



Roots 2Empower

Fostering an equitable, regenerative future.

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166 Valley Street, Providence, RI 02909

Community-Owned Renewable Energy Research Intern

Fall 2026 Internship

Remote position

20 hrs week

\$16 hr

Roots 2Empower seeks a research intern to support the development of case studies on national best practices and case studies in community-owned renewable energy. The intern will examine successful renewable-energy projects across the United States to identify ownership, financing, governance, and community-benefit models that could be adapted for Rhode Island.

The research will focus on community solar, renewable-energy cooperatives, shared battery storage, collective purchasing, and community-controlled financing. Particular attention will be given to models that benefit low-income households, renters, residents of multifamily housing, communities of color, and environmental justice communities.

Responsibilities

- Conduct a literature and policy review on community-owned renewable energy.
- Identify community solar, cooperative energy, and shared-storage projects across the United States.
- Develop case studies of promising community-owned energy initiatives.
- Compare project ownership, governance, financing, and decision-making structures.
- Examine how projects reduce household energy costs and distribute financial benefits.
- Assess approaches for including renters and households with limited income or credit.
- Review community outreach, enrollment, and consumer-protection practices.
- Examine local hiring, workforce development, and contracting opportunities.
- Identify legal, financial, regulatory, and organizational challenges.
- Interview renewable-energy practitioners, cooperative leaders, policymakers, or community organizations when appropriate.
- Evaluate which national practices could be adapted to Rhode Island.
- Contribute to writing, editing, citations, tables, and recommendations for the white paper.
- Prepare a final presentation summarizing findings and recommendations.

Case-Study Areas

The intern may examine:

- Community solar programs
- Energy cooperatives
- Shared battery-storage projects
- Solar projects on schools, nonprofit facilities, and houses of worship
- Indigenous-led renewable-energy initiatives
- Community-controlled financing models
- Municipal and nonprofit renewable-energy partnerships
- Projects connecting clean energy with local workforce development

Case-Study Framework

Each case study should address:

1. Location and population served
2. Renewable-energy technology
3. Ownership and governance structure
4. Project financing and funding sources
5. Resident eligibility and enrollment
6. Household savings and community financial benefits
7. Community participation in decision-making
8. Workforce and local-business opportunities
9. Implementation challenges and lessons learned
10. Potential application in Rhode Island

Qualifications

Graduate student in environmental studies, energy policy, economics, public policy, sustainability, community development, business, or a related discipline. Interest in renewable energy, climate justice, cooperative development, or economic equity. Strong research, writing, analytical, and organizational skills. Ability to review academic literature, government policies, program reports, and financial models. Experience with policy analysis, community engagement, data visualization, or renewable-energy research is preferred but not required. Commitment to community-centered and equitable climate solutions.

Expected Deliverables

- Annotated bibliography and national project inventory
- Selection criteria for community-energy case studies
- Five to eight detailed national case studies
- Comparative table of ownership and financing models
- Analysis of equity and community benefits
- Assessment of potential applications in Rhode Island
- Contributions to a 20–30-page white paper
- Policy and program recommendations
- Final presentation of findings

Apply by resume to: Brandi Riggins, brandi@simplybco.com, CC: Executive Director, Tarshire Battle, contact@roots2empower.org.

