

IMPACT CASE STUDY

Pacific Peering

The Aspen Tech Policy Hub's [Nonprofit and Public Interest Policy Training Fellowship](#) is a full-time, 3-week, in-person fellowship with an optional final project to support public interest organizations in achieving policy impact. The inaugural fellowship took place in San Francisco in July 2023 and included sessions exploring definitions of policy, identifying problems, defining alternatives, developing relevant outputs, and communicating to stakeholders, as well as action-oriented practical exercises founded on real-world problems provided by government partners.

Below is an overview of one organization's experience with the fellowship: [Pacific Peering](#), which sent [Josh Richards](#), its Vice President of North American Operations, as its representative.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pacific Peering, an environmental technology organization, sent representative Josh Richards to the Hub's Nonprofit and Public Interest Policy Training program to learn how it could set up its own policy arm. The fellowship program has helped Pacific Peering identify and respond to a request for information from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) that has garnered attention from government officials; think through how it can hire its own policy staff; and draft stronger communications that identify and speak to the motivations of policy stakeholders.

PACIFIC PEERING'S GOALS FOR THE FELLOWSHIP

Pacific Peering is a public benefit corporation that is deploying underwater environmental sensors to provide critical data on ocean health and tsunami warnings to governments and communities. Though the organization is French-based, it recently established a nonprofit arm in the United States to advocate for advanced technology solutions to address climate change and ocean health. Pacific Peering applied for the Nonprofit and Public Interest Policy Training Fellowship to gain insight into US policymaking and develop its policy advocacy capabilities.

JOSH'S FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE

Josh Richards, Vice President of North American Operations for Pacific Peering and Chairperson of the associated nonprofit, was awarded the fellowship to represent his nonprofit at the Hub's training program. Josh joined a cohort of 14 other fellows in San Francisco to receive intensive training on how to have policy impact and to communicate effectively in the policy space. "The experience surpassed our expectations and provided us with valuable knowledge of the advocacy process," Josh says.

"The fellowship enabled me to better understand the perspective of the people I meet with, providing insights and considerations that we, working in environmental tech, might not have appreciated. This includes understanding motivations, processes, and how to approach issues strategically."

POST-FELLOWSHIP IMPACT

As a result of the fellowship, Pacific Peering has found new venues for weighing in on policy. Josh has "greatly benefited from the Hub training" and recently used it to "respond to a request for information from OSTP on ocean science which has attracted attention from many individuals." The nonprofit arm of Pacific Peering has also engaged in policy conversations with the National Science Foundation's polar research team and the Wilson Center's Polar Institute, and is working with the United Nations' joint task force to promote global adoption of environmental technology solutions for ocean health.

Josh also has benefited from the Hub's writing training in performing this outreach. "While I had many tools in my skill set, the program showed me how to use them for maximum impact. I especially appreciated the writing assignments; the feedback and guidance provided significantly improved my writing. I've already seen quantifiable returns on my fellowship experience."

Josh notes that the fellowship also provided insights into how Pacific Peering could develop its internal company structure, especially as it thinks about adding new staff focused on policy. Reflecting on the fellowship, Josh says that he has one favorite memory: "The camaraderie. It was a great time to get to know incredible people doing diverse and exciting work. The experience is something I'll cherish forever."

About the Hub – The Aspen Tech Policy Hub is a West Coast policy incubator, training a new generation of tech policy entrepreneurs. It takes STEM experts, teaches them the policy process through fellowship and executive education programs, and encourages them to develop outside-the-box solutions to society's problems. For more information, visit aspentechpolicyhub.org.

About Pacific Peering – Pacific Peering is a French telecom public benefit corporation managing international data communications and the deployment of SMART data cables between islands in the Pacific. Its technology connects some of the most remote islands on the planet, bringing high-speed connectivity to isolated people across the ocean. Josh participated in the fellowship on behalf of Pacific Peering's North American nonprofit arm. For more information, visit pacific-peering.com.