



King County

2023 - 2024

*NextGen Climate
Internship Annual Report*

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The NextGen program gives undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to gain real world experience and further their professional development by implementing countywide climate policy in the Strategic Climate Action Plan.

Mission:

NextGen interns gain valuable experience in local government by implementing climate policy and action, managing long-term projects, and networking with environmental professionals.

3-Pronged Approach

Climate Policy Implementation

Interns lead projects and collaborate with stakeholders to implement countywide climate initiatives.

Professional Development

Interns learn the foundations of Project Management and create high quality deliverables to advance SCAP priority actions.

Networking Opportunities

Interns build strong relationships with internal and external professionals to grow their professional network.

Adapted from slides made by Elena Hamblin

STRATEGIC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) is a five-year blueprint for County climate action, integrating climate change into all areas of County operations and work with King County cities, partners, communities, and residents. The SCAP has three sections:

- Reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions section
- Preparing for Climate Change section
- Sustainable & Resilient Frontline Communities (SRFC)

Each intern was placed on a project from one of these sections.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPEMENT



Professional Development Budget

NextGen Interns receive a professional development budget as a part of their living wage. This budget has been spent on opportunities like conferences and symposia, online courses, and certifications, and can be spent on anything that will advance an intern's professional development.



Career Spotlight Sessions

An integral part of the NextGen internship involves networking with climate professionals, both within and outside King County. In small group settings, interns learn about career journeys, ask questions, and continue discussions through coffee chats. Notable Career Spotlight Sessions have included the DNRP Department Director, and many other speakers.



Google Project Management Certification

Interns must complete a project management course to develop project management skills. They learn about project initiation, planning, execution, and can utilize the agile framework and other strategies to enhance their project management capabilities.



Portfolio

Upon completing the NextGen internship, interns present a portfolio showcasing their achievements and learnings to King County employees, offering insights gained during their projects.

INTERN IMPACT

Medha Kumar - GHG Reductions

SCAP Biennial Report

- Created a tracking system for thirty-six performance measures to analyze greenhouse gas emissions.
- Synthesized data for six focus areas including transportation and land use, building and facility energy use, green building, consumption and materials, and forest and agriculture.
- Co-led over ten interactive workshops with teams from each focus area. These workshops identified the barriers and opportunities of implementing 149 priority actions.



Medha showed enthusiasm, commitment and interest. She asked questions that helped improve the final product. It was an absolute pleasure to work with Medha. I would hire her back in an instant given the chance - Carrie Lee, SCAP GHG Section Lead



Green Jobs and Workforce Development

- As part of the Green Jobs team, I coordinated a grant application for the Good Jobs Challenge. As a result, King County was awarded ~\$600,000 to expand a clean energy training program.

Energize! Heat Pump Pilot in Unincorporated King County

- Engaged with community members by meeting with program partners, designing multilingual outreach material, and coordinating event logistics.
- Supported program development by drafting scope of works documents, drafting Energize! application components and engaging with project consultants.
- Helped facilitate a multi-jurisdiction building decarbonization campaign for 2024.



Photo description: Energize! meeting with White Center Community Development Association

Climate Action Talk

- Organized the first Climate Action Talk with Climate Director Marissa Aho with over 250 King County employees in attendance.

INTERN IMPACT

Joshua Kim - Climate Preparedness



SCAP Biennial Report

- Developed a set of questions for structured interviews for over 50 staff to gather information on action statuses and for performance measurement for actions in the Climate Preparedness section of the SCAP.
- Conducted interviews with action owners, including subject matter experts, project managers, and communicators.
- That information was synthesized and gathered into action summaries and categorical data for use in the Biennial Report for 60+ Priority Actions
- Using what was learned, I helped develop the framework for, and write the Performance Measure section of the Climate Preparedness section of the 2023 SCAP Biennial Report.

Other Projects

- Created a summary document tracking key progress made on the Reducing Wildfire Risk Strategy from survey findings and a roundtable for distribution to stakeholders.
- Analyzed survey data from Energize! work groups to help guide the Urban Heat Survey with community input.

King County Noxious Weeds Field Days

- Went on four field days with the KC Noxious Weeds program with four different specialists to job shadow and learn about noxious weeds management.
- Helped manually remove noxious weeds, surveyed land around King County, and identified plants in the field.



Josh's contributions to the climate preparedness biennial report, specifically helping me figure out how to report on the performance measures, was a highlight of working with him. I don't know how I would have gotten this done without Josh!

- Lara Whitely Binder, Climate Preparedness Program Manager



Photo credit: Ben Peterson

INTERN IMPACT

Shreya Masina - Sustainable and Resilient Frontline Communities



SCAP Biennial Report

- In order to assess progress of the 31 SRFC Priority Actions, I created a tool which aggregated previously collected data in addition to newly collected information.
- Updated data collection procedures to include information on geographic region of impact, source of funding, communities being prioritized, in order to narrow down projects fully in line with SRFC Priority Actions.
- Identified projects relevant to the implementation of the SRFC PAs. I implemented the previously created tool by meeting with project managers of these projects to collect information to inform PA progress and project status.
- This information was used to write action summaries and progress report, which was utilized in the SCAP Biennial Report.
- This work supported my research on gaps in focus areas and implementation of specific Priority Actions learning the context for why these gaps exist and participating in the brainstorming process to close them.
- Facilitated partnerships between different project managers to start building towards projects that met Priority Actions that had made less progress.
- Supported the development of performance measures for the 8 focus areas of the SRFC Priority Actions.

Green Jobs Strategy

- Took feedback from different agencies to edit and design the Coalition for Climate Careers (C3) summary report.
- Marketed the Nextgen Internship to other departments to acquire funding and increase the diversity of projects, helping double the size of the 2024 intern cohort.
- Tailored green career pathway strategies across 3 county departments.



Photo credit: Ben Peterson



“Shreya played a crucial role in the development of the final product for the Coalition for Climate Career summary report. It would not have been possible to get it done without her” - Marquise Roberson-Bester, FUSE Corp Fellow-Regional Green Jobs



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Special thanks to:

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Vicky Raya, SCAP SRFC Section Lead,
Lara Whitely Binder, SCAP Climate Preparedness Section Lead, and
Nicole Sanders, Building Decarbonization Program Manager;

The **Green Jobs** team, the **SRFC** team, the **Energize!** team, and the **Climate** team;

All of our **career spotlight session speakers;**

Our **internship coordinator**, Elena Hamblin;

And finally, our **program coordinator**, Green Jobs Program Manager Michael Carter.



*We thank you for your continued support of the
NextGen Internship Program!*

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