



**McKinney Climate Fellow Program
2022 McKinney Climate Fellow**

Who We Are

reTHink is a non-profit organization with a mission “To enhance environmental stewardship through community empowerment.” Our vision is “To create a healthier and more sustainable Wabash Valley.” We achieve this through several education and outreach programs, community gardens, a plastic up-cycling workspace, and a zero-waste store. reTHink’s approach to climate action is through waste reduction by means of tangible actions while involving the community at the grassroots level. According to a recent study plastic waste is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and pollution (<https://www.beyondplastics.org/plastics-and-climate>). As of 2020, the U.S. plastics industry is responsible for at least 232 million tons of CO₂e gas emissions per year. This amount is equivalent to the average emissions from 116 average-sized (500-megawatt) coal-fired power plants.” Climate action can be intimidating and hard to teach to general public, especially in communities with high poverty and low education rates. Waste reduction is an easier approach to provide tangible solutions to the community where everyone can participate without political and socioeconomic barriers.

Overall goals for student project - Most businesses, especially in restaurant industry use a lot of disposable plastics, on a daily basis. If we want to make any dent in the amount of plastics used in a community, we need to get the business owners on board and convince them to reduce their consumption of disposable plastics. For this project we want a targeted and goal oriented education and awareness campaigns for local restaurants who use significant amount of disposable plastic waste. Our goal is to convince at least 5 local businesses to switch to compostable and/reusable products.

Working on plastic waste reduction will directly and indirectly enhance environmental sustainability in a very tangible manner. The beauty of this project is that it will tackle both climate change and sustainability in a way that will inspire more businesses and citizens to lead and take action. The businesses will be able to improve their image and attract more business from sustainable minded customers. This will also give them a lot of publicity.

POSITION SUMMARY

The McKinney Indiana Climate Fellow will be placed at reTHink Headquarters and will be responsible for taking the lead on the education and awareness campaign for local restaurants. The Fellow will provide support for the campaign to reduce consumption of disposable plastics by at least 5 local businesses.

Duties will include:

- RESEARCH - Estimate the amount of disposables used by a few local restaurants. Study and create presentation regarding the problem of plastic waste in terms of disposable

plastics by local restaurants. Contact business owners/managers (make appointments), create surveys

- MEETING AND PRESENTATION - plan presentation for a group, including chamber of commerce,
- PROPOSE A PLAN - Propose easy and feasible solutions/alternatives to reduce the amount of disposable plastics used by restaurants.
- Attend the Boot camp May 16 – 20, 2022
- Attend weekly (virtual) “Lunch and Learns”, Wednesdays from 12:00pm-1:30pm
- Submit weekly Canvas reports over the course of the fellowship

Qualifications

- Experienced in working with Microsoft Office products, especially creating powerpoint presentations, creating flyers, posters, effective verbal and written communication, self-motivated, ability to prioritize and manage multiple ongoing tasks, efficient time management, must have a driving license and a vehicle to be able to visit businesses. hard working, goal oriented,
- Student must be knowledgeable, and/or have experience or coursework in data tracking and quantification of measurable outcomes on projects [such as: calculating and quantifying the effect of disposable plastics in terms of greenhouse gas emissions at restaurants and city level] - Present calculations of the impact of their reduction
- Equity mindset/lens and other critical indicators related to DEI in climate work are preferred

Compensation

Compensation will be in the form of a scholarship through the Environmental Resilience Institute. The Fellow will work full time for 10 weeks, beginning June 6 and ending on August 12th.

Feedback and evaluation

The fellow will work closely with the executive director on a daily basis and will have feedback and support to carry out the project. Success in the fellowship will be determined by the completion of specified projects in a professional and timely manner. The Fellow will learn how this organization identifies its sustainability priorities, effective principles of communication, and how to develop and maintain professional relationships.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Indiana Climate Fellows Program supports the continual advancement and development of diverse, inclusive and equitable spaces. Indiana climate change solutions should be equitable in implementation, and projects with equity considerations are encouraged to reduce climate change impacts on marginalized communities in the state. reTHink’s diversity, equity, and inclusion policies are at par with the program.

