



AUNE Environmental Studies Department Collaborative Service Initiative Project Description

Call for Proposals

We are pleased to invite proposals for Collaborative Service Initiative (CSI) projects to be initiated and completed by Environmental Studies students spring semester 2024 (Jan-Apr). We invite community organizations, governmental agencies, and businesses to submit a CSI project proposal. Organizations can be local, state, national, or international in scope. Prior to filling out the CSI Project Application, please read the information below. These details provide a sense of what we can offer you through this initiative and give you an understanding of what is expected of CSI clients throughout the project.

Environmental Studies and the Collaborative Service Initiative

Antioch's Environmental Studies Department has earned respect as one of the oldest and largest interdisciplinary graduate environmental studies departments in the country. We educate visionary, pragmatic leaders in a collaborative, interdisciplinary setting founded on academic excellence and the principles of environmental justice and sustainability. Our graduate programs emphasize a strong base of scientific understanding integrated with social sciences and humanities. This interdisciplinary approach is essential to address the complex scientific, social, political, economic and cultural dimensions of contemporary environmental challenges.

The CSI is a faculty supervised capstone opportunity for graduate students to work together on projects for organizations. Student participants provide pro bono consultation services on behalf of clients. Projects can include for example applied ecological or social research, energy and materials management, program evaluation, or other consultative services within the environmental domain. These projects are completed over the course of a semester by teams of graduate students working with guidance and support from AUNE faculty and staff. Teams collaborate with an organization to develop a defined scope of services, seek solutions for the client-identified challenges, and provide high quality deliverables. At the same time, the CSI experience provides an experiential learning opportunity for students and deepens their engagement with communities.

Project Examples

Environmental Studies graduate students and faculty have engaged in and have successfully completed hundreds of projects serving local communities in the U.S. and abroad. Types of previous Antioch group projects have included:

- developing, piloting and strengthening a carbon-reduction program for local businesses;
- identifying "best practices" for farmers' market operations and municipal arrangements;
- building effective grassroots campaigns for passage of legislation supporting various conservation efforts;
- climate change adaptation and planning for communities;
- environmental education program evaluation and design;

- researching and preparing recommendations for various planning boards and conservation commissions;
- guiding a market strategy;
- assessing a solid waste program;
- completing assessment processes, natural resource inventories, and ecological studies to inform community initiatives;
- evaluation of college campus sustainability practices;
- development of socially responsible business practices for a certified B corporation;
- Natural Resource Inventories,
- a guide for implementing Biophilic Design in the workplace, and most recently
- climate migration in Vermont

What we Offer

Each CSI client will be matched with an interested team of 2-4 graduate students and an Environmental Studies faculty advisor. The team will work with the client to develop a CSI scope of work, determined by the number of students, which outlines the specific project objectives, tasks, timeline, and deliverables. Each project will be tailored to the client's specific priorities; however, all CSI teams will offer:

- analysis of a problem, concern, or future organizational goal;
- depending on the size of the team, approximately 400 pro bono hours of consultation services by Environmental Studies graduate students;
- students with content knowledge reflecting one or more concentrations within Environmental Studies (e.g., Resource Management and Conservation, Environmental Education, Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Advocacy for Sustainability and Social Justice, and Conservation Biology);
- students with a variety of practical skills such as strategic planning, program evaluation, quantitative and qualitative research, life-cycle analysis, geographic information systems (GIS), natural resource inventory (flora and fauna) and other ecological studies, program design, community engagement, adult and youth 3 education (teaching, curriculum design, interpretation, exhibit design), grant writing, and environmental advocacy campaign development;
- student access to University resources relevant to the project (e.g., library resources, field equipment, GIS laboratory);
- a faculty advisor supervising the student team;
- oral and/ or poster presentations of project results to client/stakeholders;
- professional quality report summarizing findings and offering specific recommendations in response to the scope of work agreed upon with the client prior to project implementation; and
- other specific deliverables as agreed upon by the client and the CSI team.

What we Expect from You

For a CSI project to be successful, it is essential that clients commit to the following:

- dedicate at least one staff member to serve as the CSI liaison to the project on an ongoing basis (e.g., for involvement in determining the scope of work, offering access to needed information or resources, and helping to ensure the project is meeting your needs and interests);
- complete an agreed upon scope of work with the student team prior to initiation of work;
- cover direct costs such office materials, equipment, and project related mileage if applicable;

- provide appropriate access to organizational information essential to the project’s completion;
- provide an opportunity for the student team to present its findings;
- indicate the level of confidentiality, if required, to the CSI team and relevant Antioch faculty advisor as part of the scope of work; and
- recognize that this project is a learning opportunity for students, that we hope will be mutually beneficial to all involved parties.

Selection Criteria

CSI projects will be vetted by the Environmental Studies faculty based on the strength of the application; and then selected by student teams based on interest and capacity to complete the project. All successful applications must include a signature of both the primary organizational director and committed staff person (“CSI Staff Liaison”). Priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate:

- well-defined objectives and content;
- an engaging learning experience for students;
- a project that compliments the skill-sets that students can bring to the organization; and
- a project scope that can be completed in one semester.

How to Apply

If you would like to submit a project for consideration, please complete the accompanying *Request for Project Application* and submit to Suzanne Green by email (sgreen5@antioch.edu). If you have any questions regarding any of the above details, please contact Suzanne by email. The deadline for applications is September 22, 2023 for projects January-May 2024.

