

Ashlee Dingler-Marshall, City of Tucson, Arizona



Project Overview and Role:

I worked with the City of Tucson from mid-June to the beginning of September 2022 during the City's Climate Action Plan project. The goal of the plan is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. My fellowship was based in the Department of Planning and Development Services, under the Sustainability Manager. My project requirements were to learn from the application of an equity lens in the larger Climate Action Plan project in part by attending meetings of the Team regarding the equity assessment, any meetings where the equity assessment is presented to or reviewed by the Mayor's Climate Action Advisory Council, and public engagement efforts by community-based organization partners to discuss the equity with frontline communities.

For my deliverables, I was responsible for synthesizing what I learned and applying it to propose modifications to suit a Climate-Adapted Development Standards project based on the framework developed for the Climate Action Plan process, including developing a draft strategy (e.g., equity goals, indicators).

What did you learn from the project?

I learned a great deal. Firstly, I learned about the level of qualifications and experience needed to complete my internship, based on pay and the difficulty of the assignments. The position was outlined in the job summary for the job application, and, going forward, I have learned what to look for in a job summary for my current abilities and skills.

Secondly, I have gained subject matter expertise about equity planning for climate mitigation and adaptation that center municipal decision-making and processes. Literacy in equity has technical components related to housing,

water and green infrastructure, transportation, land use, zoning, and building requirements when overlapped with planning and development work. As a planner, this internship helped bridge a gap in my praxis to adequately and thoroughly address diversity, equity, and inclusion, when they are prioritized as community goals.

Lastly, I have learned through engaging with Urban Sustainability Directors Network that there are many innovative strategies that are emerging from cities across the nation that tackle local government-led climate change action, and like minded leaders from these areas are looking for opportunities for connection to grow and learn from one another.

What was the impact of your work?

Tucson is early on in the process of strategizing an equity framework to measure local government-led action and impact for climate mitigation and adaptation decisions. My work will provide the Department of Planning and Development Services the opportunity to continue developing a sustainable development strategy, during the Climate Action Plan process, that is informed by a diverse group of stakeholders, including those not usually included or involved in the engagement process. Much of my work included critical policy analysis and community engagement interviews as research methods. Additionally, I completed literature reviews of case studies of cities that reference best practices, data, and concepts in previous and current projects in inclusive climate planning. The staff hopes to begin using this information as a part of their coordination efforts for upcoming, federally-funded grant opportunities related to climate equity and environmental justice.

Any links to project deliverables?

I completed two deliverables: a slide deck for presentation and a report. No links are available at this time.