Urban Climate Action and Justice Postdoctoral Scholar – Boston University

We seek a postdoctoral scholar to collaborate on research that investigates the intersections of climate action, climate finance, and climate justice in small and midsize cities in the United States.

Cities have been important sites of climate action for more than two decades. Thousands of cities globally have adopted climate action plans and the resulting climate policies and programs are remaking urban spaces, redistributing resources, and reshaping relationships between residents. This raises questions about how urban climate policies are financed and implemented on the ground and the ways those policies reproduce or challenge existing inequalities. In this new NSF funded project, we will investigate the implementation, financing, and justice politics of urban climate efforts through a study of climate action in small and midsize cities in the United States (US). Though small and midsize cities are important sites of climate action with unique opportunities for innovation and challenges particular to their size, most urban climate research has centered on larger cities. In this project, we will bring attention to finance, implementation, and justice in smaller cities. We will use a mixed-method approach that combines surveys, finance analysis, in-depth interviews, meeting observation, and document analysis to understand: How are small and midsize cities implementing and financing climate action? How do concerns about justice and equity, climate finance strategies, and other factors shape how small and midsize cites are implementing climate action?

Position Duties and Desired Qualifications

We seek a postdoctoral scholar who is passionate about urban climate action and climate justice. The postdoctoral scholar will contribute to all project activities. Specific responsibilities include overseeing the development, administration, and analysis of a survey of sustainability/climate directors in small and midsize cities and conducting case study research (including archival research, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation) about the justice politics related to the implementation and financing of specific climate mitigation and resilience projects. The postdoctoral scholar will collaborate to publish results in high-impact journals and have opportunities to engage in public outreach that will extend the impact of our scholarship beyond the academy.

Candidates must hold or expect to hold a Ph.D. in a relevant environmental social science field at the time of appointment and have experience (or at least very strong interest) in conducting mixed-methods research. Relevant academic disciplines and sub-fields include (but are not limited to) geography, city and regional planning, environmental justice, political ecology, and environmental governance.

The ideal candidate will have:

- Exceptional English language written and verbal communication skills;
- Attention to detail and strong organizational and time management skills;
- Experience with at least one of the following: survey methods, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, document analysis, comparative case study research;
- Interest and ability to rapidly learn new research and analysis techniques;
- Ability to manage multiple responsibilities and to work both independently as well as part of a team; and a
- A valid US driver’s license.

Please note: Candidates meeting most (but not all) of the qualifications with a desire to learn are encouraged to apply.
Mentorship, Collaboration, and Location
The postdoctoral scholar will be mentored by Anne Short Gianotti and will collaborate with members of the Short Gianotti research group. The initial appointment will be one year with the potential (and hope) to extend to two years. This is an in-person position based in at the Charles River Campus of Boston University. Several weeks of travel to conduct fieldwork in three US cities will be required.

Salary and Benefits
The starting salary for this position is $65,000 (USD) with an annual merit-based raise. Postdoc benefits include subsidized health insurance (Blue Cross Blue Shield Massachusetts), flexible spending accounts (FSAs) for supplemental medical costs, and paid sick leave and vacation.

Postdoc Support and Professional Development at BU
BU has a rich community of scholars working across disciplines on research related to climate change and the environment. The postdoctoral scholar will have the opportunity to network and collaborate with faculty, postdocs, and students in the Department of Earth and Environment, the BU Initiative on Cities, the BU Institute for Global Sustainability, as well as other departments and centers on campus.

BU has a well-developed Professional Development & Postdoctoral Affairs Program. The Professional Development & Postdoctoral Affairs provides an orientation to the resources available to BU postdocs, support for developing an Individual Development Plan (IDP), resume/CV and cover letter review, and general career advising. They host professional development events for Postdoctoral Researchers related to careers in academia (e.g., grant-writing, faculty application preparation bootcamp). Postdoctoral Researchers interested in careers outside of academia can participate in the wide range of workshops and short courses offered by Boston University’s Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training (BEST) Program.

Short Gianotti will work closely with the postdoctoral scholar to build connection across and beyond BU and to support professional development and career goals.

How to Apply
Please send (1) a one-page cover letter describing your fit for the position, (2) your CV, and (3) names and contact information for at least three references familiar with your work to Anne Short Gianotti with the subject line “Urban Climate Postdoctoral Fellowship”<agshort@bu.edu>

Review of applications will begin August 28, 2023 and continue until the position is filled.

Start date: as soon as possible, ideally before January 15, 2024.