



AmeriCorps CivicSpark Fellow

Job Description

Fellows are **placed with local governments** to complete research, planning, or implementation projects that **support public agencies to advance their community resilience initiatives**. Projects focus on supporting capacity in environmental and social equity resilience issues.

Living Stipend

Entry — \$30,000

Middle — \$32,000

Top — \$34,000

Core Tasks

- Work on a range of tasks, including meeting facilitation, community outreach, data collection and analysis, and report writing.
- Fellows have the opportunity to work on volunteer engagement projects and attend regular training to build professional and technical skills.
- Develop a strong understanding of working with local governments and experience in using key sustainability and water management tools.

Workplace / Environment

- Work hours**
Approx. 40 hours/week for a Year
(At key milestones overtime work may be required to meet deadlines)
- Environment**
Typical office setting for the majority of the time, some in the field for trainings.
- Travel**
Travel **around the city** to work or training sites.

Education / Prerequisites

Education Level

Minimum of an Associate's Degree, preferred to be in environmental related fields.

Licensing

N/A

Pre-Job Preparation

A year of experience either volunteering, working in local government, or working in education.

Experience

Soft Skills

- Communication
- Leadership
- Organization

Technical Skills

- Research Skills
- Technical Writing
- Data Analysis

Career Path: Bridget Wipfler



About Me

AmeriCorps CivicSpark Fellow at the City of Redmond

Bachelors in Community, Environment, and Planning from the University of Washington

High School Life

"I didn't know what I wanted to do when I was in high school. I had a hard time figuring out what was the **right next step for me**, whether that was going to community college, a big or small school, or taking a year off to work. I was deciding between all of the above and didn't know yet what the right choice was. I felt that at a big school like University of Washington, which is where I ended up going, that I was definitely going to flounder and have to figure things out by myself. But, I was excited to be around a super large, diverse group at UW, and learn from my peers. Since parts of my family lives in Seattle, I knew I would have a layer of comfort there--enough to enable me to **challenge myself** in other ways."



Exploring Interests

"At the beginning of undergrad I worked at a women's legal office for a couple of months. I loved seeing how nonprofit legal work **can make change in women's healthcare**. After that, I spent my summers working on a sheep farm. During the school year, when I needed to be on campus, I helped the farm at city markets and sold cheese and lamb on the weekends. I became familiar with the local food system and learned so much from the brilliant farmers around Washington. The community around local food is incredibly smart, welcoming, and wholesome! I then worked in logistics for a nonprofit, Farmlink Project, that focused on connecting surplus produce to food banks. Through these experiences, I found **so many connections** between ecology, community, and literature, but didn't know how to merge them. I knew that I wanted to learn more about health and the environment, food systems, anthropology, public health. Nothing felt very right on its own."

Narrowing It Down

"I initially **found joy** in learning about the environment, but I also wanted to support communities and learn about the policies that shape these spaces. Eventually, I discovered Urban Planning at UW, specifically the Community, Environment, and Planning program, which allowed me to **integrate all my interests**. This major explores how communities and the environment intersect, learning within a cohort of advocates and leaders in fields like affordable housing, environmental justice, or food systems. I started to narrow down my interests during a 2021 field course in Puget Sound Marine Ecology at Friday Harbor. This experience motivated me to explore the connections between urban studies, policy, and marine ecology through urban planning."

About My Job

"Everything becomes more exacerbated when environmental issues are left unacknowledged."

Pros

- "Something I love about my job is getting to work **directly with the community** in Redmond. That doesn't happen all the time in public sector work. I really liked that aspect of supporting what the community needs and wants to thrive."
- "Working in the public sector you get to **make a lot of change**. I feel very motivated, and that my work is very meaningful."
- "With this fellowship, I'm gaining valuable on-site experience and learning about sustainability in local government. The hands-on experience is **virtually unparalleled** for someone fresh out of undergrad."

Cons

- "A potential negative with government work is that **the pace is really slow**. You need approval from many stakeholders before any implementation. But once you do, it's **really, really fulfilling**."
- "You receive a living stipend, which is **not ideal**. However, there are benefits such as housing support, insurance, free access to city amenities like museums, and complimentary transportation. The stipend is modest, and only sustainable for a year or so depending on your needs."

Fieldwork

- "My version of fieldwork is **in-person outreach**. I'll work at City events, plan workshops, table at the library, go to coffee shops, hang up flyers, etc., to spread the word about our sustainability programs and how people can get involved."

Office Work

- "It's mostly **office work**. I'll usually have a smattering of meetings and a check ins with my boss. I'll meet with colleagues about projects like our electric vehicle planning strategy or residential electrification programs."
- "For 90% of my job, I'm working in the Sustainability Office for the city, and the other 10% I'm working on **professional development** through the AmeriCorps programming."

Skills

- “**Lean into the skills you like or are naturally good at.** I always thought that I needed to have STEM skills or to know how to code GIS. They're important, but they just weren't for me. Where I felt like I could make an impact was strategic thinking, research, and working with people. Try to find a place where you can feel like you're serving in a way that you can **make the biggest impact.**”
- “Effective communication skills are **essential** for translating complex data into easily understandable information. Being able to communicate clearly and plainly is crucial for **building relationships** with others.”

Education/Experience

- “No one will **require** you to be an environmental science major. I have a pretty uncommon major, so, I think you just have to come with the skills of collaboration, communication, and excitement to learn. I think you can major in anything and **still be a climate advocate.**”
- “**Talk to as many people** as possible because there's so many angles that you can contribute to working in sustainability, climate justice, and serving communities. I sent lots of **cold emails** to people, and asked them about their jobs.”

The Future **After AmeriCorps**

“One of my biggest passions is bringing equity and justice into the climate action field.”

“I would love to continue **working in local governments**, as I believe it's a powerful way to **enact tangible change**. I see potential in contributing to sustainability initiatives within educational institutions, viewing schools as microcosms of cities that also require careful management to minimize carbon emissions. Also, roles within school districts, county administrations, or possibly in consulting firms look interesting. With my current AmeriCorps commitment lasting only a year, my next steps are up in the air, but, my ultimate goal is to transition into a career in the public sector focused on sustainability. I think any role I pursue will **incorporate equity and justice**, as environmental care without such foci only exacerbates the burden of climate change on underserved communities. I'm excited to see what comes next!”

About Sustainability Ambassadors

We are here to **RAPIDLY ADVANCE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**. Empowering **YOUTH** to catalyze community sustainability, **TEACHERS** to integrate rigor with relevance for real-world impact, **COMMUNITY** to drive collective impact.

We support a year-round training program for over 60 highly motivated middle and high school youth, a Teacher Fellows Program, City-County CAP internships, and college-level interns, and work with hundreds of educators to design new models of problem-based, place-based learning around **a shared vision of educating for sustainability**.

Your Green Jobs Future

Ready to explore your future in green jobs? Use [Map your Career](#) to map your trajectory!

Find career opportunities near you now! Use [Career Connect - Washington's](#) tool to find programs to build your career skills.

Interested in a future in solar? Take a look at the [Solar Jobs Census](#) to track solar job growth nationwide.

Explore [RVC's opportunities](#) to work with organizations led by communities of color.

Dive into the [Center of Excellence for Clean Energy's](#) robust career tools in the sustainable energy sector.

Grow your professional sustainability skillset with the [Seattle Youth Good Program](#).

See Seattle's [Clean Energy Resources Map](#) to examine what the city is planning for a greener energy future.

Check out the [U.S. Green Building Council](#) to explore the sector's current opportunities. :

Funder Acknowledgement



King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Wastewater Treatment Division

