an equity and diversity lens
 - recommended actions to include in a resilient community plan
- A literature review of existing scholarship on the DTES and issues faced by people living there, and also resilient community planning
- A final report for the UBC Sustainability Scholars online project library.

Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between May 3 and August 13.
- The work schedule is flexible, although the scholar must be available to attend meetings and conduct interviews Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (pacific time) , approximately 16 hours per week.

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

- The Scholar must be available to attend orientations and biweekly check-ins. Other meetings or training may arise which would require attendance with advance notice, but attempts will be made as much as possible to schedule these within the Scholar's work week. All meeting and orientations will be done online.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Community engagement experience
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Strong research and analytical skills
- Deadline oriented
- Demonstrated experience in
 - Community and Regional Planning
 - Gender, Race, Sexuality & Social Justice
- An eye for design and page layout an asset
- Criminal Record Check required [the successful candidate will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses to get a criminal record check done]
- Demonstrated alignment with Atira's mission, vision and values.
- Familiarity with issues facing the DTES particularly to do with housing affordability and the housing crisis an asset

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Apply here: [Click here to apply](#)

Contact Karen Taylor at sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca if you have questions

Useful Resources

We are holding a special **resume preparation workshop for prospective Scholars** on January 19. [Click here for details and to register.](#)

Below are some links to useful resources to help you with your resume and cover letter (there are many more online). Some of these resources also provide information on preparing for your interview.

<https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/resumes-cover-letters-curricula-vitae>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/graduate-pathways-success>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/cover-letter-cv-resume-templates-ubc-career-services>

About Atira

Our Mission

Atira Women's Resource Society is dedicated to supporting women and children affected by violence by offering safe and supportive housing and by delivering education and advocacy aimed at ending all forms of gendered violence.

Our Vision

A world free of inequalities, where everyone's human rights are respected and where women and girls have the right to participate fully and effectively in all of the decisions that affect their lives.

Our Values

Our values guide our decision making and everything we do. Day in and day out, this is what we strive to be.

Inclusive Feminism

Our work is informed by our understanding that women's experience of oppressive institutions (sexism, racism, colonialism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, transphobia, xenophobia and other identity markers) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another.

Women-Centred

Our work is informed by our understanding that in addition to providing safety and respect, all of our programs must invite and encourage women's collaboration and that women must have the opportunity to be active participants in all of our services.

Harm Reduction

Our work is informed by our understanding that women's experiences of gender-based violence is central to their use of substances and that understanding the intersections between women's experience of violence, poverty, racism, gendered patterns of drug use/harms, and lack of support for mothering, are critical to developing programs that are seamless and which increase opportunities for women to keep themselves and their children safe.

Innovation

Our work is informed by our understanding that the women who access our services and our staff are our greatest asset and so we encourage individuality, creativity, leadership, transparency and accountability.