

Clean Energy Internship Program

Background

The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources and the Renewable Energy Fund at Commerce Rhode Island have partnered together to offer the 2019 Pilot Clean Energy Internship Program. This program is designed to provide clean energy companies located in Rhode Island with talented student interns interested in renewable energy, energy efficiency, or other clean energy careers. Students will be matched with eligible Host Companies during the summer of 2019. The REF has allocated \$60,000 in funding for the 2019 program year, which will fund approximately 10 interns. In advance of program launch, REF and OER worked together to revise the Renewable Energy Fund's Rules and Regulations to create the framework for the program, including definitions and minimum eligibility criteria.¹

The REF will reimburse Host Companies up to \$12 per hour for students during the summer of 2019. Host Companies are able to pay interns more, however they will only be reimbursed for up to \$5,760 per intern.

Host Company Eligibility

- Must be registered to do business with the Rhode Island Secretary of State.
- Have an office located in Rhode Island.
- Can hire up to two interns per internship period.
- Providing a meaningful internship with a clear job description.

Host Companies must apply to the REF with a complete application and provide a W-9. The application requires a detailed job description which clearly outlines the intern's role, expectations, and timeline of employment.

Student Intern Eligibility

- Students need to demonstrate that they are currently enrolled at a college or university located in Rhode Island or if the college or university is located outside of Rhode, can demonstrate proof of residency.
- Students must have completed or will complete at least their freshman year of college (24 credits) the semester before the internship.
- If a student attends a community college (or 2-year associate program) the student must have completed at least 24 credits.
- Graduate students must be currently enrolled in a master's degree program.

Students must submit an application, as well as provide an unofficial transcript, resume, and cover letter. The application allows students to indicate what interests they have and their preferred job type.

Administrative Process

REF and OER will review student and Host Company applications for completeness and eligibility. Program staff will provide at least two intern applications to each Host Company for phone or in-person

¹ <https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/870-20-00-1>

interviews. Upon selection, the Host Company will provide an offer letter to the student, which is signed by both parties. After receipt of the executed offer letter, the student may begin their internship with the Host Company. The Host Company is responsible for paying all wages associated with the internship.

After the summer session is complete, Host Companies will provide program staff with a complete reimbursement package. The package must include backup documentation in the form of paycheck stubs and/or payroll summary showing wages and applicable taxes paid for each intern. In addition, a survey is planned for both Host Companies and interns to learn about their experience and make improvements for future years.

Timeline

In early 2019, the program launched on the Renewable Energy Fund website with applications for both interested students and Host Companies.² Below is the timeline for the program.

March 22, 2019	Student Intern Applications Due
April 12, 2019	Host Company Applications Due
April 30, 2019	Intern and Host Company selections complete
May 10, 2019	Deadline for signed offer letter submissions to program staff. No offer letters will be accepted past this date.
May 27, 2019	Summer 2019 session begins
September 20, 2019	Deadline for spring 2019 summer session reimbursement packages. Reimbursement packages will not be accepted past this date.

Program Evaluation

OER and REF are hopeful this program will be a success and are planning for future program years. Detailed records are being kept regarding outreach to both students and Host Companies as well as the effectiveness of tabling at job fairs and development of relationships with college and university career centers and faculty. In addition, a detailed program tracker has been developed to capture key metrics, such as ethnicity, gender, and job type of the interns. Additional outreach will continue with Host Companies to determine whether they offer the intern placed with their company a full time job in the future.

Questions?

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² <https://commerceri.com/financing/renewable-energy-fund/>