

A person in silhouette is shown from the back, looking out over a city skyline at sunset. The sky is a mix of purple, blue, and orange. The city lights are visible in the distance.

IMPACT!

➤ Youth Sustainability
Leadership Program

Sustainability Leadership Training:
Frequently Asked Questions



1. How do I take part in this program?

To ensure a quality learning environment, participation in the IMPACT! Youth Sustainability Leadership Training is limited and competitive. There is a brief application form that should take about 15 minutes to complete. You will hear back regarding your acceptance a few days after the application due date.

2. Who is eligible to apply?

All applicants will be evaluated on the quality and strength of their applications, as well as suitability for the program, provided they meet ANY ONE of the following criteria at the start of the workshop:

- University/college students aged 19-30 years old (current or graduated in the last 12 months)
- Alumni of the IMPACT! Program including IMPACT! Youth Conference for Sustainability Leadership

3. What if I don't meet this criteria?

For those who do not meet EITHER of the above criteria, exceptions may be made for applicants from partners and a limited number of other youth who are particularly strong candidates. For those who would like us to make an exception, the application form includes an opportunity to explain your circumstances.

4. Will I receive a confirmation email when I apply?

When you click Submit, you will see a confirmation screen to verify that we have received your application. You will NOT receive an automatic confirmation e-mail. Once we have reviewed and made a decision about your application, you will receive an update on your status, regardless of whether or not you were accepted to the program.

5. Is there a cost to apply?

There is no cost to apply for this program.



6. Is there a cost to participate?

The participant cost for the IMPACT! Youth Sustainability Leadership Training program is a \$300 commitment fee, payable following acceptance into the program. This is a highly subsidized amount, thanks to our generous funders and partners. The value of the training is estimated to be nearly \$8000 per person, considering the true cost of the training and the resources you will gain access to.

7. What if the commitment fee presents a financial barrier for me?

We aim to make this program as accessible and inclusive as possible. To remove financial barriers, a limited number of bursaries are available to waive the participant commitment fee. Bursaries do not cover accommodation or travel (if applicable), which is the responsibility of all participants. If you require a bursary in order to attend, please request this bursary in your application form. Upon acceptance to the program, if you are accepted for a bursary, you will be given a bursary code and special registration link.

8. Is the commitment fee refundable?

All cancellations must be received via e-mail to impact@naturalstep.ca. The amount paid will be refunded for all cancellations received 6 weeks prior to the training start date. However, no refund will be issued for cancellations received within 6 weeks of the training start date. As the name suggests, the commitment fee is intended to strengthen your commitment to the program and show that you place value in this opportunity. The commitment fee is not returned to participants upon completion of the program.

9. If I'm coming from out of town, do you organize travel or accommodations?

Participants are responsible for organizing their own travel and accommodation to and from the in-person workshop and networking activities, if applicable. Once accepted into the program, we will empower participants with the tools to organize ride sharing and couch surfing with their peers, but we don't coordinate this ourselves or guarantee that everyone will be able to find a match. Participants from out of town should plan and budget accordingly.

10. Are subsidies available for travel and accommodations?

No. Bursaries do not cover accommodation or travel (if applicable), which is the responsibility of all participants.



11. What is your approach to sustainability?

Our comprehensive approach to sustainability takes into account our environmental, social, and economic systems, and is called the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development. It is based on systems thinking; recognizing that what happens in one part of a system affects every other part. The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development has helped hundreds of different organizations around the world integrate sustainable development into their strategic planning and create long lasting transformative change. It complements other sustainability tools and methodologies, such as life cycle analysis or environmental management systems, by providing the context and strategic vision that makes them more effective. Scientifically rigorous and peer reviewed, it is constantly being used, tested, refined, and developed. Best of all, it is openly published and free for all to use. Learn more about our approach to sustainability at www.naturalstep.ca/sustainability.

12. Who is this program for? What kinds of people will be there?

The young leaders who take part in this program are passionate, talented, and committed individuals who want to lead positive change or are already doing so. They are current and aspiring leaders interested in addressing various challenges across the sustainability spectrum, including environmental, social, and economic issues. They represent many disciplines and fields of study, from environment, science, and engineering, to business, law, and economics, from social studies, arts, and humanities, to fine art, theatre, and music, and everything in between.

Regardless of whether you already consider yourself to be an effective leader, think you have the ability to become a leader, or are unsure about your leadership potential, we welcome you. The programming is designed for youth of all types across the leadership spectrum.

Participants will have an opportunity to define what leadership means for them, and will explore and expand their leadership skills and capacity during the program. If you are, or aspire to be: catalyst, builder, innovator, activist, networker, storyteller, investigator, artist, nurturer, designer, facilitator, researcher... this program is for you!



13. Do I need to have a clear idea in mind, or be already working on one, in order to take part?

If you have an idea for an initiative, such as a sustainability event or social enterprise you'd like to launch, or something you are already working on, that's great. Many people joining us won't yet be at that stage – so it is not a requirement to have a clear idea at the time of applying. Indeed, participants will have the opportunity to brainstorm, refine, and receive meaningful feedback on their ideas during the program. In the application, we would like to get a sense of your interests, regardless of the current state of your thinking and/or initiatives.

14. Do I need to be interested in a particular model or business type for my initiative to take part in this program?

Nope - we welcome all business types and models, and believe we need to address our complex sustainability challenges using all tools and approaches available. Whether you're interested in engaging through social enterprises, non-profits, charities, social purpose businesses, co-operatives, corporations, governments (including student unions), campus groups, informal projects, all of above, something else, or you're just not sure... this program welcomes you.

15. What kind of sustainability projects and social enterprises have past participants been involved with?

Our participants and alumni have launched or taken on a leadership role in all kinds of initiatives. Some are launching a campus bike co-op, using permaculture techniques to build edible forest gardens, inspiring action on sustainability through theatre, working with at-risk youth to build urban community gardens, producing a video series on water conservation, and biking across Canada to educate and reconnect youth with their food system. Please [read their stories](#) to learn more about some of our inspiring alumni and the incredible sustainability projects and social enterprises they have launched and advanced through their involvement in the IMPACT! Youth Sustainability Leadership Training program. And [check out the profiles of some of our most successful alumni](#) who have received grants from The Co-operators Foundation IMPACT! Fund to kick-start and scale their innovative initiatives.



16. Which program activities are required vs. optional?

We expect all program participants to engage fully in all four sections of the training, as outlined in our [Program Guide](#). This includes completing pre-training preparation activities, being fully present for the duration of the in-person training and networking activities, reporting on progress and sharing feedback. We aim to select participants who intend to fully participate, and will benefit from an ongoing connection to the IMPACT! alumni network. We also recognize that each participant's circumstances, schedule, and goals are unique. We welcome applicants who may not yet know whether they will want or be able to plan and implement a new initiative in their community, or take on a leadership role to advance an existing opportunity. Likewise, we understand that each participant's personal and project development needs will vary, and that there may be exceptions made to some aspects of the training in particular circumstances.

17. What if I have to miss part of the in-person activities?

We expect all applicants selected for the program to be fully present for the duration of the workshop and any social or networking reception. We understand that circumstances may arise where a participant has to miss a small part of these in-person activities for school or other unavoidable commitments, which is OK but discouraged if at all possible in order for all participants to gain fully from the program. If you're not sure about your particular circumstances, please contact us at impact@naturalstep.ca to discuss.

Don't see your question here? Want more information? Please contact impact@naturalstep.ca and we will do our best to reply to your inquiry in a timely manner.