Summer 2026 Sustainability Scholars Program Internship Opportunity

The UBC Sustainability Hub is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the guidance of a mentor from the partner organization, and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing sustainability across the region. The pay rate for the summer 2025 program is $31.25/hour or $7,812.50 for a 250-hour project.

- Visit the Sustainability Scholars Program website to learn how the program works and to apply.
- Be sure to review the application guide on the Apply page to confirm your eligibility before applying.

Applications close at 11:59 pm on Sunday February 1, 2026.

Project title: Designing and Co-Facilitating Energy-Efficiency Workshops to Support Climate-Friendly Retrofits and Homes in Richmond

Project Background

The buildings sector is the largest source of community greenhouse gas emissions in Richmond. While the City has made progress through various policies and programs, existing homes remain a significant challenge. Household-level decisions on energy retrofits and equipment sizing have major implications for electric demand and comfort, yet many residents face barriers related to cost, information, and trust in contractors. To address these gaps, the City recently surveyed residents on topics they would find most useful for energy-efficiency education. This project translates those findings into a practical workshop series that empowers residents to reduce energy waste and emissions, and supports load management and low-carbon electrification. The project will also offer reflections on what is heard from homeowners themselves during these workshops and provide recommendations for further action.

Project description

This project will support the City of Richmond's Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) by improving public understanding of energy efficiency and low-carbon home retrofits. The Scholar will design and co-facilitate a mini-series of three to four public workshops focused on helping residents make informed, practical decisions about energy upgrades and electricity demand management in their homes. Each workshop will address a specific theme identified through a recent City survey of residents, such as saving money through energy efficiency, hiring and working with trusted contractors, retrofit basics, and improving comfort while cutting energy waste. The Scholar will conduct background research on effective community education and behavioural approaches to energy conservation, develop accessible and evidence-based workshop content, and co-facilitate sessions alongside City staff and invited subject-matter experts (e.g., contractors, energy advisors, or experienced homeowners).

The project is valuable because it directly supports the City of Richmond's efforts to reduce building-sector emissions and accelerate the adoption of efficient technologies, such as heat pumps, and improve resilience to threats like extreme heat and air quality events. It will also strengthen local capacity for

energy literacy—helping residents understand how to lower energy bills, access rebates, and make better retrofit choices.

The Scholar's work will be actionable during the summer term: research and workshop design will be completed in early summer, with the workshop series delivered mid-summer, and results analyzed by August.

The findings and materials will immediately inform future outreach by the City and partners, and provide a replicable workshop model that can be reused and scaled in subsequent years or by other municipalities and organizations.

Project scope
The Scholar will lead the research and design of a series of three to four public energy-efficiency workshops. City staff will manage logistics and coordinate guest speakers (e.g., contractors, energy advisors, experienced homeowners).

The Scholar will:

1. Conduct Background Research
    a. Research and synthesize information on workshop topics (see below), incorporating research previously completed by the City, utilities, consultants, other levels of government, and others.
    b. Identify best practices in energy-education design and communicating technical topics with target audiences,
    c. Review jurisdictional examples of municipal energy-literacy and retrofit education programs.
    d. Identify common barriers and opportunities experienced by building owners when completing retrofits or implementing energy efficiency measures, with a focus on addressing those issues in the workshops.
2. Develop Workshop Content and Materials
    a. Draft curricula, slides, handouts, and evaluation forms for 3–4 sessions covering topics such as:
        i. Saving Money Through Efficiency - Slashing energy bills and unlocking rebates and incentives for energy upgrades,
        ii. Hiring the Right Contractor - Tips for finding and working with pros you can trust,
        iii. Energy Retrofits 101 - The must-know basics for a more efficient home,
        iv. Comfortable and Efficient Living - Boosting comfort while cutting energy waste, and
        v. What Questions Should I Ask My Contractor? - A checklist for making sure your home is made as efficient and comfortable as possible following a retrofit project or new build
3. Co-Facilitate Workshops
    a. Collaborate with City staff and guest presenters to deliver and evaluate three to four workshops.
    b. Collect participant feedback and document observations.
4. Analyze Findings and Develop Recommendations
    a. Summarize "what we heard," including common themes, questions, and feedback.
    b. Identify opportunities to improve future workshops and scale energy-education efforts.

5. Prepare Final Report and Toolkit
    a. Produce a public-facing summary and internal recommendations report.
    b. Compile a replicable set of materials for future City use and distribution to partners.

Deliverables

- Final report summarizing background research, workshop design process, key findings, and recommendations.
- A "Richmond Energy-Efficiency Workshop Toolkit" including curricula, slides, handouts, and evaluation templates for each session.
- Workshop summaries with attendance and feedback data.
- Recommendations memo for City staff and BC Hydro on improving public energy-education initiatives.
- Public-facing summary for UBC Sustainability Scholars Library.

Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete
- This project must be completed between May 1 to August 14.
- The Scholars is to complete their hours between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 17 to 20 hours per week.
- The Scholar will be expected to attend regularly scheduled check-in meetings with the project mentor—time and date to be determine in discussion with the Scholar

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
☒ Excellent public speaking and presentation skills
☒ Community engagement experience
☒ Strong analytical skills
☒ Ability to work independently
☒ Deadline oriented
☒ Project management and organizational skills
☒ Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
☒ Understanding of concepts and technologies related to building efficiency and decarbonization
☒ Familiarity with workshop design and delivering workshops to adults, an asset

Applications close **at 11:59 pm Sunday February 1, 2026**
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, 2026. Click here for details and to register.

Below are some links to useful resources to help you with your resume, cover letter and preparing for an interview (there are many more online).

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