



# Internship Toolkit

## *Agency Guide to Creating and Establishing Successful Internship Programs*

### CONTENTS

- [Establishing an Internship Program](#)
  - [Business Case & Leadership Support](#)
  - [Goals & Measures](#)
- [Identification of Opportunities](#)
- [Intern Requirements](#)
- [Compensation & Benefits Considerations](#)
- [Getting Started](#)
- [Sample Tools](#)
  - [Internship Program Charter](#)
  - [Internship Role Profile](#)
  - [Internship Selection Process](#)
  - [Internship Offer Letter](#)
  - [Intern Evaluation](#)
  - [Internship Feedback Survey](#)
  - [Manager Guide](#)
  - [Mentor/Buddy Guide](#)

### AUDIENCES

Agency Human Resources Staff  
Agency Leaders & Managers

### DEVELOPED BY

Department of Human Resource Management  
*Human Resource Consulting Services*

### QUESTIONS OR NEED CONSULTATION & SUPPORT IN ESTABLISHING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM?

Contact: [deanna.goldstein@dhrm.virginia.gov](mailto:deanna.goldstein@dhrm.virginia.gov)



## ESTABLISHING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



### THINKING ABOUT ESTABLISHING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM?

When considering the opportunity for establishing an internship program, agencies should create the business case and secure leadership support for the program.

- Identify the value an internship program can create for the agency.
- Establish goals for the internship program and measure results.
- Create the internship program structure including identification of roles, branding and recruiting approach, training for supervisors, and mentors, etc.

### VALUE OF AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

#### FOR THE AGENCY

- Expand the talent pool.
- Build agency brand in the community.
- Increase diversity in talent pipeline and in the work environment.
- Benefit from latest knowledge & techniques interns may bring.
- Ability to evaluate knowledge, skills, and abilities of interns over time.

#### FOR THE INTERN

- Opportunity to gain real-world work exposure & experience.
- Ability to contribute to business solutions.
- Practical learning & training.
- Build a network of business contacts & resources.

Program Goals & Success Measures	
<b>Program Goals</b>	<p><i>Potential Goals May Include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase brand awareness for your agency in the community.</li> <li>▪ Create a talent pipeline.</li> <li>▪ Add value to the agency's business through the completion of short-term projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Success Measures</b>	<p><i>Potential Measures May Include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # or % of interns hired post-internship.</li> <li>▪ Intern feedback survey results.</li> <li>▪ % of returning interns.</li> <li>▪ Trending of future intern application volume.</li> </ul>

## INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES & INTERN REQUIREMENTS



### INTERN PREFERRED REQUIREMENTS

Determine potential intern requirements that will support success in your agency's identified internship opportunities and expand the agency's talent pipeline.

- Preferred educational studies & degree areas aligned to the internship job.
- Current enrollment in the educational studies program area.
- Recent graduates from preferred educational studies program & degree areas.
- Non-traditional interns including career switchers and transitioning veterans.
- Local interns or interns from non-local areas. Will relocation support be provided for non-local interns?
- Eligibility to work in the US for any employer without visa sponsorship.

### IDENTIFYING INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Once your agency has decided to move forward with an internship program, it is time to identify the functional areas and jobs where interns might add significant value for the agency.

#### Successful Internships Should:

- ✓ Focus on meaningful work.
- ✓ Promote learning for the intern and agency employees.
- ✓ Include collaborative work.
- ✓ Include short-term projects or assignments where interns can make a meaningful impact.
- ✓ Be in a function that does not require significant agency or state government specific knowledge.
- ✓ Consider functions that would benefit from practical application of the latest knowledge & techniques.
- ✓ Consider functions that would benefit from an expanded talent pipeline.

#### Internships Should Not:

- ✓ Be used as "free" or low cost help.
- ✓ Be unstructured and without dedicated leadership and supervision.
- ✓ Be focused on busy or administrative work.
- ✓ Be used as a way to replace other employees.

## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS CONSIDERATIONS

### TO PAY OR NOT TO PAY?

Agencies must determine whether to pay interns. Consider these factors when making decisions around compensating interns.

- It is generally permissible for public sector entities to provide unpaid internships according to the FLSA. If using unpaid internships, we recommend applying DOL criteria for the unpaid internship. [DOL Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act](#)
- Agencies may also consider working with colleges, universities, and other educational institutions where course credit may be awarded for unpaid internships. Agreements may be helpful for internships with course credit and/or where there may be insurance or risk concerns (e.g, healthcare).
- Keep in mind that most private sector employers must pay interns. If your agency chooses not to pay interns, your internship positions may be less competitive.
- Be aware of minimum wage and overtime laws and regulations as they will apply to intern compensation. [DOL Wages & FLSA](#)
- Understand federal and state child labor rules to ensure your agency has applied them correctly when employing interns. [Virginia Department of Labor and Industry Youth & Labor Laws - DOL](#)

### WHAT ABOUT BENEFITS?

Agencies should be aware of benefits related considerations when employing interns.

#### Paid Interns

- Internships are often designed with limited duration, hours, and scope and typically meet the intent of wage positions as defined in state policy. [Types of Employment](#)
- As wage positions, work hours are limited to no more than 29 hours/week on average over a 12 month period. [Work Hours Limitations for Wage Employees](#)
- As wage positions, pay is provided for hours worked. Most wage positions are considered to be non-exempt.
- As wage employees, interns will not be eligible for classified benefits except for FMLA, Workers' Compensation, and Leave Without Pay for Military Service. [Types of Employment](#)

#### Unpaid Interns

- Unpaid internships provide no compensation for hours worked for the internship.
- Unpaid interns will also not be eligible for classified benefits.



#### **Intern Role Codes**

Agencies should use these role codes for their internship positions in Cardinal/PMIS:

89001 - Intern - Paid (max salary is \$25/hour)

89002 - Intern - Unpaid

## GETTING STARTED

### IT'S A GO!

Your agency has decided to move forward with an internship program and has made the necessary planning decisions related to the program. To make the internship program a reality, get ready to take the following actions!

- Prepare an “intern role profile” that identifies the key projects and success measures for the internship.
- Identify who will supervise the intern and identify who can serve as a mentor(s) for the intern. For both roles, be sure to provide supervisors and mentors with education about working with interns.
- Create a branding and recruiting plan for attracting, sourcing, and selecting interns.
- Leverage colleges, universities, and other educational institutions to market your internship(s). [Virginia Public Colleges & Universities Career Center Links](#) [Colleges & Universities in Virginia](#)
- Use [HandShake](#) as a way to market your internships with participating colleges & universities.
- Consider opportunities for transitioning Veterans’ internships for your agency.
- Be sure to tag your RMS posting with **#covainternships** to highlight your internship postings on the [RMS Job Search webpage](#).
- Develop your selection process. Identify the team who will participate in intern selection and be sure to train them on a valid selection approach.
- Determine an onboarding approach. Interns can participate in orientation, be part of an intern cohort, and/or be able to meet with agency leaders.
- Don’t forget an off-boarding process when the internship ends. Use this opportunity to obtain feedback about the internship program.
- Identify what happens after the internship ends. In creating an intern talent pipeline, determine if positions will be available for recruiting agency interns and how you might communicate/recruit former interns.



### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Will your agency have supervisors and/or mentors “apply” for the opportunity to supervisor or mentor interns? Their “application” could indicate the intern role, projects, education to be provided, supervision approach, and mentoring approach.
- Will your agency’s internship program include rotations? Or, will it focus on one assignment?
- What type of learning opportunities and events will be included in your agency’s internship program?
- How will your agency evaluate intern contributions?
- How will your agency provide work and development feedback to interns?
- How will your agency obtain feedback about the internship program?
- Will interns have the opportunity for networking and/or a group project?

**SAMPLE TOOLS – INTERNSHIP PROGRAM CHARTER**

<p><b>Mission</b></p>	<p>&lt;AGENCY’S&gt; Internship Program is focused on enhancing our talent pipelines to attract, hire, and grow the best talent to successfully achieve our goals and deliver the highest quality services for the Commonwealth of Virginia.</p> <p>In enhancing our talent pipelines, we are committed to providing practical learning opportunities for those in our internship program and supporting our interns in achieving successful results as contributors to our agency’s business and operational objectives.</p> <p>Through our commitment to &lt;AGENCY’S&gt; Internship Program, we also seek to build beneficial relationships between our agency, interns, educational institutions, and our communities.</p>
<p><b>Agency Strategies Supported</b></p>	<p>&lt;AGENCY’S&gt; Internship Program supports the following key agency strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create, grow and develop talent pipelines necessary today and that we need for the workforce of tomorrow.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that we meet productivity and service expectations as a commitment to our customers, the citizens of Virginia.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stakeholders</b></p>	<p>Key stakeholders of &lt;AGENCY’S&gt; Internship Program include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential interns</li> <li>▪ Agency employees, supervisors, and managers</li> <li>▪ Educational institutions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Approach</b></p>	<p>&lt;AGENCY’S&gt; Internship Program will operate with the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus on meaningful and collaborative work.</li> <li>▪ Clearly identify work activities.</li> <li>▪ Promote learning for the intern and agency employees.</li> <li>▪ Include short-term projects or assignments where interns can make a meaningful impact.</li> <li>▪ Allow for rotations as appropriate to the intern role, agency department(s), and the interns skills.</li> <li>▪ Internships will last from &lt;X-Y&gt; months.</li> <li>▪ Interns will be hired as wage employees and will be scheduled to work &lt;X&gt; hours per week.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Deliverables</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Target of &lt;XX&gt; interns each &lt;TIMEFRAME&gt;.</li> <li>▪ Identification of appropriate roles and projects for internships.</li> <li>▪ Identification of and training provided to intern supervisors and mentors to ensure successful internships.</li> <li>▪ Internship program components: hiring process, orientation &amp; on-boarding, learning events, off-boarding process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Success Measures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # interns hired post-internship.</li> <li>▪ Intern feedback survey results - % indicating positive experience, interest in returning.</li> <li>▪ % of returning interns.</li> <li>▪ Increased trending of future intern application volume.</li> </ul>



**SAMPLE TOOLS – INTERNSHIP ROLE PROFILE**

**Internship Role Profile (Example) – Development Intern**

<p><b>Internship Position Overview</b></p>	<p>Design web based and internal business applications to support delivery of citizen services. Collaborate with agency developers and subject matter experts to create applications that solve business problems and improve business processes. Deliver applications that meet the business needs and create positive user experience.</p> <p>Work in a fast-paced agile team environment as a team contributor and collaborator while developing practical and applied skills.</p> <p>&lt;Add information about the department, department’s mission, location, etc.&gt;</p>
<p><b>Internship Position Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with key department staff and subject matter experts to create user requirements for development of web based application.</li> <li>• Participate in discussions with relevant staff and subject matter experts to create user requirements and to make revisions or edits to user requirements.</li> <li>• With support from key department staff, create timeline for key milestones, subject matter and user testing, and delivery of the application.</li> <li>• Partner with key department staff to translate user requirements to code/program web based application.</li> <li>• Complete coding/programming according to project schedule.</li> <li>• Participate in designated learning activities and events as coordinated by the internship supervisor.</li> </ul> <p>&lt;Add key position objectives for the internship experience.&gt;</p>
<p><b>Required and Preferred Education, Skills, Abilities, and Experience</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills.</li> <li>• Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills.</li> <li>• Effective time management skills.</li> <li>• Eager to learn new technologies and methodologies.</li> </ul> <p>&lt;Add preferred program areas of study, level in the educational program, etc.&gt;.</p>



## SAMPLE TOOLS – INTERNSHIP SELECTION PROCESS

### Selection Process

#### Topics to Consider

- ✓ Will HR, hiring managers, or both screen intern applications?
- ✓ Will the agency use remote or in-person interviews? Keep in mind that interns may be attending school in another location from where the internship is located.
- ✓ Will the agency schedule interviews during school breaks to increase applicant availability?
- ✓ Will the agency use “power interview” days where multiple interns will come for rounds of interviews?
- ✓ Who will be part of the interview process? What will their relationship be to the intern position?
- ✓ When and how will offers be presented to interns?
- ✓ What types of reference and background checks should be required for interns?

#### Tips

- Internship applicants may not have had much interviewing experience. Be sure to put them at ease!
- Make eye contact and conduct the interview as a discussion.
- Keep questions at the appropriate level. Interns may not have had much professional work experience.
- Rate responses appropriately. Consider creating behavioral anchors for interview evaluations that are relevant and appropriate for the job and experience levels.

#### Sample Intern Interview Questions

How does this internship and organization interest you and your future career objectives?

What skills and experiences are you interested in growing in this internship?

What has been the most effective team of which you have been a member? What made the team so successful? What was your role and contribution to the team and its' success?

Tell us about a situation where you took initiative. Tell us how you took initiative and share the outcomes.

What types of leadership opportunities have you had? What role did you play and how did you impact others?

Tell us about an assignment or project you have had. From start to finish, tell us about how you approached it, what went well, and what you would have done differently. What outcome did you have from the assignment or project?

What is one significant challenge that you have faced? How did you overcome it?

Tell us about a time where you had to learn something completely new. How did you go about it? What were your results?

What questions do you have for us?

***Also, consider adding relevant situational questions to the interview. For example, share a current business challenge and ask how the intern might approach the challenge.***



### Offer Letter Example

*After providing verbal offers to prospective interns, be sure to provide offer letters to confirm internship positions, internship work schedules, paid or unpaid internship status, and if paid, the internship pay rate.*

Congratulations on your selection for an internship with <AGENCY>!

Your internship will be in the <XXX> Department and your internship supervisor will be <NAME>. Your internship position will last from <DATE> to <DATE>.

On your first day of employment, <DATE>, please report to <NAME> at <TIME> at <ADDRESS>. Your orientation is scheduled for <DATE & TIME>.

The internship for which you have been selected is a <PAID or UNPAID> internship position.

<Your pay rate will be \$XX per hour.>

OR

<As an unpaid intern, you will not receive compensation for this internship position.>

Please be aware that this internship position does not provide benefits or a guarantee of future employment.

In this internship position, your schedule will be <HOURS, DAYS, ETC.>.

**Please be sure to bring the following documents with you on your first day of employment:**

- (1) XXXX
- (2) YYYY
- (3) ZZZZ

Please do not hesitate to contact me at the information below with any questions or concerns.

We are truly excited and look forward to you joining <AGENCY> in this internship position. Congratulations and we look forward to seeing you on <DATE>!

# Congratulations!

#### Offer Letter Tips

- Include internship begin and end dates.
- Identify whether the internship is paid or unpaid.
- If paid, provide the internship pay rate.
- If unpaid, ensure that the letter makes this clear.
- If the internship will provide academic credit, you may include this information in the offer letter.
- Include information relevant to E-Verify, I-9 verification, and other agency hiring requirements.

**SAMPLE TOOLS – INTERN EVALUATION**

**Intern Evaluation Example**

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in collaboration with representatives from higher education and corporations identified competencies associated with career readiness for new college graduates. Agencies may want to provide interns with feedback on their progress towards these competencies as presented during their internship. Agencies may consider using this example evaluation template as a tool for intern supervisors and mentors to provide and discuss development with interns.

<b>To what extent does the intern:</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Almost Always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b><i>Critical Thinking/Problem Solving</i></b>					
1. Exercises sound reasoning to overcome problems or challenges.					
2. Seeks appropriate resources to obtain necessary data, information, and assistance.					
3. Interprets data and information to make sound decisions.					
4. Demonstrates originality in identifying business solutions.					
5. Effectively uses digital technologies to complete tasks.					
<b><i>Communication</i></b>					
1. Articulates written thoughts and ideas effectively.					
2. Articulates verbal thoughts and ideas effectively.					
3. Prepares reports, memos, and letters in a clear manner.					
<b><i>Collaboration/Teamwork</i></b>					
1. Builds collaborative relationships with diverse individuals.					

2. Contributes effectively to collaborative projects.					
3. Demonstrates ability to manage conflict.					
4. Demonstrates inclusiveness, sensitivity, and respect for individual differences.					
<b>Professionalism</b>					
1. Exhibits punctuality in maintaining a regular schedule.					
2. Prioritizes and manages workload effectively.					
3. Demonstrates ability to learn from mistakes.					
4. Respects organization policies, norms, and expectations.					
5. Takes initiative and seeks opportunities to contribute.					

**Progress towards learning and performance goals during the internship:**

**Recommended additional developmental actions to expand Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

**SAMPLE TOOLS – INTERNSHIP FEEDBACK SURVEY**

**Intern Feedback Survey Example**

It is also important to obtain feedback from agency interns on their perceptions of the agency’s internship program. This feedback provides the opportunity to understand program strengths and opportunities for change. Collecting intern feedback as part of the off-boarding process through surveys and/or exit interviews can provide valuable information about the success of the internship program.

In what department(s) did you work during your internship?	<input type="checkbox"/> Department A <input type="checkbox"/> Department B <input type="checkbox"/> Department C
How did you learn about this internship opportunity?	<input type="checkbox"/> College/University Website (please specify college/university website below) <input type="checkbox"/> HandShake <input type="checkbox"/> Agency Website <input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Jobs Website <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media (please specify social media channel below) <input type="checkbox"/> Current agency employee <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below)  Comment: <a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
<b><i>Internship Hiring Process</i></b>					
1. <Agency's> careers website was helpful in learning more about the agency.					
2. The internship application process was clear and easy to apply.					



3. I received communication about where I stood at each stage of the hiring process.					
4. The hiring process appeared well-organized.					
5. Realistic internship expectations were provided to me in the hiring process.					
6. I was provided with clear answers to my questions during the hiring process.					
7. I felt comfortable during the interview process.					
8. I was satisfied with the overall timeframe of the hiring process.					
<b>Internship</b>					
1. I feel that I was compensated fairly for the work I completed in my internship.					
2. I had an effective mentor provided to me during my internship.					
3. My internship work assignments were at the right level.					
4. I was involved in my group's work during my internship.					
5. I felt my contributions were valued during my internship.					
6. I directly contributed to meeting the agency's mission and goals.					
7. I received feedback from my internship supervisor about how I was performing on a regular basis.					
8. My supervisor provided for relevant learning opportunities during my internship.					
9. My supervisor was regularly available to answer my questions.					

10. I was encouraged to try new ideas during my internship.					
11. I was supplied with the necessary resources to accomplish my work.					
12. I felt that my perspective was valued during my internship.					
13. I felt that I fit in with the work style of my group.					
14. I learned new skills and abilities during the internship.					
15. The work I completed provided value in relation to my academic studies.					
16. I was able to apply my knowledge and skills to my work assignments.					
<b>Overall Experience</b>					
1. I would recommend this internship to other students.					
2. I would recommend this agency as a great place to work to others.					

**Please provide any additional comments about your internship:**





**Manager Internship Guide**

As a manager of interns, be sure to complete these actions post-hire to ensure a successful internship!



Manager Checklist	Completed
Ensure necessary tools and equipment are available for the first day. (e.g., computer, desk & office space, phone, access to necessary applications, basic office supplies, id badge, parking, etc.)	
Share an introduction of and information about the intern with the team after the intern has accepted the internship offer.	
Arrange for the intern to participate in orientation on or near the first day.	
Identify a “buddy” or “mentor” for the intern. Discuss expectations with the buddy or mentor.	
Call the intern prior to the first day to say “hello” and share excitement about the intern joining the team. Share information about where to go and meet for the first day.	
Ensure that the intern is introduced to the team on the first day and is provided with a tour of the facility.	
Identify key projects and activities in which the intern will be involved or for which the intern will be responsible. Identify expected outcomes. Share this information with relevant team members who may be working on projects with the intern.	
Identify key learning opportunities and events in which your intern can participate during the internship.	
Meet with your intern on the first day. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Set aside sufficient time for a thorough discussion.</li> <li>▪ Discuss work schedules.</li> <li>▪ Review your team’s mission, the agency’s structure &amp; mission, and how your intern will support these.</li> <li>▪ Have an activity on which the intern can get started right away.</li> <li>▪ Provide and discuss plan for key projects and deliverables.</li> </ul>	

Employing an intern can also provide growth opportunities for current team members:

- Leadership experience.
- Teaching/training experience.
- Mentoring experience.

As a manager, you do not have to fly solo in supporting your intern! Be sure to include other team members in the intern experience to help develop their skills and grow their experiences.

And, rotate these opportunities so multiple team members can participate!

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discuss your leadership style.</li> <li>▪ Learn more about your intern's learning and work approaches.</li> </ul>	
Consider taking your intern to lunch or having a group lunch on the first day to allow the intern to meet the team.	
Schedule weekly check-in meetings with your intern for the duration of the internship. Use these opportunities for planning and two-way feedback.	
Remember to include your intern in regular team meetings and discussions.	
Check on your intern daily.	
Solicit feedback from your intern on work processes, products, etc. They bring a fresh set of eyes and may provide valuable input for improvements!	
<p>Remember to engage in an effective off-boarding process for your intern. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collecting equipment.</li> <li>▪ Collecting files and projects.</li> <li>▪ Asking your intern to participate in an intern evaluation survey and/or providing you with direct feedback.</li> <li>▪ Completing an intern evaluation and providing developmental feedback to your intern.</li> <li>▪ Provide contact information so that you and your intern can continue to communicate!</li> </ul>	



**As an intern manager, you also play these important roles in an intern's professional growth and development!**

**Mentor and Advisor**

**Network Connector**

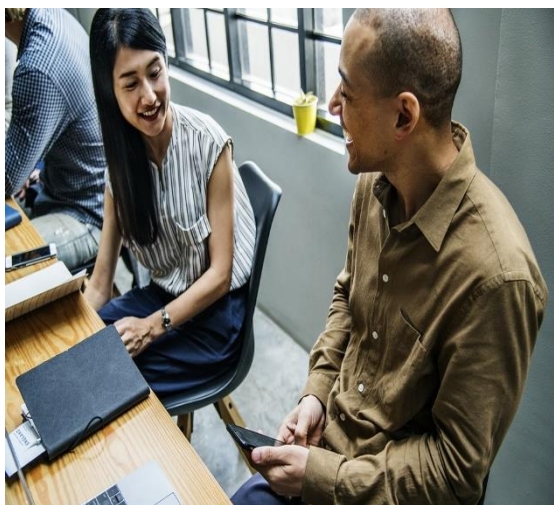
**Role Model for Success**

**Educator**

**SAMPLE TOOLS – INTERNSHIP MENTOR/BUDDY GUIDE**

**Mentor/Buddy Internship Guide**

As an intern mentor or buddy, be sure to engage in these actions with your assigned interns to ensure a successful internship!



Mentor/Buddy Checklist	Completed
Support preparation of intern’s work area. Ensure intern has the tools and supplies necessary to complete the assignments to be provided.	
Review the intern’s skills background to learn more about experience and education.	
Introduce the intern to team members and to key contacts in other departments.	
Be available to answer questions and provide guidance. Determine a method for communicating regularly (e.g., daily check-ins).	
Identify a backup mentor/buddy for when you may be out of the office.	
Include the intern in learning opportunities as relevant and appropriate.	

***As a mentor, you play many roles which may include:***

*Role Model      Advisor      Teacher*