

Management Internships

A Guidebook for Local Governments





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Introduction

This internship resource was revised and updated in 2012 by combining and amending two existing ICMA resources, the Model Internship Guidelines (Guidelines) and the Internship Toolkit (Toolkit). Special thanks to the 2011–2012 ICMA Task Force on Internships that reviewed these two resources by streamlining existing content and added new sections where necessary.

The original Guidelines were adopted by ICMA's Advisory Board on Graduate Education and the NAS-PAA Urban Management Education Committee in October 2003, stating a mutual interest in ensuring that high-quality internships are available for MPA students.

The original Toolkit was prepared by ICMA intern Jessica Jordan, MPP student at George Washington

University, with support from with support from the following ICMA members and staff: David Ammons, Chris Bradbury, Charles Cristello, Doug Elliott, Dan Fitzpatrick, Bill Fraser, Colin Haller, Rick Herbek, Cornell Knight, Christal Kliewer, Joe LaFortune, Tina Leon, Mark Levin, Rocco Longo, Cecile Pettle, Cynthia Seelhammer, Todd Selig, Paul Sharon, Louise Snyder, and Gerald Young.

Keeping with the goals of both original documents, this new resource is intended to help local government managers and MPA programs work together to develop meaningful internship opportunities that benefit both the student and the local government.

The Purpose of Internships

Effective internship programs provide an excellent opportunity to make use of very talented people and assess them as possible full-time employees. These programs also provide an opportunity for managers to demonstrate to interns the potential of a career in local government administration.

The Internship Education

An internship that integrates the student as an operating member of a management staff is a critical component of the local government management education of graduate MPA students. One benefit of such a program is that it provides students with a realistic exposure to an organizational/bureaucratic environment. This experience should enhance the student's awareness of the organization—its internal dynamics and values as well as its employees' attitudes toward both their clientele and their administrative/political superiors. The internship should help students understand their obligations as professionals and as public servants. It may be one of the few opportunities that students have to test the knowledge and skills they developed in their academic coursework.

A second benefit of internship programs, particularly those of a year or more in duration, is the opportunity it gives the organization to take advantage of the knowledge and emerging skills of the students. Graduate interns represent an intellectual resource for the local government as it addresses the needs of the community.

In a very real sense, interns—whether they are part-time, temporary, or full-time—are employees of the host organization and should be treated as such. Their position should be integrated into the organizational structure as any other position would be, and their assignments and responsibilities should reflect the needs and priorities of the local government. When the intern is treated like an employee, both the student and the organization gain the most from the work assignment.

Although the intern should handle real work assignments, all supervisory personnel—both professional and academic—should remember that the major

reason for the internship is to provide the intern with an educational experience. Both the faculty internship coordinator and the local government internship supervisor must function as educators in their dealings with the intern. In particular, supervisors should assume responsibility for mentoring the intern—that is, for showing how to apply theoretical knowledge from the classroom to real-world situations; demonstrating how knowledge affects problem solving; and providing guidance in interpersonal interactions, communications, and task achievement.

Key Principles

The following is adapted from a description of the city of Phoenix's Management Internship Program. This postdegree program has been in existence for more than fifty years. The principles and perspectives expressed here are applicable to virtually any internship program; thus, they can serve as the basis for judging the quality of an internship program.

Practical Experience: Interns serve in an entry-level professional capacity and are responsible for completing a mix of key projects and assignments related to major issues facing the city. Interns observe and participate in the decision- and policy-making processes, learn the fundamentals of the budget cycle, and recommend changes to existing policies and procedures after engaging in thorough research analysis. Interns benefit from the same performance evaluation system as permanent employees and receive constructive feedback on their work.

Mentoring Process: Informal mentoring takes place during and beyond the intern program year with the budget and research director, city manager, and other management and supervisory staff. Interns are encouraged to arrange informational sessions with department staff and other city officials to obtain first-hand knowledge of specific operations.

Networking Opportunities: Interns are to be fully integrated into the network of local government professionals through participation in various professional

association activities. These activities occur on a local and regional basis and provide interns with extensive exposure to a variety of key issues affecting other jurisdictions.

Exposure to Council-Manager Form of Government:

Interns are afforded the opportunity to obtain a working knowledge of how policies are developed and implemented within the council-manager form of government. Theories pertaining to the policy/administration dichotomy are further expanded as interns realize

that developing and administering effective policies requires a coordinated effort between elected officials and management staff.

Successful implementation of an internship depends on standards, expectations, and structured communication. The government entity, the academic representative, and the intern must collectively and periodically evaluate the intern's response to the program to provide ongoing guidance and support outstanding achievement while helping the intern to develop the strong sense of ethics he or she will need as a professional.

The Basics of Internships

Whether a local government can offer an internship will depend upon a local government's available resources. A prospective host agency should consider the following issues when making this decision:

- Ability to compensate an intern
- Types of suitable projects
- Proximity to student populations
- Access to available transportation
- Availability of office space
- Undergraduate level or graduate level.

If the decision is made to proceed, it is important to ensure that the internship is carefully integrated into the student's overall academic program. This requires attention to the basic issues of duration, timing, preparation, and placement.

Duration and Timing

One difficulty in establishing internships is coordinating them with the academic calendars of the institutions from which interns will be drawn. Schools usually have a great deal of flexibility in allowing students to continue in internships before and after the official start or end of a term, but student interest and availability are often tied to the school terms. Thus, internship sponsors should be aware of the starting and ending dates of the school terms and, to the extent possible, synchronize the period of the internship with the school calendar.

Most internships that occur as part of a student's course of study are part-time (typically twenty hours per week). They may last from three months (a summer internship) to the nine months of the academic year, or even for a full year. While many internship programs are available only in the summer, a long-term experience—preferably at least six months full-time or one year part-time—is better. Shorter programs provide too little time for the student to adequately grasp the organizational and political cultures of the host local government and may not give the student a sufficient range of experience observing and participating in diverse activities.

MPA programs are now using a variation on longer part-time internships to establish a formal link between the MPA program and a local government. In this structure, students are hired as interns and work part-time for the local government, but they are placed on graduate research assistantship contracts and are treated like research assistants, gaining tuition reimbursement and other academic benefits as full-time students. Under such an arrangement, the intern is available approximately twenty hours a week during the two semesters of an academic year. Often such an arrangement can last for the two years of a typical MPA program.

For its part, an academic institution that offers an internship program should be aware of the local government's board meeting nights and try to avoid scheduling evening classes on those nights. This will enable the intern to experience working with elected officials.

Preparation

A locality that seeks to establish a useful internship program should prepare by taking the following steps:

- Create effective outreach materials and advertising strategies
- Identify the types of internship available (generalist or specific focus)
- Arrange to conduct the internship as a summer school course to maintain communication links between the school, internship site, and intern
- Consider summer placement to an area that could benefit from having interns even if it is not close to the school, almost like an MPA intern summer "Peace Corps"
- Develop mutual selection criteria as part of the intern application process
- Ensure that strong program supervision and evaluation mechanisms are in place.

Intern Placement

One of the most important components of internships is the nature of the assignment given to the student. The primary responsibility for evaluating the adequacy

of an intern's placement should rest with the academic coordinator, working in conjunction with the local government administrator.

The intern placement process should take into account any experience or skill sets that the candidate may possess that might make him or her particularly well suited to a specific internship post. The process should mimic a job application process and include an interview with the local administrator and the intern supervisor (if different from the administrator). Both the student and the local government should have the right to refuse a placement.

When a student is placed, there should be a formal understanding between the local government, the academic coordinator, and the student of the obligations and responsibilities of all parties. Evaluation and oversight responsibilities of the academic unit and the local government agency should be described with a periodic feedback mechanism for the intern. While not necessary, we recommend that a brief, formal "agreement" or job description be developed as a guide for all parties.

Placement should ensure that management interns are

- Exposed to a broad range of management problems
- Given diverse work assignments
- Expected to perform daily management tasks
- Required to conduct long-term research and report preparation
- Required to interact with other professionals inside and outside the local government
- Required to interact with constituents
- Exposed to elected and appointed officials
- Exposed to boards, commissions, and various groups associated with policy advisement/development
- Provided with opportunities for interaction in professional association activities.

Intern assignments should also allow for the use of various communication skills, including written memos and reports as well as oral presentations to groups of various sizes and compositions.

Choosing the Type of Internship

Internships can be full-time or part-time, undergraduate or graduate. Whatever option is chosen can be a positive experience as long as the goals and projects meet the needs and expectations of both the government and the student.

Part-time/Undergraduate

An undergraduate internship in local government works best for filling a certain need in a department or for completing a particular project. The position should allow for flexibility, enabling the student to maintain an ongoing relationship with his or her school.

Undergraduates typically obtain degree credit for their job-related work, so they are less dependent on outside income as their room and board is covered by school tuition. Various alternatives to paying interns are discussed in the “Compensation and Financial Considerations” section. While undergraduates usually bring a less-developed skill set with them, students with specific educational preparation can be targeted to work on projects that use their experience and knowledge.

Office space enhances productivity and demonstrates that the intern is part of the staff. If space is limited, however, an undergraduate or part-time intern might be appropriate since he or she will need whatever space is available for only brief periods of time, and other interns or employees can then use the space when the intern is not present.

Graduate Level

Often referred to as “management internships,” positions established for graduate students usually run for the duration of the students’ MPA coursework. Graduate interns typically work approximately twenty hours per week in their internship positions.

Graduate students bring a more mature and focused skill set to the internship. Thus, employing a graduate student requires more preparation time than employing a part-time undergraduate intern. For example, a graduate intern will need office space. This should be taken

into consideration before the intern arrives.

Interns who are hired as part of a graduate MPA program are best served by rotating through a variety of departments and job assignments, working on substantial projects, experiencing the realities of local government management, and interacting with elected and appointed officials. These rotations, which should be of two to four months’ duration, should include the local government manager’s office, the finance/budget department, and two or three operating departments. The rotations can be chosen on the basis of project proposals submitted by each department or agency. Project proposals should include

1. What the intern can learn from a rotation in the department
2. Who will serve as the intern’s immediate supervisor (preferably a department head)
3. What specific projects and work assignments the intern will perform
4. How long the rotation will last
5. What enhanced experiences and activities will be provided for the intern.

Proposals should also include any additional information on the department’s ability to provide a meaningful experience and on what the intern’s assistance will mean to the department.

Finally, graduate interns expect compensation. Similarly, many MPA programs require that their students be compensated, even though the students are required to participate in the internship. Compensation can range from a nonpaid internship to entry-level pay with or without benefits.

Summer Graduate

A program with summer graduate students is recommended as a way to save money, complete short-term projects, work with student schedules, and accommodate students from schools that require a summer internship. It is recommended that the format of a graduate student internship include résumé-building tasks, open access to upper-level management, and frontline experience.

Other Internship Considerations

The local government hosting an intern should consider this an opportunity to accomplish a task that no one on staff has the time to research and/or complete. The employer should make sure that the project has clear criteria and expectations outlined before the intern begins. Because the intern may be getting course credit for this work, the intern, the school adviser, and the employer might want to enter into a “learning contract.” Such a contract can include the following measures to ensure a quality experience:

- Specific start and end dates
- Designated supervisor for the intern and project
- Course credit hours to be earned
- Description of duties
- Hours to be worked
- Measures for evaluation.

The employer should develop a work project before the intern is selected. Every effort should be made to ensure that the following guidelines are met for the intern’s project or position:

- The supervisor can provide guidance and mentoring, learning opportunities, and access to upper-level management.
- The project should be achievable within the time frame.
- Time should be allowed for the intern to participate in other government functions.
- If the position entails working on many small tasks, those tasks should provide tangible learning experiences and, when possible, result in a concrete product.

Allowing an intern to participate in other aspects of local government management will enhance the intern’s experience, and the value of this experience can be used to attract interns to unpaid positions. An employer should consider allowing the intern to

- Sit in on upper-level management meetings
- Shadow the local government manager for a day
- Take part in frontline service delivery
- Attend council and neighborhood meetings
- Experience collective bargaining activities.

Attracting the Best Talent

There are interested and qualified students out there, and it is in the local government's best interests to attract and hire the best talent available.

Recruitment

Local government managers have a number of options for publicizing internship openings and attracting excellent talent. Possible marketing techniques include

- Posting on the community website
- Advertising in the community newsletter
- Using social media (blog, e-newsletter, etc.)
- Posting on association websites, such as ICMA (jobs.icma.org) and NASPAA (www.naspaa.org)
- Contacting state associations
- Consulting with academic coordinators at educational institutions, and with professors and program directors in the field of public administration
- Participating in university job fairs and leveraging ICMA's brand. (To arrange participation at a job fair under the ICMA umbrella, contact careers@icma.org or visit icma.org/careerfairs for more information.)

Local government managers should use several of these marketing techniques to find the method that produces the best results. They should also be sure to find out how applicants heard about the particular opportunity being offered.

It is important to sell the employing local government to prospective interns. The job description should be easily accessible online and upon request. Photos and an outline of past projects will help to tell the story of what the internship experience is like in that particular community.

To attract the best candidates, local governments should offer potential interns

- The opportunity to participate in leadership meetings or council meetings
- Meaningful project work
- A flexible schedule
- Compensation

- Course credit
- Mentoring and assistance with job placement.

The Application Process

Since staff time is often limited, a straightforward and efficient process can be used to determine which applicants will provide the best fit for an organization.

The following are items frequently requested from applicants:

- Cover letter
- Résumé
- References
- Employment application (if applicable)
- Writing sample.

The Interview Process

After reviewing the materials submitted, a host agency should be able to reduce the number of applicants before interviewing. While it can conduct the initial interview by telephone, it should conduct an in-person interview prior to the final selection to ensure that the candidate meets its criteria for professionalism. Even though interns are part-time employees, a local government should not cut corners during the selection process.

Qualities to look for during the interview process include

- Strong communication skills
- Applicable experience
- Applicable coursework
- Interpersonal skills
- Interest in local government
- Self-motivation.

The interview process also provides the prospective candidate with an opportunity to interview the community during his or her visit. The applicant should have the chance to attend a brief tour of a public facility and/or to meet members of the management team.

Compensation and Financial Considerations

Internships are, in many cases, one of the methods that students use to finance their education. While it is not always feasible, every effort should be made to create funded internships. The old adage “you get what you pay for” is true for many internships.

Compensation

Local governments that contribute financially to the support of the internship are more likely to make meaningful use of the intern, to provide the intern with good supervision, and to demand more from the intern in terms of professional productivity. The more the intern is treated like an employee, the more valuable the internship will be to both the student and the local government. Providing financial support to the internship is also likely to increase the pool of potential interns from which the local government can choose.

Municipalities who opt for the nonpaid intern should, at a minimum, pay the expenses for the intern to attend related regional and national conferences as well as to take advantage of local opportunities typically offered through local ICMA or councils of government organizations. In the event of an unpaid internship, some universities may waive the internship credit required for graduation so that the student is not paying tuition money to work for free. A local government should be sure to discuss compensation options with area universities before publicizing a job announcement.

Financial Considerations

A part-time graduate internship allows flexibility in the resources required to support a program. There are several ways to ensure that the internship is cost-effective, depending on what monies are available:

- *Program Materials:* Whenever possible, the local government should partner with a local college

or university and work with the public administration department through websites and online applications.

- *Recruitment Process:* The cost of personnel time to recruit, interview, and manage the intern is the most significant expense. Initial costs include the development and distribution of an ad outlining the internship opportunity. Staff will be needed to review the applications, check references, and conduct the interview process. Phone interviews are a way to minimize costs if the intern is not available for a personal interview.
- *Compensating Interns:* If the resources are available, financial compensation can certainly increase an intern’s accountability and provide supervisors with leverage on deadlines and performance evaluations. If financial compensation is not an option, there are several alternative compensation options to consider:
 - Course credit from the school
 - A stipend for the overall period of time
 - Paid travel expenses or free lunches
 - Mentoring and career development assistance through staff connections.
- *Supervision:* Staff resources will need to be devoted to managing and mentoring the intern to ensure a valuable experience for both the intern and the local government. A current employee can be assigned to oversee and coordinate the implementation of an internship program. Since this will be an additional duty, the employee should be compensated accordingly with a pay increase, a bonus, or some other benefit. Once the program becomes established, interns can maintain it and recruit applicants for the following year.

While not always feasible, every effort should be made to create funded internships.

Supervising and Evaluating Interns

Before and during an internship assignment, wherever practical, there should be a series of sessions attended by the student, the academic coordinator, and the government representative (in most cases this should be the intern supervisor) to discuss their mutual expectations of the internship program.

Supervision

Interns should not be left unsupervised. Both the local government and the academic coordinator should undertake the supervision. The local government should designate an intern supervisor who maintains regular contact with an academic internship coordinator.

The local government supervisor should spell out work assignments for the intern, follow up to see that these assignments have been completed satisfactorily, and feel free to discuss assignments with the academic coordinator. The supervisor should be regarded as a partner in the learning experience of the student.

Evaluation

Evaluation should be a continuous, ongoing aspect of the internship program. Some suggestions for the local government to get the most out of the evaluation process are as follows:

- Maintain contact with supervisors and stay informed of intern participation. Look for ways to incorporate interns into various agencies and departments.
- Use the evaluation process to provide feedback not only to the intern but also to the sponsoring jurisdiction and to the academic coordinator to ensure that the internship is meeting the expectations of all concerned.
- Conduct evaluations in light of goals set forth in advance by the program supervisor and the intern. If goals are continually unmet, perhaps they are set too high or not applicable to the situation.

- Ensure that intern supervisors use the same performance evaluation system that is used for other employees and provide the intern with a copy of the evaluation that is sent to the academic coordinator. Occasionally, the academic coordinator will provide the intern supervisor with a specific evaluation form that can be used instead of or in addition to the form used for other employees. Should that happen, the academic coordinator should make clear to the intern supervisor just how the the academic institution will use the evaluation in determining the student's grade.
- Require interns to submit self-evaluations of their experiences. Both supervisors' and interns' statements should include evaluations of the program's effectiveness. This should aid the academic coordinator in determining which local governments have provided (or not provided) desirable supervision and learning experiences. Written statements by the students should be submitted in addition to any academic paper prepared in conjunction with the internship.
- If desirable, require that students submit an additional evaluation six months or a year after their internships have ended. This will provide a means of assessing the long-term impact of the internships.

Continued success

- Maintain a relationship with school faculty to ensure that both the needs of the government and the student's degree requirements are being met. Offer to guest lecture for a local government-related course.
- Use interns to keep the internship program running. Have them place ads and take responsibility for communicating with future applicants and collecting applications. Former interns are also a great resource for suggestions regarding how to make the internship experience stronger.

Top Ten Best Practices

1. **Access.** Allow the intern access to staff and the chief administrative official, and encourage the intern to attend meetings and events, including

- Department director meetings
- One-on-one mentoring sessions
- Board/council meetings
- Nonpublic/executive sessions
- Regional manager meetings
- State association conferences.

2. **Variety and meaningful work.** Provide various projects and participatory experiences in a number of different departments. For example,

- Set the council agenda
- Put together a RFP/RFQ
- Develop a budget for a specific cost center
- Update a section of the strategic plan
- Conduct a citizen survey
- Update the emergency plan
- Update the hazard mitigation plan
- Prepare a fixed-asset report.

Tasks that are important to the goals of the organization will attract quality interns. Résumé-building experiences often are more valuable than a paycheck.

3. **Individuality.** Each intern will have his or her own set of career goals. Help meet the intern's needs and interests by eliciting input from various departments and agencies for potential work projects. Discuss the intern's career goals and provide an opportunity for the intern to work with departments in the organization to meet those goals.

4. **Education.** Educate people in the community about careers in local government, and seek out opportunities to promote the internship program. In particular, target nearby colleges or universities to ensure a sustainable internship program.

5. **Frontline Experience.** Provide an opportunity for the intern to learn to appreciate and respect the work of frontline service providers who exhibit

good management practices. Such opportunities could include

- Providing customer service/answering phones
- Responding to resident inquiries via e-mail or postal mail
- Responding to a Freedom of Information request
- Providing time in the intern's schedule for ride-alongs with public safety or other service providers, as well as for the possibility of actually helping to do the work in the field.

6. **Mentoring.** Provide the intern with a stable mentor to offer guidance and encouragement throughout the internship experience. Remember, today's interns are tomorrow's leaders. Avoid putting interns in basements, back rooms, or conference rooms. Instead, provide them with workspaces near as many people as possible so they can engage with other staff.

7. **Supervision.** Avoid having the intern report to a supervisor who may lack the experience and authority to provide the intern with tools for learning. Have supervisors supervise.

8. **Flexibility.** Remember that interns may have difficult academic schedules. Discuss projects and deadlines with interns and their academic counselors to ensure that everyone's needs are being met. If necessary, allow for flexible work hours.

9. **Evaluate.** Give interns feedback throughout their tenure and have them evaluate their own experiences before leaving. Remember that this is a growth experience for them. Help them work through their learning mistakes, and offer guidance and/or help when needed.

10. **Assimilate.** Make the program a routine part of the organization. Train regular staff to expect and appreciate the value added by interns. Continue to seek out qualified candidates and to share enthusiasm for local government. Budget funds each year for internships and, if possible, spread the funds out among several cost centers so that the financial impact extends throughout the organization.

Fair Labor Standards Act

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) stipulates that interns must be fully aware of and agree to the terms of employment set out by the employer, whether or not the intern is to receive pay or other forms of compensation (i.e., school credit, stipend, or tuition assistance).

If the intern *is* to receive an hourly wage or salary, the intern is classified as an employee and is protected by all terms of the FLSA, including minimum wage standards, overtime compensation, and sick leave. Consult the Department of Labor at (866) 4-USA-DOL, or [dol.gov/](https://www.dol.gov/), with further questions.

Appendix A

National Internship and Fellowship Programs

Below is a list of some established programs that could serve as a model for your own program, or that offer assistance with getting a program established. Or, like the Local Government Management Fellowship (LGMF) Program, actually help broker the screening process to make getting a top-notch Fellow easier.

1. **Local Government Management Fellowship (LGMF)**
icma.org/lgmf
2. **City of Phoenix, Arizona Management Intern Program**
phoenix.gov/employment/intern/programs/faq/index.html
3. **City of Kansas City, Missouri Cookingham-Noll Fellowship**
kcmo.org/CKCMO/Depts/CityManagersOffice/InternshipsandfellowshipswiththeCity/FellowshipProgramDescription/index.htm
4. **City of Long Beach, California Management Assistant Program**
longbeach.gov/citymanager/maprogram/default.asp
5. **Local Government Management Internship**
icma.org/lgmi

Find more internships or Fellowships at

icma.org/en/icma/career_network/job_seekers/interns

or by searching ICMA's job board at

icma.org/en/icma/career_network/job_seekers/browse_jobs

Appendix B

Testimonial from Local Government Management Fellows

Most Fellows continue in local government and are thriving because of their Fellowship experience. Fellows have said that their experience helps them put practice into policy, and that local government is the ideal place for this to happen. The program is a great opportunity to gain diverse experience in multiple departments, work at the top levels of local government alongside some of the leading professionals in the field, and demonstrate to citizens that government can be responsive, that it can provide them exceptional service, and that they really have a voice in the community. The mentorship, experience, challenges, and opportunities are simply extraordinary.

Read what a few have to say about the LGMF program:



Paul Fagin

2011 Fellow, River Falls, WI

The Fellowship has been a great opportunity to build on my past work experiences and further develop my project management skills. My position allows me to work on projects with department heads throughout our city, observe different management styles and techniques, and understand cross-cutting issues within our community.



Phyllis Russell
Budget & Policy Analyst,
City of Norfolk, VA

2009–10 Fellow, Dubuque, IA, &
Lancaster, WI

I have discovered that I made the right decision to enter into this profession. I have discovered that serving the public in this capacity is my career calling. I consider myself fortunate to be a Fellow, and I consider myself fortunate to have been given the opportunity to cross paths with people I will be comrades with for the rest of my life.



Jonathan Radermacher
City Manager, Madison, MN

2008 Fellow, Sarasota County, FL

My Fellowship experience has allowed me to have an excellent preview into the world of city management, and currently as the city manager of a small rural Minnesota community it has been very helpful despite the obvious difference of size and location from Madison, MN, to Sarasota County, FL.



Nathan Thiel

City Administrator, Mauston, WI

2007 Fellow, Riverside, IL

I can't say enough about the Fellowship program. The local government management profession is a bit intimidating to enter, and the Fellowship didn't just get my foot in the door, it opened it. By the end of the Fellowship, I was serving as an interim director of public works, and two years later I am now a city administrator. This program not only helps identify future management issues; it also helps develop future managers.



Tanisha Briley

Assistant City Manager, Davenport, IA

2006 Fellow, Davenport, IA

Shaping the future of a dynamic city like Davenport is an immensely humbling and worthwhile experience. Each day affords a new opportunity to move the community forward and I can't imagine a better way to start my day.



Joe McRae

Deputy City Manager, Evanston, IL

2005–06 Fellow, Catawba County, NC

The Fellowship allowed me to match classroom theories with effective practice. It was the logical next step for me in my career and absolutely laid a great foundation for my future success. I truly appreciate the invaluable opportunities afforded to me during my Fellowship and highly recommend the program to other aspiring next generation managers.



Mary Furtado
Assistant County Manager,
Catawba County, NC
2004 Fellow, Sarasota County, FL

Every day is so different in my job—I’m challenged and invigorated by the variety. I have been put into positions that stretch my competencies and force me to grow as a professional, and I recognize the value of that. My participation in the Fellowship laid a solid foundation of experience for me, and I have been building on it ever since.



Kelly Spivey
Senior Analyst/Diversity Manager,
City of San Jose, CA
2004 Fellow, San Jose, CA

For me, local government is the heart of day-to-day democracy, the place where every person’s voice can inspire positive community change. The Fellowship accelerated my professional development, connected me with leading-edge government professionals, and enabled me to combine my passion for leadership and diversity into a strategic change management initiative.

If you are interested in becoming a Fellow or hosting a Fellow, please contact ICMA at lgmfprogram@icma.org.

Internship Case Studies:

Contributed by ICMA's Breaking into Local Government Task Force, 2011–2012

Points to Consider When Using an Intern

Below you will find suggestions to consider when hiring an intern. These suggestions are based on the collective experience of ICMA members working with multiple interns over the years. In general, interns can provide a great way to research and implement time-consuming projects or handle day-to-day administrative issues. They provide a new perspective and offer mentoring opportunities to managers and department directors to pass along their legacy.

In order for interns to provide the optimal benefits to your office and community, it is important that you spend time with them upfront to assess their skills and to explain office expectations. This is important because each intern's skills vary significantly depending on the intern's educational level (from high school to postgraduate level). Many of them have limited professional work experience and may not go through typical employee orientation programs that explain baseline expectations. Whether their internships are paid or unpaid typically confers different levels of expectations and responsibilities as well. Therefore, it is important to outline the expectations with the intern early on to avoid confusion.

The following is a list of issues and suggestions for your consideration as you develop an internship position and hire an intern. Not all items will be relevant, but they are provided as a sample for you to consider upfront. Look for the items that are most relevant to your community and implement strategies to ensure a positive experience for both you and the intern.

Position development or pre-offer

- Set job expectations. What type of work will be done? Develop sample assignments and skills to be learned. Think of lingering projects that need attention.
 - Organize the position in a way that will require little direct supervision. Larger research projects often offer this opportunity.
 - Identify time expectations. Develop the internship length and hours per week.
 - Offer flexible hours/options for working from home.
- Note whether the job could turn into a permanent position. If such a possibility is limited or nonexistent, state this upfront so the intern does not have unrealistic expectations of where the job can lead.
 - Identify professional development opportunities. Will the intern attend professional conferences, trainings, meetings, etc?

Starting work:

- Use of social media. Is it okay to use government computers or personal own devices to update personal Facebook/social media accounts on the job?
- Policies on the use of personal devices on the job.
- Confidentiality expectations. Staff meetings or one-on-one meetings may cover items that are expected to remain confidential.
- Notice of planned absences and sick time.
- If it is a paid position, limitations on the hours that can be worked and approvals for work outside of that time frames. Some interns are very motivated and may put in a lot of extra time outside of work that may conflict with state labor law regulations or your budget for the position.
- Protocols/expectations. For example, come to the supervisor with suggestions; if asked by others to do assignments, all materials go through X.
- Restrictions, including on cell phone usage, when driving government vehicles or using a personal vehicle for work.
- Public perception (fishbowl effect). Explanation that when the intern is driving a government car, wearing the agency insignia or otherwise identifying as part of the government, the public is watching, and that even legal behaviors may reflect poorly on the agency.
- Job interviews. Consider interviewing the intern beforehand. Allow for flexibility in scheduling interviews to account for interviewees' varied schedules.
- Task flexibility. Allow the intern to have fun and explore. Let their creativity flow to the benefit the community.
- Mentoring. Will you serve as a mentor to the intern? If so, what does that entail? Keep in mind that this looks different for every individual mentor.

Interns: Making a Difference in Government

Case Study 1: City of Charlottesville, VA Human Resource Department

Q&A with internship mentor Leslie Beauregard, Director of Budget and Performance Management

Q: Did the intern provide value to the county and how? In the big picture, did the intern save the county money (i.e., how would the work otherwise get done)?

A: Yes, the intern did certainly provide significant value to the city. Ryan worked on various special projects and detailed work that our small staff of two would have to find the time to do, taking away from larger more strategic issues. A really good intern becomes part of the staff and is able to do more complex projects in an efficient manner. The intern wants meaningful experience and making sure they get that is always high value and will result in a great work product.

Q: How did you organize projects for your intern?

A: We would try to come up with a meaningful large project that has a research component and could be completed within the time frame of his/her internship. As their mentor, I would explain the problem/situation and what we needed to find out. As staff, we gave the interns as much direction as possible on how to start the project and then we would let them use their own research skills. I also gave interns specific projects like updating spreadsheets, inputting survey data, and editing documents.

Q: Some people are hesitant to use interns because of the perception that the intern would take too much time. How do you manage interns?

A: Early on, the expectation is set that the intern needs to be able to think on their own so that they can work independently, once direction is given. But

Internship Snapshot

City of Charlottesville, VA

Budget: \$146M General Fund

Staff: 923 Full Time Equivalent Employees

Major Projects:

- Budget document preparation
- Financial spreadsheet updates
- Survey data analysis and input

Details:

- Budget Intern
- Unpaid internship
- One month tenure
- 15 hours/week

“Ryan was a tremendous help during one of our busiest times of the budget planning process”

—Leslie Beauregard

to also feel comfortable asking questions when they don't understand something. This has worked well in my experience.

Q: Where do you do outreach to find your interns? Was the internship paid or unpaid?

A: Our office usually works through the University of Virginia Internship Program. Students receive class credits to participate in an internship.

Q: Advice for someone considering using an intern?

A: Don't hesitate! It's worth the effort and time.

Case Study 2: Washtenaw County, MI

Office of Economic and Community Development

Q&A with Washtenaw County internship supervisors

Q: Did the intern provide value to the county and how? In the big picture, did the intern save the county money (i.e., how would the work otherwise get done)?

A: It depends on the intern; good ones, absolutely. Bad ones; no. A good intern is enthusiastic about whatever the project happens to be, cares about learning the subject matter, has good organization and research skills, and can work independently. A bad intern does not listen to directions, complains about the work, or is not very skilled. Good interns do save money and/or get work done that would otherwise not get done, because those projects are lower on the priority list; i.e., updating reports or doing a research project that adds value to the organization but would otherwise not get done during the regular work day.

Q: How did you organize projects for your intern?

A: Our staff would try to come up with a meaningful large project that has a research component. As their supervisor, I would explain the problem/situation and what we needed to find out. As staff, we gave the interns as much direction as possible on how to start the project and then we would let them use their own research skills. I have also given interns specific projects like compiling information, updating reports, etc.

Q: Where do you do outreach to find interns? Was the internship paid or unpaid?

A: We usually found interns through university professors' referrals and work study.

Internship Snapshot

Washtenaw County, MI

Population: 344,791

Major Projects:

- Program Evaluation
- Maintaining CDBG Program Files
- Surveys
- Updating Website
- Liaison to Community Group

Details:

- Internship Program
- Paid Internship
- Averaged 10-20 hours week (depending on funding and the intern's time)
- Supervised by OECD Staff

"As staff, we gave the interns as much direction as possible on how to start the project and then we would let them use their own research skills."

—Jennifer Hall, Washtenaw County

Q: Advice for someone considering using an intern?

A: Interns need to be able to reason and think on their own so that they can work independently, once direction is given. My advice is for your staff to come up with bigger projects that the intern can work on independently. Also, find space to fit interns in your office. For our interns, wherever we could find a space—it was used, even if we had to beg and borrow.

Interns: Making a Difference in Government

Case Study 3: Ypsilanti, MI City Manager's Office

*Q&A with internship supervisor Judi Smith,
Human Resources Manager, Ypsilanti, MI*

Q: Did the intern provide value to the county and how? In the big picture, did the intern save the county money (i.e., how would the work otherwise get done)?

A: I have been very fortunate to have interns willing to learn all aspects of Human Resources. This in itself provides value to the city and knowledge to the intern. I believe the reason why so many of our interns have been successful in obtaining such good jobs after graduation is because of the training they received here. We don't have them doing "grunt" work; they are doing hands-on projects, like updating our website, revising job descriptions, participating in negotiations, interviews and preparing new-hire paperwork. Their value to us speaks volumes.

Q: How did you organize projects for your intern?

A: I started out with one main project for the intern. My last intern scanned all our employee 5 x 7 cards with all their pertinent data. Now when people call for reference checks, everything is on the computer (e.g., their previous positions, raises, date of hire and termination, etc.). Because HR always has the unexpected come up, I have the intern work on a lot of various projects such as surveys, reports for insurance companies, Workers' Compensation reports, etc. I try to plan out their work on a week by week basis. The next intern I have is going to launch an employee Orientation Program for the city.

Q: Some people are hesitant to use interns because of the perception that the intern would take too much time. How do you manage interns?

A: I follow-up with my interns on a weekly basis to see how they are coming along and if they are on track to complete their work on time. If not, I'll ask if there is something I can do to assist them. I like to give

Internship Snapshot

City of Ypsilanti, MI

Population: 19,435

Home of the Eastern Michigan University

Budget: \$14.3M General Fund

Staff: 923 Full Time Equivalent Employees

Major Projects:

- Participating in Negotiations
- Revising Job Descriptions
- Preparing New Hire Paperwork
- Conducting Interviews

Details:

- Graduate Student Internship Program
- Paid Internship
- Averaged 10–20 hours per week during the school year and maybe more during the summer

"I believe the reason why so many of our interns have been successful in obtaining such good jobs after graduation is because of the training they received here."

—Judi Smith

them a sense of ownership to their assignments. Once I know that they are responsible and dependable to get their tasks done, I don't do much follow-up. I let them know from the beginning of their internship that I'm not their babysitter, but I do hold them accountable. I also let them know that I'm accessible for any questions they may have.

I also feel that interns should have a voice in expressing their ideas. With collaboration, we can usually come up with the best possible results. My advice is to listen to interns and enjoy them. Once they learn the office protocol they are truly a valuable asset.

Case Study 4: Ypsilanti, MI City Manager's Office

Q&A with internship mentors Edward Koryzno and Bob Bruner, Ypsilanti City Manager's office

Q: What made you want to start your internship program? Did the interns provide value to the city and how?

A: Necessity is the mother of invention. We had more work to do than people to do it in Ypsilanti. The city is a university community and the University of Michigan isn't far away either, so it seemed like a natural fit to get good people into the office to help.

Each intern performed very well and provided valuable service. One of our first interns prepared and presented at a council meeting the data justifying the city income tax election. Our next intern assembled the first online complaint system among other projects. The following intern led the historic Freight House renovation project and establishing the Administrative Hearings Bureau and her successor assumed the Freight House project, website redesign, and other projects.

Q: How did you organize projects for your intern?

A: Our assistant city manager initiated and maintained the internship program in the city manager's office. We usually picked a project on which we needed work done that we felt would be challenging for an intern.

We had a specific set of duties and projects for interns to perform. Some were ongoing duties and others were one-time projects. The ongoing projects were easy. You just create and document processes the intern can follow. One-time projects are more specific and require more time and attention.

Q: Some people are hesitant to use interns because of the perception that the intern would take too much time. How do you manage interns?

A: I understand the hesitation, but the right intern can be invaluable. I was there for support as Bob

Internship Snapshot

City of Ypsilanti, MI

Population: 19,435

Home of the Eastern Michigan University

Budget: \$14.3M General Fund

Staff: 923 Full Time Equivalent Employees

Major Projects:

- Grant Management
- Disc Golf Course Creation
- Administrative Hearings Bureau Creation
- Website Redesign
- New Program Analysis

Details:

- Paid Internship
- Interns averaged 10–20 hours/week during the school year and 20–40 during the summer.
- Supervised by Assistant City Manager
- Interns mentored by City Manager

"I understand the hesitation [to have an intern], but the right intern can be invaluable"

—Edward Koryzno

"If you match the right intern with the right projects, then supervision takes less time than doing the project yourself!"

—Bob Bruner

Underprimarily supervised the interns. The supervision required depends greatly upon the intern's level of experience and the duties and projects assigned. Supervision is easy if you match the right intern with the right projects. Then supervision takes less time than doing the project yourself!

Interns: Making a Difference in Government

Q&A with intern Ryan Henderson,
City of Charlottesville, VA

Q: How did you find your internship?

A: I was seeking an internship over the winter break of school that would allow me to work in a municipality and start gaining meaningful experience working in local government. Currently concentrating my MPA in financial management and local government administration, I was interested in finding an internship that would allow me to apply what I had learned in my first semester of graduate school to real-work situations. That opportunity presented itself when I began interning in the Office of Budget and Performance Management, in Charlottesville, VA.

Q: Did your interest in local government increase during your internship? Why?

A: Yes. During my four-week internship I was always busy and always felt that I was lending a valuable and helpful hand to the office. It gave me a great taste of not only what it's like to work in a budget office, but also what it's like to work in local government. For an MPA student who is solely interested in pursuing a career in local government, it was an amazing chance to get a glimpse of the environment in which I want to work.

Q: What do you think was the single most important benefit you received through your work in internship? How did the organization benefit?

A: During the weeks that I interned with the Office of Budget and Performance Management, and under the guidance of the director of Budget and Performance Management, Leslie Beauregard, I was assigned various projects using Microsoft Excel. I spent weeks updating and adjusting budget spreadsheets as well as inputting 2010 actuals. As someone whose previous experience using Microsoft Excel was limited, I found my work to be satisfying and extremely beneficial. Along with the work I was doing with budget spreadsheets, I was also

Intern Snapshot

City of Charlottesville, VA

Name: Ryan Henderson

Degree/School: MPA candidate, Virginia Commonwealth University's Wilder School

"For a student who is solely interested in pursuing a career in local government, it was an amazing chance to get a glimpse of the environment in which I want to work in."

—Ryan Henderson

asked to review the budget-in-brief from the previous year and make suggestions on improving the context and content of the document. For my final project I reviewed and processed over 300 budget surveys, information that would be analyzed by both the city manager's office and city council.

Q: How are the internships helping you in your actual job search?

A: My internship was the first one I ever had working within a municipality. My previous internships varied widely, from working at a local radio station to working for a political campaign. This had a more important meaning to me because it related directly to what I was studying and to what I want to pursue in terms of a career.

Q: Did your internships inspire you to have an intern of your own in future local government work?

A: The commitment I felt toward the organization and the personal benefit I received were the two things that made my internship incredibly meaningful. I can only hope that future internships in local government prove to be as meaningful as this one was.

Q&A with intern Dan Hogan, Office of Budget and Performance Management, City of Charlottesville, VA

Q: How did you find your internship?

A: During the summer of 2011 I worked as an intern in the city of Charlottesville’s Office of Budget and Performance Management as part of the University of Virginia’s University Internship Program (UIP). As a candidate for a major in economics and a minor in mathematics, I saw the internship position available at city hall as a worthwhile opportunity to investigate the careers open to college graduates in my area of study and to experience working in an administrative setting.

Q: Did your interest in local government increase during your internship? Why?

A: Absolutely! After completing this internship and meeting with one of the assistant city attorneys, I decided that I wanted to pursue a career in law that includes some time in local government.

Q: What do you think was the single most important benefit you received through your work in internship? How did the organization benefit?

A: The single most important benefit I received through the internship was the direction I received from my sponsor, Leslie Beauregard. At each stage of my internship she made me feel comfortable and involved. I found her direction to be the key force in making my internship a positive experience. She consistently took time to introduce me to co-workers,

Intern Snapshot

City of Charlottesville, VA

Name: Dan Hogan

Degree/School: BA in Economics, University of Virginia’s College of Arts and Sciences

“I worked with the satisfaction of knowing that my efforts would ultimately help facilitate efficient government operation in Charlottesville.”

—Dan Hogan

expose me to the inner workings of government, and entertain any questions I had. The organization benefited by the daily tasks I was able to complete. I was assigned a number of tasks over the course of my internship. Chief among these were the update of the budget history record for the city and assistance in developing the Plan, Perform, Perfect Program (P3). The former task predominantly involved data entry and organization while the latter included revision of online performance scorecards, attendance at project meetings, and coordination with P3 team members to perform various project assignments. In both cases I worked with the satisfaction of knowing that my efforts, however marginal, would ultimately help facilitate efficient government operation in Charlottesville.

Interns: Making a Difference in Government

Q&A with intern Brittany Mollica, Office of Budget and Performance Management, City of Charlottesville, VA

Q: How did you find your internship?

A: As the summer following my freshman year at UNC Chapel Hill approached, I began searching for an internship in a field related to mathematics. My father, who has worked for the public works department for the city of Charlottesville, forwarded information regarding the internship opportunity with the Office of Budget and Performance Management. After reading more about the internship, I decided it would be a great opportunity and applied.

Q: Did your interest in local government increase during your internship? Why?

A: Coming into this internship, I knew very little about Charlottesville's local government. One of the first projects I worked on involved reading over the budget document for FY 2013–14. Simply becoming more knowledgeable about how Charlottesville's government worked increased my interest in local government. The knowledge that I gained from this internship has encouraged me to want to learn more by taking government- and political science-related classes; I now know that I find this area of study interesting and that I would love to further pursue this interest when back in Chapel Hill.

Q: What do you think was the single most important benefit you received through your work in internship? How did the organization benefit?

A: Overall, this internship was a great experience and I am lucky to have had the opportunity to spend my time here this summer. The single most important benefit I received from interning in this office is the wide variety of people I had the opportunity to meet and work with. I worked on various projects with people from many different departments, and I gained a much broader view of how the different departments work and

Intern Snapshot

City of Charlottesville, VA

Name: Brittany Mollica

Degree/School: BA in Mathematics (2015), University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

"I like the idea that I could find a job where my voice can really be heard and I can have a direct impact on my community."

—Brittany Mollica

collaborate. The city benefited from having me as an intern in that I brought a completely fresh and neutral perspective because I knew very little about Charlottesville's government beforehand. For example, this summer was the first time I had ever read the budget document, which allowed me to quickly notice any errors or items that needed to be changed.

Q: How are the internships helping you in your actual job search?

A: This internship has helped me to focus my ideas for my career search; while I know I want a job that involves mathematics, I now can also be sure that I would enjoy working in a larger organization. I also know that I would enjoy working in local government. I like the idea that I could find a job where my voice can really be heard and I can have a direct impact on my community.

Q: Did your internships inspire you to have an intern of your own in future local government work?

A: I would absolutely want to have an intern if I were to work in local government in the future. I was lucky to have the opportunity to learn so much by working in local government this summer and would definitely want to provide someone else with an experience similar to the one I had!

Q&A with intern Rebecca Lurie, City Manager's Office, Cities of College Park and Bowie, MD

Q: How did you find your internship?

A: The city of College Park position as the liaison to the city council was advertised in an op-ed in the University of Maryland (UMD) student newspaper, *The Diamondback*. My internship with the city of Bowie, Maryland, was a partnership between Maryland Municipal League (MML) and the UMD School of Public Policy. The school Career Council told me about the application.

Q: Did your interest in local government increase during your internship? Why?

A: Yes. I found that unlike my federal internships, the time line for getting major policy changes in local government was reasonable, the issues being dealt with were close to people's lives, and I was interacting directly with the constituents. I am very likely to work in local government now; I am currently searching for a position with a strong preference for the local level.

Q: What do you think was the single most important benefit you received through your work in internship? How did the organization benefit?

A: The most important benefit I received from these opportunities, though the benefits were numerous, was the feeling that I was making a difference in these communities, not just answering phones and making copies. It was that feeling that made me seek out other opportunities in local government. I think College Park benefited because they had someone who understood not only the realities they were facing but also the student community. I was able to help the council to see the issues from the students' perspective and also educated the student body about council policies and

Intern Snapshot

Cities of College Park and Bowie, MD

Name: Rebecca (Becca) Lurie

Degree/School: BA/MPP (2012), University of Maryland School of Public Policy

"The most important benefit I received from these opportunities, though the benefits were numerous, was the feeling that I was making a difference in these communities; not just answering phones and making copies"

—Becca Lurie

reasoning. Bowie was launching a new program, the part of the process that takes the most staff time, and I was able to help get part of the program set up and partially executed, allowing their staff to concentrate on bigger parts of the program that were having larger start-up problems.

Q: How are the internships helping you in your job search?

A: In all of the interviews that I have done so far, the people I have spoken with have been impressed that I have so much experience, and it has given me a base of knowledge to be able to discuss the issues that cities face.

Q: Did your internships inspire you to have an intern of your own in future local government work?

A: Knowing what a great experience it was for me, I would absolutely love to host an intern if I am ever in the position to offer a quality opportunity.

Interns: Making a Difference in Government

Q&A with intern Robert Riker, City Manager's Office, Cities of College Park and Bowie, MD

Q: How did you find your internship?

A: I was contacted by the previous intern (who was still in the position) following a column I wrote for the student newspaper. We talked about some of the projects she was working on and my ideas about economic development and supporting local business. When she made the decision to move to a new job, she reached out to me to see if I might be interested in the intern position at the city.

Q: Did your interest in local government increase during your internship? Why?

A: My interest in local government certainly increased as a result of this internship. Initially I did not have any intention of working in local government long-term but now I am not so sure. Having had experience with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, I feel it has really helped me gain some perspective. I really enjoyed the dynamic of local government; there is camaraderie in working together for constituents and council, and you really feel like you are part of a team. It is also nice that you are doing something important and making some improvement at the local level. That is a feeling I had here at the city and interning at a nonprofit, but not something I experienced in the private sector.

Q: What do you think was the single most important benefit you received through your work in internship? How did the organization benefit?

A: The most important skill I learned through working at the city was flexibility. You never know what issue might arise or what you will need to work on next. It means you have to be prepared to learn new things, be ready for change, and not be upset when your ideas get changed or scrapped. In terms of personal benefits I would say that getting to work in an office with such warm and caring people and building relationships with them has been my biggest personal benefit. I really feel like I belong here. In terms of benefits to the city, I would like to think that the city as a whole benefited from my work, particularly as a bridge between the old economic development coordinator and the new one.

Intern Snapshot

Cities of College Park and Bowie, MD

Name: Robert Riker

Degree/School: BA/MPP (2012), University of Maryland School of Public Policy

"My internship has given me experience doing a lot of different things and interacting with a lot of different people, which is invaluable in the job market."

—Robert Riker

During the transition period I took over some projects to help ease the transition. Once the new coordinator started, I brought him up to speed on College Park and his job. Over my 17 months here, I was involved in a lot of projects, from hosting events, to helping create business organizations, to doing business inventories, to running websites and social media; so hopefully the city benefited from all of those efforts.

Q: How are the internships helping you in your job search?

A: It has given me experience doing a lot of different things and interacting with a lot of different people, which is invaluable in the job market. I am confident that my experience working for the city and my recommendations will help me in future job searches.

Q: Did your internships inspire you to have an intern of your own in future local government work?

A: I would definitely be interested in having an intern sometime in the future. Aside from doing various useful tasks, interns bring new perspective and fresh ideas and may possess unique skill sets that can be really valuable. The value an intern adds to an office or project is a combination of the intern, his or her project, and the supervisor; these things create a lot of potential for a positive impact. It is also a great way to introduce someone to a field.

Q&A with intern Nijah Fudge, City of El Dorado, KS, Office of Budget and Performance Measurement

Q: How did you find your internship?

A: I found my internship through my current master's program, the KU Master of Administration program. Several employers notify KU advisors, who then notify students of job opportunities.

Q: Did your interest in local government increase during your internship? Why?

A: My interest in local government was motivated by my master's program, which emphasizes local government. My internship experiences reinforced my interest. Successful project completion that includes tasks like grant writing, project management, promoting economic development, and collaborating with schools and nonprofits have motivated my passion for the field. My experiences have taught me that I can make a valuable difference in the community in which I work.

Q: What do you think was the single most important benefit you received through your work in internship? How did the organization benefit?

A: The most important benefits I received were practical experience and application. The organizations I interned with have greatly benefited through the results of the projects I've completed. I was given tasks that no other department head had time to complete. Each project I successfully completed helped further the progression of the body.

Q: How are the internships helping you in your actual job search?

A: My internship experiences are helping me build my career. I have begun interviewing with other organizations for project management and analyst positions. Without my internship experiences I would not be qualified enough to further advance my career despite my education. Without internship opportunities, I

Intern Snapshot

City of El Dorado, KS

Name: Nijah Fudge

Degrees/Schools: BA, Ottawa University; MPA, University of Kansas

Currently a graduate student at Kansas University in the Public Administration Program

"My internship experiences are helping me build my career. Without internship opportunities, I would be forced to seek work outside of the field."

—Nijah Fudge

would be forced to seek work outside of the field. I have a passion for this field, which is why I have invested my time, money, and cognitive energy toward the obtainment of a Master of Public Administration degree. Working outside of the public administration field is the last thing I want to do.

Q: Did your internships inspire you to have an intern of your own in future local government work?

A: Internships are necessary for any professional organization that wishes to stay viable. Internships provide the opportunity to educate the next generation, and at a low cost in most cases. Overall the opportunities yield great gains. When given the chance I will create an internship to help continue to inspire others to continue the work that I have become so passionate about. The internship opportunity provides a safe environment in which people can learn how organizations function and how to make a career out of their experiences before they take on more responsibility.

Interns: Making a Difference in Government

Q&A with intern Ijun Lai, Office of Economic and Community Development, Washtenaw County, MI

Q: How did you find your internship?

A: It was posted through the University of Michigan Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy’s website for job and internship listings. I responded to the post and applied for the internship.

Q: Did your interest in local government increase during your internship? Why?

A: Yes, it increased. I saw the immediate impact that policy decisions can have, and the great sense of community that can come from simple involvement.

Q: What do you think was the single most important benefit you received through your work in internship? How did the organization benefit?

A: It was very helpful to attend many different community meetings with my supervisor and see how the community development office team works in terms of providing good housing and support services to so many people in Washtenaw County.

Q: How are the internships helping you in your actual job search?

A: Employers were impressed with my knowledge of local housing policies and implementation, and I ended up working as a research analyst for a program evaluation of a housing project.

Intern Snapshot

Washtenaw County, MI

Name: Ijun Lai

Degrees/School: BA and MPP,
University of Michigan;
PhD Candidate, Northwestern University

“Because of my internship, employers were impressed with my knowledge of local housing policies and implementation.”

—Ijun Lai

Q: Did your internships inspire you to have an intern of your own in future local government work?

A: I’m actually back in school to get a PhD. In the future, if I work in local government, of course I’d love to have an intern.

Q&A with intern Greg Modd, City Manager's Office, City of Ypsilanti, MI

Q: How did you find your internship?

A: I went to a Greater Ann Arbor Society for Human Resource Management (GAASHRM) meeting and met a chair member who knew the Ypsilanti HR manager (my supervisor) and asked me if I would be interested in the position. I forwarded my résumé to the chair member who sent it to the HR manager. I interviewed and landed the position.

Q: What do you think was the single most important benefit you received through your work in internship? How did the organization benefit?

A: The single most important benefit I received during my internship was the HR manager's ability to help me transition my skills from military human resources to civilian human resources. I believe I had an impact on the city because I single-handedly obliterated a cumbersome and redundant paper-based system. I took over 40 years of records and uploaded them into an e-system that helped streamline organizational efficiency. Additionally, I was able to provide logical resolutions to grievances that satisfied both management and the Union.

Q: How did the internship help you in your actual job search?

A: As Bo Schembechler wrote, "Do the best at the job you have and people will take notice and come after

Intern Snapshot

City of Ypsilanti, MI

Name: Greg Modd

Degree/School: BA in Business Administration, University of Michigan, Dearborn

"The single most important benefit I received during my internship was the HR manager's ability to help me transition my skills from military human resources to civilian human resources."

—Greg Modd

you." Our HR manager always spoke very highly of me to her associates. My reputation as a hard worker who is intelligent and meticulously organized preceded me, and I received a call from PMA Consultants when a position opened up, because they heard good things about me.

Q: Did your internships inspire you to have an intern of your own in future local government work?

A: If I was ever to work in local government again, I would definitely love to have an intern.

Interns: Making a Difference in Government

Q&A with intern Jason Wicha, City Manager's Office, City of Ypsilanti, MI

Q: How did you find your internship?

As one of Ypsilanti's first interns, I actually reached out to Ypsilanti and some other communities asking for opportunities to intern. I heard back from Ypsilanti's assistant city manager saying that they could bring me on board but that they didn't have any money, so it would be an unpaid internship. I was told that interns are allowed to do real work and it will be a very valuable experience for me. I started as a part-time summer intern and was able to shadow the manager and assistant city manager, which allowed me to watch and learn. I stayed beyond the summer into the fall and received more hours after that when I was offered a full-time paid position.

Q: Did your interest in local government increase during your internship? Why?

A: Yes indeed! It was my first taste of local government and it opened my eyes to the fact that I wanted to be in this profession.

Q: What do you think was the single most important benefit you received through your work in internship? How did the organization benefit?

A: During my internship, the city manager had to take time off for medical reasons, and the assistant city manager was not in the office at the time, so I served as acting city manager. In the long run, that time spent as acting city manager was the most beneficial. In the short term, the deep experience and trust that I built up in the first 8–9 months was the most beneficial. I am most appreciative of the fact that the city manager and assistant city manager really allowed their intern to jump into city government and even sit in on the meetings as a nonspeaking attendee. The organization benefited because they were able to continue projects even while the actual city manager was sick. That provided a super

Intern Snapshot

City of Ypsilanti, MI

Name: Jason Wicha

School and Degree: Wayne State University Public Administration Program

He is the currently town manager of Thornton, IL.

"The only way you will learn is through experience and watching others. I acquired a level of comfort through this experience especially for political dynamics."

—Jason Wicha

great opportunity for both me and the city. The only way you will learn is through experience and watching others. I acquired a level of comfort through this experience, especially for political dynamics.

Q: Did your internships inspire you to have an intern of your own in future local government work?

A: I always view my time in Ypsilanti as a template of how managers should help nurture and mentor entry-level people. I can't say "younger people" because I'm pretty young myself. As town manager, I have offered unpaid internships to people in my current community of Thornton, IL. I feel that unpaid interns are really dedicated and motivated to work, not just make a paycheck. I really pull students into the positions and nurture them.

I receive my interns through the interns reaching out to me. The Northern Illinois MPA program communicates with me if students are interested in paid or unpaid internships. I take what I can get and do a very informal interview with the students and then get them on board.

Articles from the *PM Next Gen Anthology*

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How I Spent My Summer Vacation. . .

You guessed it—at city hall—and yes, it was incredible!

by **Corey Schmidt and G. Chris Artung**

Across college campuses this fall, students might have been asked that age-old question, “How was your summer vacation?” The standard reply usually consists of the word “good” and perhaps not much else. But if that description is all the student can muster, then a summer internship in local government wasn’t part of the agenda.

As a 2011 summer intern with the city of Maryland Heights, Missouri, I was fortunate to experience the dynamic nature of management in local government. Although the old adage that no two days are alike may not be entirely true for an intern, there are certainly enough everyday twists to keep things interesting. Particularly in this internship program, the combination of challenging tasks and managers who welcome thoughtful ideas made it a great fit not just for me but also for scores of others in past years.

A 26-Year Program

Maryland Heights has operated this internship program every summer since the city incorporated in 1985. The program originated in the administration department, with graduate student interns from local universities who were interested in municipal management.

Over the years, internships were developed for other city departments—community development, parks and recreation, public relations, and public works—and expanded to include undergraduate and

graduate students from schools around the country. Maryland Heights has now hosted more than 100 interns in its 26-year existence.

This past summer, the internship program included students from universities in the Midwest who worked on a variety of projects. Interns in community development conducted research and analyzed data that related to city planning and zoning. A public works intern performed design, concept, and cost estimates for engineering and construction projects. Another intern, in parks and recreation, learned about the management of a recreational facility. In administration, three interns worked on economic development research, human resources matters, and budget projections.

Although we worked independently on these projects, we as a group also experienced various aspects of city government. Weekly excursions to facilities like a water treatment plant and a recycling center exposed us to operations taking place outside of city hall that still impact service delivery and quality of life in the area. We also planned the annual summer barbeque for the city’s 200 employees, a task designed to give us experience working on an interdepartmental project. It was also a lot of fun!

Projects like these benefited past interns when they were seeking jobs after their internships concluded. More than half of them now enjoy employment in the public sector, and many others work for private firms

that conduct business with government. Regardless of the sector in which they are employed, past interns have overwhelmingly reported that the internship gave them skills and experiences still useful years later.

In addition to providing a slew of students with a launching pad into public service, the internship program has also been beneficial to the city. The staff can rely on summer interns to complete tasks and projects that are meaningful to the organization's success. They bring perspectives that can freshen up staid approaches to conducting the business of government. Perhaps most important, interns give department heads and managers an opportunity to convince the next generation that a career in public service is a worthwhile endeavor.

Benefits Are Real

The Maryland Heights internship program is just one of many around the country that has been offering hands-on experience to students pursuing a career in local government. As any student who has conducted

an internship search will note, however, there is still a need to increase the availability of meaningful internship programs at the local level. Although budget constraints may make growth difficult, this is one program that does not need a sophisticated cost-benefit analysis to implement, and the benefits of employing interns far outweigh the costs!

When members of the 2011 class of Maryland Heights interns concluded their experience, some traveled back to school to finish degrees while others went off to begin their careers. Whatever paths we ultimately choose to pursue, we will be better prepared because of our experience as interns. And next time someone inquires about our summer vacation, we will have a lot more to say than "It was good."

Corey Schmidt was a 2011 summer intern in Maryland Heights, Missouri, and is a graduate student at the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. He can be reached at orschmi@indiana.edu.

The Job Interview

The Importance of the Last(ing) Impression

A lot of advice has been given about the importance of the first impression in a job interview. Although I agree that candidates must be aware of the power of a poor first impression, at least with a poor first impression the candidate has the balance of the interview to recover.

If a candidate leaves a less than favorable impression as the interview is ending, there is no opportunity to overcome that.

Let's examine a few of the trouble spots that can ruin an otherwise positive interview.

1. Don't prolong the interview needlessly. A common mistake some candidates make is asking too many questions in the initial interview stage. This needlessly prolongs the interview. The hiring authority often allows time at the end of this type of formal interview for the candidate to make a final statement or ask questions of the interview panel.

This period is intended to allow the candidate to ask a limited number of questions. The schedule usually does not provide time for the candidate to ask the panel as many questions as the candidate has been asked. Candidates who open their notebooks and begin to ask a long series of detailed questions may well talk themselves out of an otherwise favorable rating.

2. Know the details of the interview process. It is important for candidates to be prepared for the interview by knowing the details of the interview process. One of the details candidates need to know is how much time the organization has allocated for the interview and then be sensitive to that schedule.

If the interviewer extends the allotted time with follow-up questions, that is the interviewer's choice. If the candidate, however, causes the schedule to slip by asking too many questions at the end, that can be seen as a definite negative by the panel.

3. Do the homework. Another red flag is the candidate who asks a question that indicates a lack of preparation. Before an interview, candidates should research the organization and the position by reviewing material available on the Internet or from such other sources as profiles developed by the organization or a search consultant. Questions that indicate the candidate has done due diligence are viewed positively by interviewers.

Candidates also need to be careful about asking questions that come across as being critical of the organization or its management. A brief job interview is probably not the time to get into a critical evaluation. If the position seeker is hired, there will be ample time to understand all of the challenges of the position.

4. Don't assume the interviewers know you want the job. I remember a chilling statement made by an interviewer after

a candidate left the room at the conclusion of an interview. One panel member said to the others, "Do you think he really wanted this job?" It is imperative that a candidate never leave an interviewer with even a remote impression of being uninterested in the position—assuming, of course, that the job seeker truly wants the job.

One of the basic principles of sales training is: Always ask for the sale. Salespeople are taught to never assume anything. I think that is a good principle to follow if you are trying to sell yourself for a job. At the close of the interview, when an applicant is about to leave the room, the applicant should look directly at the interview panel and state or restate a desire for the position. A statement such as "I just want to make sure you know that I am truly interested in this position and believe that I can make a contribution to the organization" will eliminate any confusion.

5. Leave the room with a confident demeanor. Interview guides stress the importance of entering the interview room with a confident demeanor, sometimes described as "having presence." Leaving the room with a confident demeanor at the close of an interview is at least as important. Interviewers evaluate everything about a candidate during the interview. Not only the information being disseminated but also the candidate's body language and tone of voice.

At this stage, the interviewers are envisioning how the candidate would perform as a representative of the organization both internally and externally. As a candidate for city manager, assistant city manager, or other senior position, the applicant will be judged on presence as well as other personal characteristics.

Concluding the interview with presence includes expressing a strong interest in the position, shaking hands with the panel members, and thanking them individually for their time. It is important to maintain eye contact during these brief encounters because eye contact is an indicator of confidence, sincerity, and transparency.

6. Finally, use the name of the interviewer as you shake hands. One of the most effective interviews I ever saw involved a candidate who was being interviewed by three city managers for a position as director of a multicounty operation. She had obviously done her homework and had the three names attached to the correct faces.

Managing your interview by paying attention to small details may well make the difference between landing the job or being faced with disappointment and regret later.

G. Chris Hartung is the president of Chris Hartung Consulting and the former city manager of Denton, Texas.

From the Frying Pan to the Fryer: Practical Tips on Career Advancement from a Recent Graduate

by J. Scott Sellers

Public sector . . . private sector . . . public sector? In March 2006, I was one month away from graduating with an MPA from Brigham Young University (BYU) and had no prospects for employment. I was currently interning in city management and hoped to find a permanent position soon. Every evening I would put the kids to bed, get online, and begin surfing all of the public sector job sites that I could think of. It seemed I was caught in the classical catch-22 of looking for an entry-level job that required at least three to five years of experience. I was ready to give up on the public sector and begin searching elsewhere for employment. Had I persevered this far just to regret my decision to get an MPA?

As I was about to retire from my virtual pavement pounding one night, my older sister signed into Instant Messenger from Chicago. I unloaded on her my frustrations of trying to find a job when nobody was hiring. I explained how I had even considered private sector positions but that the MPA did not translate well to the corporate world. How was I going to provide for my family after my internship ended? Stepping back into the role of Big Sister, she asked me, “Just what is an MPA, and why would you want to be a city manager?”

Choosing an MPA

My path into the public sector started in eighth grade although I did not know it at the time. I needed some volunteer hours in anticipation of my Eagle Scout advancement, so I volunteered to be the computer specialist on the Bountiful, Utah, City Youth Council. Although I contributed toward several great

community projects, I finished the year without any idea of how the city was managed.

During my first two years of college I had no career prospects. I was newly married and needed a steady nine-to-five job that could provide enough income for a family. After six declared majors I finally settled on recreation management (not necessarily the quintessential day job, but it would get me through college!). To validate my decision, I interviewed several recreation directors in nearby communities. One director referred me to Ricky Horst, the city manager of South Jordan, Utah, who had begun his career as a recreation director.

As I walked into Mr. Horst’s office I was immediately envious of the inviting atmosphere. The room was spacious and accentuated with oak furniture, comfortable leather chairs, and large sun-filled windows. Ricky explained how he had spent the first portion of his career mowing lawns (at times with his own mower), working late hours, and receiving little pay. Sure, he enjoyed it, but now he was working daytime hours, was better able to provide for his family, and made decisions that positively influenced the entire community! Incredibly, after this discussion, it still did not occur to me to pursue an advanced public administration degree.

After graduating, I took the rather non-recreational job of working as a financial adviser for the MONY Group. Although this job gave me the finance experience I would later appreciate, it was commission-based and provided me with only a paltry stipend that depleted after six months. I calculated that I was working for about 50 cents an hour. To make matters worse, the office was an hour’s drive from my little apartment. My wife had recently given birth to our first child, and

our financial and emotional reserves were exhausted.

In absolute desperation—and with a prayer in my heart—I sequestered myself in a room one evening and navigated to BYU’s online graduate catalog. I began reading at the top of the list—accounting, anthropology, Arabic. I read each of the course descriptions and, one by one, concluded that I was not a candidate for any of these degrees. By the time I reached the letter P, I knew I was destined to become an organ-grinder.

But suddenly I began reading about the most incredible program—public administration. All of the right buzzwords were in the course descriptions: altruism, service, community, family, stability, and so forth. I noticed that the program was part of the Marriott School of Management and required a strong quantitative background—something I had successfully avoided while pursuing my degree in recreation management.

Undaunted, the following day I picked up the phone and made an appointment to talk to the admission committee. A few days later I spoke with each faculty member on the committee, explaining why I would be a good fit for the program. Amazingly, they took me at my word and accepted me with a scholarship.

Gaining Practical Experience

When I began the MPA program in 2004, I still did not fully grasp what a local government manager was, but at least I had two years to find out. The program was brutal, requiring 18 credits per semester plus an internship. After the first semester, an opportunity arose for a group of students to conduct a build-out analysis for the city of Syracuse, Utah. I immediately volunteered along with five others. We combined this project with course projects that were due from such other classes as statistics, quantitative analysis, and budgeting. Through this hands-on experience, I began to understand the complexities of local government.

During the two years of my graduate program, I volunteered for everything I could think of. I began a year-long paid internship with the city of Lehi, Utah, which taught me the budgeting process and honed my newly acquired statistical skills. I was also able to work on a budget document that received the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.

I worked with another team of graduate students analyzing the feasibility of a business improvement district for the city of Payson, Utah. For the city of

Alpine, Utah, I wrote the parks and recreation element of its general plan (who says undergraduate degrees aren’t worth much?). I was also elected by my peers to serve as the class president.

Finding Employment

During the last months of the MPA program, I networked with everybody I could think of in hopes of landing my first job. The golden contact turned out to be my older sister, which brings me back to our earlier conversation. As we continued chatting online that night, I told her about the incredible experiences I had enjoyed during the MPA program. I explained that being a city manager is an incredibly stressful—yet rewarding—responsibility but is driven by an intense desire to serve and enhance the quality of life for a community. I also told her that I did not want to abandon this career path but that things weren’t panning out as planned. After a brief pause, she said that what I had just spoken about sounded similar to the job her co-worker’s brother-in-law had. She said that she would e-mail him and ask if he would offer me some career advice.

The next day, I received a phone call from the Centralia, Illinois, city manager, Grant Kleinhenz. He told me about receiving an e-mail from my sister and understood that I was searching for a job. He also informed me that he was actively recruiting an assistant city manager and that he would love to see my résumé (which I quickly e-mailed after I hung up). A month later I was in Centralia, Illinois, interviewing for the position, and a month after that I began my career in public administration.

A Variety of Projects and Responsibilities

With the experience I had gained during my internships, I immediately began work on the creation of a citizen survey. I also developed a budget document that won another GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. I created a capital improvements program, strategic plan, and a performance measurement system that won special recognition awards from GFOA for both capital improvements and performance measures. The performance measurement system also won the Certificate of Achievement from ICMA’s Center for Performance Measurement.

The city had an untouched fund that was collecting revenues from a cable franchise agreement. I was able to use a portion of these funds to begin a city-

operated cable network. The city began broadcasting its council meetings as well as community events and capital project updates. I also gained valuable experience in easement acquisition, property appraisals, annexations, website development, street and water-line projects, and department head supervision.

The most beneficial responsibility I had in Centralia was to work on various economic development initiatives. I attended courses and ultimately graduated from the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute. I also attended classes relating to economic development at the ICMA annual conferences.

Putting my education to practice, I worked closely with the city manager, community development director, and economic development director to create two tax increment financing districts and enterprise zone incentives. We bought, sold, and rehabilitated commercial and residential properties downtown, all while making needed streetscape improvements that enhanced the walkability and viability of the heart of the city.

Moving Up

After two wonderful years in Centralia, I heard the great Rocky Mountains calling my name. I found Montrose, a

mid-sized city in the heart of Colorado that was hiring for an assistant city manager, and submitted my résumé. The city was looking for economic development experience, and on the strength of my tenure in Centralia I was selected from a pool of 104 candidates.

Now, after a year in Montrose, I have accomplished what I only dreamed about three years ago. We had our fourth child six months ago, and I am on a steady income with steady hours. I never dreamed how amazing the local government profession would be—and I love every minute of it. Sure, work can be stressful at times, but I don't know of another profession that offers the quality of life, the responsibility, and the rewards of local government management.

I reflect back on those difficult job-searching months, and I am grateful that I stuck with the public sector. Although every individual's path will be different, the journey is definitely worth it!

J. Scott Sellers is assistant city manager, Montrose, Colorado (ssellers@ci.montrose.co.us).

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13 Tips for Upward Movement

- 1. Fill your plate, and then some.** The practical experience you will gain from a wide variety of projects will set you apart from the rest. You must show that you are willing to go well above and beyond the norm to be noticed.
- 2. Request high-level projects.** Managers want to know how many successful—and important—projects you have directly supervised. If you aren't gaining that experience now, find an unmet need that fits your abilities and talents and propose a project to the manager.
- 3. Education and training are indispensable.** Although it might not fit the budget, extra credentials and certifications enhance a résumé. I highly recommend gaining as much economic development training as possible. An understanding of statistics is also a great asset to a community. Other credentials you might want to work toward would be the Certified Public Manager credential, the Certified Economic Developer credential, and the ICMA Credentialed Manager.
- 4. Learn Spanish.** I interrupted my college education for two years to live in Peru. Speaking Spanish has helped me a great deal on the job, allows me to interact with most members of the community, and it looks great on a résumé.
- 5. Gain as much economic development and budgeting experience as possible.** Did I already mention this? Typical local government managers spend a majority of their time on these two functions.
- 6. Strengthen your résumé with awards and recognition.** Remember, you are trying to prove that you are management material.
- 7. Write a grant.** A successful grant can more than make up the cost of your salary, which looks impressive to those deciding on your employment.
- 8. Be willing to relocate.** My wife and I were adamant about living near family until the perfect job opened in the Midwest. This proved to be a great move for our little family, and we are now content to be five hours away from our families.
- 9. Select good references.** Listing college professors and family friends on your résumé signals that you are inexperienced. If you don't know any managers, then introduce yourself to some and offer your assistance on a project.
- 10. Read, read, read!** In addition to reading biographies and history, familiarize yourself with current events. Read the local newspaper and the newspaper where you have job interviews. Also read minutes of council meetings to become familiar with local issues.
- 11. Don't text message and chat online while at work.** If you have time to burn, then you are squandering an opportunity to impress senior management (and wasting taxpayer dollars). In the current market, those who are ambitious and eager for assignments will surpass those who wait to be asked. It is difficult to obtain a positive reference from a manager who thinks you are wasting time.
- 12. Don't give up!** After months of searching without any luck, I was ready to defect to the private sector or to the state or federal sector. With persistence, you will be rewarded.
- 13. Relax.** Don't expect to hop into the perfect job right out of college or to have the understanding of a seasoned manager. After three years, I am finally beginning to understand many of the complexities that a manager faces every day. Don't be afraid to ask questions and take risks, and don't be discouraged if you are completely baffled by certain issues. Experience will bring more confidence and ability, which in turn will open new opportunities to expand your experience.

Volunteer Internships Benefit Local Governments and Students

by Robin Popik

Internships have been around for more than a decade, and numerous local governments have toyed with the idea of offering them but not as part of the community's volunteer program. Could it be that some volunteer managers just aren't sure how to sell the idea to local leaders, or maybe staff just aren't buying the concept?

Here are some tips to help you get an internship program started, along with some reasoning to help get your local officials on board with the idea.

Who Is the Intern?

The typical college student who scurries to find an internship opportunity has initiative, goals, and high expectations for the future. This student not only wants to build a résumé but also wants to see if college goals are a good match for them. The student sees an internship as a stepping-stone to bringing a career to life. That enthusiasm has a tendency to be contagious for those who work with the student.

Interns can be paid or nonpaid; and the individual could be working on a bachelor's degree or a master's degree, or could already be finished with these degrees. The basic premise of an internship is to take the organization or field of work out for a test drive. Depending on the level of the intern, the organization can also test-drive the person for compatibility as a future employee.

How Do You Sell the Idea?

Government organizations that need temporary staff for special projects are a great place to use internships. Challenge the intern to bring out the value of the project. Don't shortchange the intern or your organization by providing only menial tasks to supplement the secretarial pool; if you do, you'll both be disappointed.

Interns want to learn and apply program theory and management to work flow. In local government, internships directly related to the student's area of study can be in numerous departments, including building inspections, environmental services, park planning, engineering, local government manager's office, and fire.

Practicum and cooperative education provide workplace settings in which students gain practical experience in a particular discipline, enhance skills, and integrate such knowledge as libraries, finance, or police. Internships offer the opportunity of better-trained employees while developing new talent in an employer's organization. Not only does an intern bring enthusiasm to the workplace, the person also brings up-to-date theories and business practices that relate to a specific field. Not to mention that internships are just point-blank great recruitment and retention tools for any organization.

If the best public relations tool is an employee, then the second best is an intern. That individual is a great resource to educate the community about what happens within the local government organization. Local governments can champion this concept by using interns to teach about the governmental process and politics in a way most textbooks miss. The partnership between the educational institution and a government organization can also foster other community or training opportunities.

As the workforce continues to age, governments like all other organizations are looking for educated individuals to fill needed positions. These internships bring to the forefront students who may otherwise not have come via the local government service route. Where better to teach students how their government runs or introduce them to politics?

Local governments have diversity in departments, from police to park planning and libraries to environ-

mental services, where students can use their talents and explore a career in this public sector.

How Do You Start an Internship Program?

Start with what you know by reviewing your organization's existing job descriptions to determine the ones applicable to college interns. Next, talk to departments in the organization and collect their ideas for projects that an intern can do.

Write a job description for the internship and advertise it on your organization's website, on www.volunteermatch.com, or through an area volunteer center or local college. It's best to start with just one or two places. Another place to list your internships is on co-op and service learning websites.

You can also opt to post a generic job description that reads something like this: "College interns can volunteer throughout the year using their skills while they learn more about leadership. Our office would be happy to work with your college to find places for students in different departments. For more information, contact xyz."

Plano, Texas, advertises for college interns throughout the year and matches them as they contact the city. In the past year, interns were used in building inspections, engineering, park planning, environmental services, police, health department, Plano's television network, and parks and recreation. It's a surprise to see the projects that departments can organize once the staff knows a student is available and interested in their area.

Requests will usually be sent by e-mail. When students approach your program, review their interests to see if their skills and academic major fit one of your departments. You can request more information before actually meeting with a student and can suggest the individual visit your organization's website to find the department that best complements the student's field of study.

This past summer, Plano had 12 interns. Three interns worked for the police department, where they use interns all year long. The job descriptions were ready, and assignments were easy to make. The libraries are always willing to accept a student in a library science field of study, which they did this past summer.

In June, the health department made a special request for a student with a science or biology major to assist with a special research project. The other

students were matched up by reviewing the answers to questions that were sent by e-mail, through a phone conversation with the volunteer manager and volunteer supervisor, and with an outline of requirements from their schools.

At first you might decide to stay with safe choices, such as office assistant, database development, website design, data entry and scanning, research projects, newsletter writing, or environmental specialists, but actually the possibilities are endless.

The length of the internship depends on the school and the number of credits the student requires. Service-learning requirements can start with as few as 15 hours, while credit internships can extend as long as 360 hours. This information should be discussed up front with the student and the department director, so they both know what's expected and can plan ahead.

The school or student should share the course description, course focus, and course competencies with the volunteer supervisor. Here's an example:

Course description. Career-related activities encountered in the student's area of specialization offered through an individualized agreement among the college, employer, and student. Under the supervision of the college and the employer, the student combines classroom learning with work experience.

Course focus. Work experience should:

- A. Add a unique dimension to classroom instruction through on-the-job experience and training.
- B. Test career aptitude and interest against practical job requirements before graduation.
- C. Develop self-confidence, maturity, professional skills, and an understanding of human relations.
- D. Help gain a professional contact that may be used as a reference for after-graduation employment.

Course competencies.

- A. Improve interpersonal skills in class and on the job.
- B. Work as a team member to accomplish the employer's goals.
- C. Meet with members of your work group to identify problems that need to be addressed.

The final grade will be determined by criteria established by the student's college. However, here is an example of possible criteria:

Course work percentage

Contact information:	5%
Daily log:	10%
Supervisor evaluation:	15%
Book review:	30%
Quizzes:	15%
Discussions:	25%
Total percentage:100%

The volunteer manager completes the course agreement form, establishes learning objectives with the student and the instructor or coordinator, evaluates the learning objectives to decide whether they were completed in a satisfactory manner, and completes an evaluation form.

The student is under the direct or close supervision of a qualified college faculty member who will provide the local government with the necessary paperwork. Steps to supervise an intern are similar to supervising an employee or volunteer: orientation, training, guidance, and review of the student’s activities.

The additional supervision might include sending e-mails to the college faculty to understand what is expected of the student and completing mid-session and end-of-session evaluations.

College academics are just one part of preparing for a future career. New graduates’ résumés need to offer something extra to prospective employers, and that’s where an internship is helpful. An internship also helps students gain hands-on experience and shows employers they have taken extra steps to learn more about their career choices.

Best of all, internships introduce supervisors to their next generation of employees.

Robin Popik is volunteer resources group supervisor, Plano, Texas (robinp@plano.gov).

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Intern/Fellow Job Descriptions

Graduate Management Intern

Graduate Local Government Management Internship

The graduate local government intern will work under the direction of his or her assigned department supervisor as well as of the city manager and assistant to the city manager. The intern will play a leading role in coordinating, facilitating, and managing city projects that require the involvement of multiple city departments. He or she will be given the opportunity to interact with department heads and attend high-level meetings, and to be exposed to the responsibilities of each department and current local government issues. The intern will meet with the city manager and assistant to the city manager on a monthly basis to review monthly progress and discuss potential new projects, and will be given an opportunity to provide feedback on the value of the experience he or she is receiving. The intern will also perform tasks and daily activities in support of his or her assigned department and the office of the city manager. The intern's interests and goals will be taken into account for special projects.

Typical Examples of Work

The graduate local government management intern may be called upon to do any or all of the following (although these examples do not include all the tasks that the intern may be expected to perform):

- Develop and enhance department operations performance data systems
- Provide research and analysis in support of the city's Managed Competition initiative
- Conduct performance audits
- Research departmental and/or organizational issues
- Draft reports detailing research
- Make recommendations to assigned supervisor and/or city management
- Manage special projects
- Support assigned department with daily activities
- Attend meetings

- Communicate with community organizations and the public
- Assist in the budgeting process.

Qualifications for Internship

The intern must be currently enrolled in, or recently graduated from, an MPA or similar master's degree program. The intern must be willing to commit up to 35 hours per week for an 11-month obligation.

Positions will remain open until filled. Several positions are available for hire.

Management Internship

- Make a difference.
- Develop management skills.
- Gain exposure to village operations.
- Be part of a village thriving on innovation, service, integrity, and solutions.

About the Program

The village of Bayside's Management Intern Program is a recognized program that has been training future municipal leaders since 2005. If you are interested in a rewarding and challenging public service career, this is an excellent opportunity to apply to work in an award-winning, high-performing municipal operation in the Milwaukee metropolitan area.

The program is designed to attract and develop talented individuals with an interest in a local government management career. This program gives selected participants the opportunity to observe firsthand the efforts of municipal government working on a wide array of areas and issues. Successful participants have completed the program and accelerated into senior-level management positions as city managers/administrators.

Our program is paid, and the current recruitment is open to talented individuals holding a master's degree or those who will satisfactorily complete all coursework for a master's degree by May 2013, or have previous experience in municipal government operations.

The Program

A Wide Range of Experiences

If selected, you will learn about every facet of a municipal operation from the ground up. During this exciting, fast-paced year, you will:

- Work on a variety of assignments and projects that affect our organization and community.
- Gain exposure to innovative best practices in an our award-winning organization that provides direct service to the community.
- Use research and writing skills by studying an issue, recommending solutions, and drafting a management report.
- Work directly with residents and village staff on service delivery to the public.

Some of the projects completed by past participants include:

- Coordinating village special events
- Compiling performance measurement data
- Assisting in development of the village's Sustainability Action Plan
- Researching and applying for grant funding
- Assisting with the continued development of the village's GIS system
- Learning and working in the village's Administrative Services Department, developing skills in municipal finance and human resources
- Assisting with the administration of elections
- Completing special projects as assigned by the village manager.

Graduate City Management Internship

The graduate city management intern will work under the direction of the city manager and assistant to the city manager. The intern will play a leading role in coordinating, facilitating, and managing city projects that require the involvement of multiple city departments. He or she will be given the opportunity to interact with department heads and attend high-level meetings, and to be exposed to the responsibilities of each department and current local government issues. The intern will also perform tasks and daily activities in support of the city manager's office. The intern's interests and goals will be taken into account for special projects.

Typical Examples of Work

The graduate city management intern may be called upon to do any or all of the following (although these examples do not include all the tasks that the intern may be expected to perform):

- Research issues facing the city of Royal Oak
- Draft reports detailing research
- Make recommendations to the city manager
- Manage special projects
- Support the city manager's office with daily activities
- Attend meetings
- Participate in strategic planning exercises
- Communicate with community organizations and public.

Qualifications for Internship

The intern must be currently enrolled in, or recently graduated from, an MPA or similar master's degree program. The intern must be willing to commit up to 20 hours per week for a 16-week obligation.

Management Assistant (Internship)

The city of Fort Collins Management Assistant Program allows current Master of Public Administration students and recent graduates the opportunity to gain valuable career-related experience in a wide variety of areas of municipal operations. This position provides future municipal leaders with the opportunity to learn from seasoned professionals in a community consistently rated as one of the best places to live in the country. In this stand-alone municipality of over 140,000 residents, interns have the opportunity to learn about the inner workings of a full-service city.

The intern will be provided with the opportunity to work on projects in a variety of city departments while maintaining a "home base" in the city manager's office. The intern will be involved in research, analytical work, and managing special projects. This position represents a one-year internship.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Assist the city manager's office in researching high-level issues of concern as they arise.

- Perform entry-level program analysis, organizational and administrative field studies, and statistical analysis of research data.
- Report findings of research or study to the city manager or other executive staff and elected officials in writing and in person.
- Plan and coordinate various meetings and internal training opportunities.
- Participate in the City Budget and Capital Improvement Program process.

Education and Experience

Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major course work in public or business administration, political science, urban planning, or closely related field. Applicants must have completed or substantially completed coursework toward a Master of Public Administration or closely related degree by June 2012.

Catawba County, North Carolina **LGMF Demonstration of Mentorship Ability**

What are some of the attainable goals that you will establish for the Fellow?

- To obtain a better understanding of the structure and operations of county government in Catawba County specifically and in North Carolina generally.
- To provide practical work experience as it relates to various county operations.
- To impress upon the Fellow the importance of establishing excellent interpersonal relationships to be successful as a professional local government manager.
- To add value to Catawba County by asking questions and sharing new ideas on how to accomplish the work we perform.
- To prepare and develop the Fellow to progress into a position as a professional local government manager.
- To expose the Fellow to ICMA and the North Carolina City/County Manager's Association and the resources that they offer.

How do you plan to structure the Fellow's experience in general?

The Fellow's experience will be structured in four parts:

1. Orientation and tour of county facilities

2. Educational component including attending related in-house professional development courses, seminars, conferences, and meetings with community leaders
3. Practical component including working on various projects in multiple departments
4. Community service component including work on a community service project.

How will you ensure that the Fellow gains exposure to at least one of the following areas: human resource management, intergenerationality, or diversity, however that issue is represented in your community?

The Fellow will be exposed to two of the above-noted areas. Human resource management and diversity will be addressed as part of the practical component through the completion of related projects and attendance at community leadership meetings such as the NAACP.

What do you hope the Fellow will understand about local government and public management by the end of the program?

Catawba County would like the Fellow to understand the value and rewards associated with a career as a professional local government manager. In addition, we would like to expose the Fellow to the tools needed to succeed as a manager and provide an overview in the operations associated with a county government in North Carolina.

Description of Potential Local Government Involvement by Fellow

What role do you see the Fellow fulfilling?

The Fellow would be participating in the administration and service delivery of Catawba County government. It is expected that the Fellow will commit to a year of learning about Catawba County government. In addition, the Fellow will be able to apply skills acquired through advanced study while completing work for the county. After attending the orientation and facilities tour of the program, the Fellow will begin to work on management projects in several departments, including the county manager's office. During the rotation of the departments, the Fellow will observe as well as be assigned projects on both an individual and group basis. Many of these projects will be molded to the interests of the Fellow. Throughout the year, the Fellow will be asked to attend meetings with local community leaders as well as attend related local government

seminars and conferences as part of the educational component of the program. Finally, the Fellow will participate actively in a community-based project, such as the construction of a Habitat Home.

With which specific department/initiatives/projects would the Fellow be involved?

The Fellow would be involved with the following departments:

1. County manager, including budget and personnel
2. Human Resources
3. Public Safety
4. Public Health
5. Planning
6. Emergency Services
7. Tax
8. Budget
9. Finance
10. Technology
11. Cooperative Extension.

Possible initiatives or projects could be as follows:

1. **Small Business Assistance Program development:** In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, perform best practice research and analysis on a range of small business assistance programs in existence. Propose a program (with an associated budget) tailored to the needs of Catawba County businesses and, potentially, draft an implementation plan.
2. **Public Safety staffing analysis:** Perform comparative research with surrounding counties and compile cost-benefit analysis of hiring additional employees versus continuing to pay overtime, holiday pay, and part-time wages to existing employees within the Emergency Services department.
3. **Libraries staffing analysis:** Work with Libraries and Budget to hone staffing projections for a new branch library.
4. **Reinventing Departments analysis:** Gather information from North Carolina counties on how “reinventing programs” have been structured, and evaluate Catawba County’s approach within this context. Perform quantitative analysis of year-end spending patterns to determine whether existing nonreinventing departments would be good candidates to shift to reinventing.
5. **Facilities Condition assessment:** Work with Facilities department to develop comprehensive building

condition assessment tool and to evaluate existing buildings using this tool. Deliver a prioritized work plan for facility renovation, retrofit, and repair.

6. **Farm & Food Sustainability Plan:** Assist with implementation of a plan aimed at ensuring successful transition of local agricultural economy and enhancing local food self-reliance through Farm-to-Fork initiatives and other activities identified through the community planning process.
7. **Performance Dashboard update:** Work with Budget to gather the most recent statistics for use in updating the existing performance dashboard.
8. **Budget management/analyst responsibilities:** Assume responsibility for budget development and monitoring for one or more county department operating and capital budgets.
9. **Cooperative Extension Cattlemen’s Association Marketing Committee:** Work with Cooperative Extension as project manager/event coordinator for cattle sales/agent source verification program that allows local farmers to export their live animals for sale.
10. **Participate in the County’s Book Club** that reads and discusses management-related books on a quarterly basis.
11. **Participate in department head meetings and the department head retreat.**

Which staff would the Fellow work with and what would be their relationship?

The Fellow would be working with department heads and other senior administrative staff throughout the program. The assistant county manager will be assigned as the Fellow’s mentor to provide career guidance and insight into management and leadership styles. The Fellow will also be working with the county manager on several projects.

What sort of rotation would you provide to the Fellow and what added value would it offer to the Fellow’s experience?

The Fellow would have the opportunity to work with various county departments during the orientation phase and then by working on different projects with various departments.

What other resources/opportunities would you provide that would maximize the Fellow’s exposure to local government and your time with the Fellow?

Catawba County has been active in the ICMA Resource City/County program. The Fellow would be exposed to the work associated with the program. Attendance at state and regional manager meetings would be permitted and encouraged. In addition, Catawba County also offers Lunch and Learn programs for its employees. The Fellow would be permitted to attend these programs and any other programs the county offers on behalf of its employees. Finally, the Fellow would be asked to attend some of the meetings of the Catawba County commissioners. Attendance at these meetings would expose the Fellow to the governance model used in Catawba County. The Fellow will also be expected to attend all Board of Commissioners meetings as well as department head meetings and Catawba county managers' meetings.

City of Fort Lauderdale ICMA Fellow Work Plan

The City of Fort Lauderdale is seeking three Management Fellows for the city manager's office. The Management Fellows would be located within the divisions of Structural Innovation, Budget/Community Investment Plan and Grants, and Neighborhood Support.

Structural Innovation Division

The city of Fort Lauderdale is developing a strategic plan and implementing a performance management system. The strategic plan is under development by five strategic area teams referred to as Cylinders of Excellence: Infrastructure, Public Places, Neighborhood Enhancement, Business Development, and Public Safety. The teams are led by the Division of Structural Innovation and department directors. The strategic plan will have a five-year time line and will be presented to the commission for formal adoption in 2012. At least one member of every department is included in this process. The teams are defining goals, objectives, performance indicators, benchmarks, and annual action plans. After the development of the strategic plan, each department will create scorecards containing objectives, performance indicators, measures, and initiatives that further deploy the strategic plan.

The Management Fellow for Structural Innovation would assist with the development, implementation, and monitoring of the city's strategic plan and annual action plans. Responsibilities may include:

- Researching and identifying performance indicators, targets, and benchmarks for the city's strategic plan and FL²Stat, the Performance Stat meetings.
- Assisting departments in selecting and analyzing performance measures, ensuring the connection to benchmarking associations when appropriate. Guiding departments through this process of self-evaluation and performance improvement. Ensuring implementation of clear performance measure methodology and target setting.
- Assisting in development of the agenda and background work to prepare for FL²Stat meetings.
- Researching and proposing best practice solutions and innovative service delivery models with the purpose of implementing initiative(s) to result in improvement, such as approaches to address the homeless population, organizational communications, succession planning, and employee training, for example.
- Researching and evaluating sustainability goals, approaches, and measures.
- Assisting in conducting customer survey analysis and links to the strategic plan. Working with departments to refine or improve processes to improve results.
- Assisting in identifying, managing, and improving key processes. Working with department staff to map processes, identify improvements, develop action plans, and monitor progress through achievement of the action plan and performance metrics.

Budget/CIP and Grants Division

The division provides budgetary support services to all city departments, including assisting with development of the annual budget, preparing revenue and expenditure projections, updating the Budget Preparation Guide and Revenue Manual, implementing budget monitoring and controls for long-range forecasting, developing the Community Investment Plan (CIP), preparing a monthly department trend analysis and financial report, and ensuring strategic alignment of the annual budget and CIP to the goals of the city. In addition to the budget and CIP, the division is also responsible for audit compliance, grants, and legislative affairs.

The Management Fellow for the Budget/CIP and Grants Division would assist with the each of the major functional areas. Responsibilities may include:

- Assisting with overall budget development, including revenue and expenditure forecasts, financial, statistical, and programmatic research
- Assisting in analyzing departmental budget requests; participating in each department's budget review; creating and analyzing spreadsheets and financial data for the purpose of making a recommendation for the efficient use of funds and to facilitate short- and long-range planning;
- Assisting with the development of the Community Investment Plan, including evaluation of project applications, development of informational spreadsheets, analysis of information to make recommendations on funding, and preparation of reports as needed
- Assisting with conducting grants management, including collecting program and project data and evaluation information to determine effectiveness of each program; establishing and maintaining resource library of grants and grant files; distributing information regarding training, workshops, and relevant publications
- Researching grant-funding needs and identifying potential grants and matching resources to share with grants personnel
- Attending various organizational meetings to gain an understanding of the decision-making process
- Performing related work and drafting written correspondence as required.

Neighbor Services Division

Under the leadership of the city manager, the Neighbor Services Division provides quality outreach and enhanced services to our neighbors, visitors, and partnering agencies. The division is responsible for coordinating city services, responding to neighbor-initiated requests, and reaching out to civic, neighborhood, and homeowners associations.

The division administers the Neighborhood and Business Capital Improvement Programs. To enhance the quality of life in our neighborhoods, the Fort Lauderdale City Commission established the Neighborhood Capital Improvement Program (NCIP) and the Business Capital Improvement Program (BCIP). The goal of these programs is to provide matching grant funds for the construction of capital improvements that beautify neighborhoods and businesses and enhance quality of life for those who live, work, and visit the city of Fort Lauderdale.

The Management Fellow for Neighbor Service Division would assist with monitoring, executing, and enhancing the services provided to our neighbors. Responsibilities may include:

- Assisting in neighbor inquiries
- Assisting in commission inquiries
- Assisting in developing a Complaint Management System to synthesize and analyze information
- Assisting in enhancing a Neighbor Services web page
- Researching and proposing a system to update/archive projects electronically
- Assisting in coordination of the NCIP and BCIP program and projects
- Attending HOA and community meetings/events as appropriate
- Attending/assisting with the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC), Education Advisory Board (EAB), and the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations.
- Attending city commission meetings as needed.

City of Loveland, Ohio **Management Fellowship**

The Management Fellow will be a crucial member of the city manager's office. The Fellow will be expected to contribute high-level work product as if he or she were a seasoned local government professional. The work will be that of a generalist, and the Fellow will not be pigeon-holed in one area of municipal governance. Instead, Loveland's Management Fellow will be expected to shift focus from human resources to budgeting, from customer service to council agenda preparation, from working on the website to writing a grant, all in the space of one day.

If the Fellow has areas of interest, however, many assignments will be tailored to expose the Fellow to those particular subdisciplines of municipal government. For example, Michelle Knowland, the city's 2010–2011 Management Fellow, had a particular interest in economic development and was involved from the start in the Loveland Station project. This included high-level meetings with the developer, attorneys, bond counsel, city council executive sessions, residents, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and others. Michelle's role in this project was not that of a passive observer, and she had the opportunity to dig deeply

into a complex, \$15 million project. Michelle also was at the table during union negotiations, and while she did not know she had an interest in human resources before that experience, she developed one after her involvement in the collective bargaining process.

The Management Fellowship in Loveland has the potential to last beyond the typical twelve-month contract. If the 2012–2013 Fellow meets expectations, it is expected that the Fellow can be offered either an additional one-year contract or be promoted to management analyst depending on the city’s budget situation. This opportunity in the city of Loveland therefore has the potential to offer the perfect training ground to the individual looking to embark on a career in city management because it holds the promise of more than one year in a high-functioning, fast-paced work environment. The Management Fellow candidate should also be evaluating whether he or she wishes to stay in the city of Loveland for more than one year. Loveland will offer a rich and rewarding year of experience, but the ideal candidate will have a passion not just for public service, but for service in the Loveland community.

While the projects are varied throughout the year, experience indicates there will be a definite pattern to the twelve-month fellowship. The fellow should plan to work primarily on the next year’s budget in September through November. This will include participating in all budget meetings, developing graphics, overseeing the capital improvement program, and making a presentation to the city council and the city’s finance committee. Evening meetings and after-hours work should be expected during this three-month period of time. December is typically busy with overseeing (with help from the Human Resource manager) the city’s annual open enrollment process. The Fellow will meet

with all full-time employees one-on-one to go over benefit selections for the next year. The Fellow must have a mastery of benefit options and the implications of benefit selections to succeed. March is busy with overseeing the city of Loveland’s performance measurement submissions to ICMA.

Past Fellowship Projects

- Oversee city wellness program
- Oversee interns to design Budget Sustainability workshop
- Grant writing and implementation of pilot programs such as the Paper Elimination Project through Duke Energy Foundation grant that provided iPads to city staff and council, saving 60,000 pieces of paper each year.
- Public Information Officer, which includes writing press releases, creating monthly newsletter, and managing website content
- Assist in labor negotiations, grievances, arbitrations
- Assist with economic development initiatives and business recruitment efforts
- Liaison with community organizations: Loveland Arts Council, Chamber of Commerce, the Senior Services Committee
- Provide support to the Loveland Farmers Market
- Provide data analysis on a variety of projects with financial implications
- Provide support to department heads, including zoning interpretation, property maintenance inspections, recreation league field usage, and service on various committees
- Participate in various special projects and events.

ABOUT ICMA

ICMA advances professional local government worldwide. Its mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and advancing professional management of local government. ICMA, the City/County Management Association, provides member support; publications, data, and information; peer and results-oriented assistance; and training and professional development to more than 12,000 city, town, and county experts and other individuals and organizations throughout the world. The management decisions made by ICMA's members affect 185 million individuals living in thousands of communities, from small villages and towns to large metropolitan areas.

ICMA

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