

## **California Planning Foundation Scholarship Application 2014**

### **Personal Statement**

Shannon Baker

Candidate for Masters of City and Regional Planning

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

When I entered college, I knew I was passionate about social justice, issues of poverty, and finding solutions to better life for vulnerable populations. I was introduced to planning while working on my undergraduate degree at UCSB in 2012, and realized that this is a field that significantly contributed to everything I was passionate about. As I continued to study planning, my passion for the field grew as I saw how it contributed to improving the quality of life for people at or below the poverty line. My drive and passion for planning flourished and I began to look into graduate schools in order to further my knowledge of planning and to prepare me for a career in the field. In 2013 I was accepted into a City and Regional Planning Master's program at California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo. My first year at planning school has given me the opportunity to further hone in on my interests and discover what aspect of planning I want to focus on. I am currently working on an emphasis of housing and community development with a special focus on affordable housing. Through the program and my own personal research, I have learned that one of the biggest burdens on vulnerable families is poor quality housing and the high cost of housing. This is especially true in California due to its high cost of living and ever-increasing population. My hope is that by focusing on affordable housing, I can contribute to providing a safe and stable home environment with convenient access to workplaces, services, and stores, to help relieve some of the struggles of those in poverty. I am currently trying to secure a position as an intern at an affordable housing agency for the summer in order to gain more practical experience in working in affordable housing. After the summer, I plan to complete my master's degree and secure a position at a housing agency, non-profit, or housing and community development department at a city or county within California. I am currently relying on loans and financial aid to work my way through school and do not receive any family contributions. Receiving this scholarship would significantly contribute to relieving the cost burden of attending a graduate program and allow me to rely less on student loans. The support of the California Planning Foundation would allow me to focus completely on my studies and garner the necessary practical experience to prepare for a career in planning. I am passionate about providing safe and well-functioning communities in California and I know that planning will make this passion a practical reality.

## Shannon Baker

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### OBJECTIVE

To obtain a scholarship from the California Planning Foundation to aid in the completion of a graduate degree in City and Regional Planning at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

### EDUCATION

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo  
MCRP, City and Regional Planning  
Expected Graduation Date: June 2015

University of California, Santa Barbara  
B.A., Environmental Studies; Geography Concentration  
Graduation Date: June 2013

### EXPERIENCE

**Intern, SCS Tracer Environmental, Santa Maria, CA**  
June 2013-September 2013

- Wrote and edited land use permits and exemptions for oil related development in Santa Barbara County.
- Developed several maps for land use permits, exemptions, site plans, and environmental review using GIS software.
- Assisted staff in administrative and organizational tasks, as well as assembling land use documents for review.

**Intern, Santa Barbara County Office of Planning and Development, Long Range Planning, Santa Barbara, CA**  
September 2012- June 2013

- Assisted in the development of the Eastern Goleta Valley Community Plan update environmental impact report; specifically in regards to affordable housing site assessment.
- Contributed to the development of the Winery Ordinance update by providing extensive research on winery regulations in California.
- Assisted planning staff in various administrative and organizational tasks.

**Intern, Santa Barbara County Office of Planning and Development, Development Review, Orcutt, CA**  
June 2012-September 2012

- Assisted in writing land use permits, CEQA exemptions, and environmental review.
- Assisted the Supervising Planner in administrative, organizational, and research tasks.
- Assisted, attended, and participated in several planning, environmental, and staff meetings.

**Intern, Cheadle Center For Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration, Santa Barbara, CA**  
September 2011-December 2011

- Attended weekly educational meetings learning about the native environment around UCSB
- Assisted staff in seed collections, soil analysis and invasive plant removal
- Learned skills in planning and executing restoration projects

**Small Group Leader/Event Planner, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at UCSB, Santa Barbara, CA**  
September 2011-May 2013

- Planned and lead a bible study in small group setting for college students
- Attended weekly leadership meetings
- Helped plan and execute events, outreaches, and fundraisers on campus

**Youth Intern, NewLove Ministries, Santa Maria, CA**  
October 2010-May 2011

- Developed life skill lessons for teenagers, primarily from migrant families
- Taught teenagers about God, relationships, communication and community
- Engaged teenagers in games, skits, and other team-building activities

**FAMILIAR COMPUTER APPLICATIONS**

Microsoft Office Suite, GIS, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, AutoCAD, SketchUp

**MEMBERSHIPS**

**Student Member**, American Planning Association, April 2012-Present

**AWARDS**

**California Planning Foundation Scholarship**, Recipient, August 2012

**REFERENCES**

Available upon request.