

Fall 2022 Sustainability Scholars Program Internship Opportunity

The UBC Sustainability Hub 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 September 18, 2022.

Project title: Research to update policies and practices to support the health and safety needs of women living in SRA hotels in the DTES managed by Atira Property Management

Project Background & Overview:

The DTES was the center of the city at the beginning of the 20th century and concentrated industry, the hub of rail transit, shopping areas, and a major cultural and entertainment district along Hastings St. It was also the home of many low and moderate-income people. Men have predominantly inhabited the area, because of its closeness to the industrial zone, the type of jobs historically offered and the way housing was designed. According to Antolin (1989), Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels were the main accommodation of male immigrants and transient workers. These hotels also housed couples and families during the first decades of the 1900s. Until recently, the major group of (Single Room Accommodation) SRA¹ residents have been men, although the percentage of women living in this type of units has increased over the past years.

The DTES is an example of how cities have been historically designed from a male-centered perspective. Planning is not neutral and historically has developed gender-blind policies with the goal to respond to a universal idea of the public interest. Women in the DTES are still in some cases considered second-class citizens; women's bodies are undervalued, objectified and become vulnerable to all types of gender violence; this is aggravated not only by the fact of being women, but also by being low-income, marginalized, migrants, from a minority group, with mental health challenges, drug addictions or for being sex workers. For some people their lives do not have the same value than any other human being.

Women's safety is a major issue in the DTES. Poverty, homelessness and unsafe housing make many women more vulnerable to sexual, emotional, mental, and physical violence. Now, adding to this are the implications and the impact of COVID-19. It is important that Atira understands what all of this means for women's health and safety in SRAs which are considered a last-resort housing and struggle to meet many of the minimum standards of adequate living.

Project description

¹ Atira uses the term Single Room Accommodation (SRA) instead of Single Room Occupancy (SRO), but they refer to similar types of accommodation.

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In December 2013, in partnership with the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning, Atira produced a report that looked at women's health and safety practices within Atira's SRAs, which resulted in a policy document: Preventing Violence Against Women in Atira's Single Room Occupancy Hotels. However, and while the reported incidents of violence within Atira programs in 2022 are primarily between men, much has changed since 2013 especially considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's safety and wellbeing. Also, and only anecdotally this year, we are seeing an increase in violence between women. It is important that Atira explores those changes through an updated version of this report and a review and update of its Preventing Violence Against Women in Atira's Single Room Occupancy Hotels protocols.

The purpose of this project is to explore how can Atira can best support the health and safety needs of women living in SRA hotels in DTES through policies and practices. Atira also expects, as part of the report analysis and recommendations, considerations on the effects of climate change while living in last resort housing in the DTES.

Therefore, Atira is seeking a Sustainability Scholar to update the women's health and safety in SRA hotels report while adapting a more participatory approach in which women's voices and experiences are better captured through interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires while also maintaining an equity and diversity lens to the project approach. You can read the previous report here: <https://atira.bc.ca/sites/default/files/2014-03-05%20WH%26SL%20Report%20Ortiz.pdf>

Project scope

We want to understand:

- What changes occurred in women's health and safety practices since the 2013 report?
- What does health and safety mean for women living in SRA hotels?
- How can Atira better support women living in SRA hotels? actionable recommendation?

Activities will include:

- Research to understand the living conditions, gender considerations, health and safety, and other aspects of SRAs in the DTES. The research will include desk research, document review and interviews to capture a variety of perspectives from key informants and stakeholders. Interviews will be with government officials, BC Housing staff, City of Vancouver staff, local organizations; staff working in DTES SRA hotels; etc.
- Design a questionnaire to gather information on women's perspectives on existing practices to support their health and safety, analyse the data and make recommendations for actions.
- Analyze results from data collection tools.
- Draft and finalize an updated report on women health and safety in SRA hotels.

Please note that Atira will support the scholar in each step including connecting the scholar with interviewees and supporting logistics.

Deliverables

- A final report summarising the research
- A final report for the online public-facing [Scholars Project Library](#).

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Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between October 17, 2022 and March 15, 2023
- The scholars are to complete hours between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 10 to 12 hours per week.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Experience conducting stakeholder engagement events, including facilitation skills, is an asset
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Excellent public speaking and presentation skills
- Community engagement experience
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys

Applications close **midnight Sunday September 18, 2022**

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

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

Useful Resources

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>