

ACCG Civic Affairs Foundation

MEMORANDUM

To: Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP) Grant Recipients for Summer 2024 Grant Period

From: Michele NeSmith, ACCG Research and Policy Development Director on behalf of the ACCG Civic Affairs Foundation

Re: County Grant Information Packet and Grant Agreement

Date: February 7, 2024

Congratulations on being a grant recipient for the Summer 2024 Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP)! We hope that this internship is mutually beneficial to both the county and intern. The intern can perform their internship at any time from May 1, 2024-September 1, 2024. Counties are responsible for paying the interns during the internship and the Foundation will reimburse counties for their internships after the internship has been completed and all required documentation has been submitted. Reimbursement requests with accompanying proof of hire must be submitted to the Foundation no later than Friday, October 11, 2024. **Please read this memo and all the materials included in this packet in their entirety before you submit the requested documents.**

The primary contact for the grant will need to work closely with the Human Resources Department, or the person who manages the county's hiring practices in that there are many employment related forms that must be completed by the county and the intern close to the date of hire. If the primary contact for the grant changes before the end of the grant period, please contact me immediately and provide the new contact with their email and phone numbers.

While the Foundation is aware that it may take time to have your board formally approve the grant agreement through a meeting of the board of commissioners, please make every effort to return it as soon as possible so that it can be finalized by the Foundation. When an intern has been hired, the Foundation should be notified, and a copy of the Intern Consent Form and the Intern Information Form should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than **July 15, 2024**. The county should not wait until the end of the grant period to submit this information.

Also, if you have previously participated in the grant program you are aware that we request that the intern evaluation form and photo(s) of the intern be submitted. In that past this has been an optional requirement, but it is now mandatory. Please ensure that both are submitted in order to be eligible for the reimbursement.

Enclosed in this packet is the grant checklist, frequently asked questions, and an intern supervisor's guide. The grant agreement is included in a separate attachment and includes the

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following: 1) grant award letter 2) county grant application, 3) E-Verify usage and acknowledgement form, 4) grant reimbursement form 5) intern evaluation form, 6) the intern consent form, and 7) the intern information form.

In order to receive the grant funds, the county must submit the following to the Foundation:

- 1) Signed Grant Agreement – as soon as possible**
- 2) Signed Intern Consent Form – beginning of the internship but no later than July 15, 2024**
- 3) Signed and Completed Intern Information Form – beginning of the internship but no later than July 15, 2024**
- 4) Intern Photo – by September 1, 2024 (head shot and action photo)**
- 5) Proof of Hire (offer letter and a copy of the E-Verify Usage and Acknowledgement Form) by October 11, 2024**
- 6) Signed and Completed Grant Reimbursement Form – by October 11, 2024**
- 7) Proof of Payment – by October 11, 2024**
- 7) Completed Intern Evaluation – by October 11, 2024**

Once the county has submitted all the items listed above, the Foundation will provide reimbursements for the wages, workers' compensation coverage, and Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) for the county internship positions that have been approved by the Foundation. The money provided for FICA and workers' compensation must be used for these purposes. The county is required to cover all interns hired through the GCIP under their workers' compensation policy. Grant reimbursements may take 6-8 weeks to process. **Please note that your county will not receive your grant reimbursement until you have submitted ALL the requested information and provide proof that an intern has been hired.**

Over the course of the internship, the Foundation will be checking in with the internship supervisor(s) for your county to ensure that the internship is going smoothly. The Foundation will also be visiting certain counties in order to interview the intern(s) and supervisor(s) and to take photos to promote the program. All visits will be scheduled prior to arrival. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at mnesmith@accg.org or at 404-992-8737.

Thanks again for your participation in this program.

Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP) County Check List

- Read all provided information before completing required forms
- The **Grant Agreement** needs to be approved by the County Board of Commissioners at a Board meeting, signed, and returned to the Foundation **as soon as possible**. The Foundation will then sign the agreement and return it to the County.
- Send Foundation internship job posting and advertise locally **as soon as possible**
- Complete, sign and submit the **Intern Information Form** to the Foundation **at the beginning of the internship, but no later than July 15, 2024** (must be signed by intern and intern supervisor)
- Intern to complete and sign **Intern Consent Form** and submit to the Foundation **at the beginning of the internship, but no later than July 15, 2024**
- Submit photo(s) of Intern (head shot and action shot) by **September 1, 2024**
- Submit proof of hire (copy of Offer Letter and E-Verify Usage and Acknowledgement Form) to the Foundation by **October 11, 2024**
- Submit proof of payment to the Foundation by **October 11, 2024**
- Submit Intern Evaluation to the Foundation by **October 11, 2024**



Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP) Frequently Asked Questions

Will the grant contract need to be approved by the board of commissioners?

Yes. The contract needs to be approved by the board of commissioners and entered on the minutes as required by state law at O.C.G.A. § 36-10-1.

What qualifications does an intern have to meet?

The program is open to undergraduate and graduate students from a variety of educational backgrounds, provided a student's abilities are appropriate to the intern project proposed by the county. Since county governments provide a wide range of services, counties are encouraged to be creative in proposing internship opportunities across diverse areas of study from engineering and law to human resources and veterinary sciences.

Recent college graduates may be selected for an internship provided they can provide proof that their graduation was within six months of the start date of the internship. High school students who are dually enrolled in a college program **and** are 16 years of age or older may also participate.

How many hours should an intern work and how should this time be scheduled?

GCIP grant funds will pay internship costs for up to a maximum of 200 internship hours. It will be up to the county and the intern to determine the work schedule in terms of the number of hours worked per week and total number of weeks to be worked. It is recommended that the minimum number of hours worked per week is 15.

If a grant for multiple interns is awarded to a county, this does not mean each intern has to work the same schedule or the same number of hours as long as the total number of hours worked under the grant does not exceed 200 for any one intern.

When can internships be completed?

A student may start an internship at any time during the applicable Grant Period. Students must complete their internship no later than the last day of the applicable Grant Period.

What if my intern doesn't complete the full 200 hours?

Interns are not required to work the total 200 hours for the county to receive the grant, although the Foundation will only reimburse the county under the grant based on the actual number of hours worked if less than 200.

While GCIP grant funds cannot be provided past the applicable Grant Period, a county and an intern can extend the duration of any internship based on mutual agreement. All expenses incurred beyond the grant period will be paid by the county.

My county was awarded one internship. Can I split the grant to hire two interns?

Yes. If a county was awarded a grant for one intern and later determined that more than one intern was needed, the grant can be split into two 100-hour internships if the county abides by all the requirements of the grant agreement. However, the Foundation must first be contacted to ensure the requested split meets all the grant requirements. The grant for one intern cannot be split into more than two 100-hour internships.

How much do interns get paid under GCIP and how is this funded?

The county pays the intern directly and the Foundation reimburses the county for all approved costs after all required paperwork has been provided.

The wage for interns for the 2024 grant period is \$15.00 per hour. Interns cannot be paid less than \$15.00 per hour. The total hourly pay for a maximum 200-hour internship may not exceed \$3000 in wages, \$229.50 in FICA, and up to \$30 in workers' compensation costs for a maximum reimbursement of \$3259.50 per intern. An intern paid using GCIP grant funds must be covered under the county's workers' compensation plan.

If a county wants to pay an intern more than \$15.00 per hour, that amount over \$15.00 will need to be paid by the county along with the additional FICA and workers' compensation costs applicable to the additional salary. The GCIP grant does not cover wages paid over \$15.00 per hour nor does it pay for more than 200 hours of employment during any grant period.

Can the county extend the internship beyond the 200 hours/grant period?

Yes, but the county will be responsible for all related costs beyond the 200 hours and timeframe provided in the grant agreement.

What if an intern needs academic credit?

If a student wants to obtain academic credit for the internship, it will be the responsibility of the county to work with the student and the student's academic institution to fulfill this requirement. The Foundation is not responsible for securing academic credit or certifying work performed by the intern for this purpose.

What if my county has already hired an intern for the grant period?

If a county already has identified an intern who meets the requirements for this program for a specific Grant Period, the county is eligible to receive grant funding for that intern as long as it submits all required application materials by the applicable deadline and is selected to receive a grant. Note that the internship must be completed within the applicable Grant Period.

Who is responsible for recruiting interns?

It will be the responsibility of the county to recruit and hire their intern. This requires advertising through the county website, area technical colleges and universities, contacting department heads of colleges, etc. The county is also responsible for selecting applicants to interview, interviewing, and hiring interns.

The Foundation will assist in this process by posting county positions on its website www.civicaffairs.org to provide statewide exposure to interested students and sharing these postings with career service directors across the state. If needed, the Foundation can further assist in this process if the county needs additional assistance or direction on how to recruit interns.

What happens if a county is not able to recruit an intern for its GCIP grant?

If no intern can be identified, the GCIP grant will be rescinded for that grant period.

What if the grant project cannot be performed as provided in the county application ? Contact the Foundation immediately to see if a possible accommodation can be made. Grant awards are based on competitive scoring related to the project submitted. As such, grant projects should be performed as described. If an accommodation cannot be made, the grant will be rescinded.

Can interns perform private projects for elected officials or staff?

No. Interns are not allowed to work on projects that are not county-related. The purpose of the internship is for the student to learn about county government through a project that benefits the county, not a county staff member or elected official.

Can interns work on political campaigns?

Interns funded by GCIP are prohibited from participating in any type of political campaign work.

Georgia County Internship Program
County Intern Supervisor's Guide

Welcome to the Georgia County Internship Program!

We are excited that you are participating in the Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP). Over the following months, you will have the opportunity to work with a student or recent graduate who is interested in learning about how communities and governments operate at the local level. Outside of working for a county or city it is very difficult for students to learn practical lessons about local government. It is our hope that this internship with your county not only will provide a valuable education on the operations of local government but may also help to motivate the student to consider a career in public service.

Serving as an Internship Supervisor is a big responsibility and will require a significant time commitment. As an Internship Supervisor, it is necessary to oversee all daily assignments and projects, provide direction and feedback and ensure that the intern has adequate workspace and needed resources. It is your responsibility that all the requirements for the program are met. These requirements are necessary to ensure that the student gets the most out of his or her internship experience.

The best way to have a successful internship program is to prepare as much as you can for the intern before he or she arrives. Please take a moment to look over the materials contained within this manual. These materials were prepared to ensure that you have adequate resources to take you from the interview process through to the exit evaluation. We encourage you to use these materials both to help you prepare for the arrival of your intern and to keep your intern on task so that projects are completed in a timely manner.

We wish you the best of luck with the internship and hope that your county decides to participate in the GCIP in the future. Please continue to visit our website at www.civicaffairs.org to learn more about project ideas and how other counties are utilizing interns.

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The Interview Process

While the Association County Commissioners of Georgia Civic Affairs Foundation (Foundation) helps to promote GCIP internship positions, counties are ultimately responsible for recruiting and hiring their intern. It is highly recommended that the county posts the internship position on the county website where jobs are advertised as well as post on area college student recruitment websites. Once applications for the internship position are received by the county, you will need to begin the interview process. Please schedule at least thirty minutes per interview in order to provide ample time to get to know each student or recent graduate. Once you have scheduled an interview, be sure to send a reminder confirmation along with directions to your office to the interviewee. It may be beneficial to include parking information, especially if your department does not have adequate parking available.

Sample Intern Interview Questions

1. What attracted you to this internship opportunity?
2. How does this internship fit into your schedule and educational goals?
3. What do you hope to gain from this experience?
4. Do you have any knowledge or experience with local government issues?
5. [Describe position/ project details] What coursework or former work/volunteer experience do you think best prepared you for a position like this?
6. Do you have experience working with customers/clients?
7. Any questions?

Sample Internship Offer Letter

Dear _____,

It is with great pleasure that I offer you the position of _____ internship with _____ County. The intent of the Georgia County Internship Program is to provide outstanding students the opportunity to receive a “hands on” understanding of the inner workings of county government.

The position that you are being offered begins _____ and ends _____. During your internship, I will be your supervisor and will review your progress toward the timely completion of all assignments on a regular basis. By accepting this position, you are committing to work _____ hours a week on a regular weekly schedule to be determined at the start of the internship. You will be responsible for notifying me in advance if you will be absent on days that you are scheduled to be in the office. You will be paid _____ (weekly/monthly) at an hourly rate of \$____ (there are no benefits associated with this position.) As part of the _____ County team, it will be important to note and adhere to _____ County’s standards regarding office conduct and work rules.

The projects that you are assigned will involve issues affecting county governments. These projects will be substantially, if not completely, your responsibility. At least one of these projects will result in a tangible work product at the completion of the internship. In addition, you may be assigned smaller research-related and administrative duties. It is our intention to ensure that the work that you will be assigned will result in a meaningful learning experience for you.

I look forward to working with you, and I thank you in advance for your contribution to _____ County.

Sincerely,

_____ County Internship Supervisor

Sample Internship Rejection Letter

Dear _____,

I enjoyed meeting with you on _____ regarding the _____ internship position with _____ County. I was very impressed with your resume and qualifications and thought that you presented yourself in a very professional manner over the course of the interview.

We received numerous applications for this position and in that we had many well qualified applicants, it was difficult to make the final selection. While your credentials were impressive, we have chosen another candidate at this time.

Please remember that you may re-apply for another internship position in the future as those become available. I wish you the best of luck with your future academic and career endeavors.

Sincerely,

_____ County Internship Supervisor

Before the Intern Arrives – Checklist

Prior to the new intern’s arrival, it will be helpful to address some of the items listed below to ensure that the intern will be able to function in and around the office once he or she starts work. By completing these items ahead of time, you will be able to smoothly transition the intern into your office so that he or she can begin daily activities and assignments immediately upon arrival.

Prepare an Intern Manual

Intern Manuals are a great way to provide your intern with basic information about your office and its operation. The following list suggests general information that should be applicable for most offices. It may be helpful, in the event your intern is the first for your county, that you have the intern put together a more thorough manual as a project so that you can use it with future interns.

- Intern Expectations (Duties, Hours, Dress Code, Timesheets/Payroll, etc.)
- Office Personnel and Procedures Manual, if available
- Office Staff Information (Phones numbers, Office numbers)
- “How To” Section (How to operate phones, copier, fax, scanners, etc.)
- Transportation (Parking, Transit options)
- Local Areas of Interests (Lunch options, Nearby ATMs/Banks)
- Helpful Resources for completing assignments (Websites, Manuals, etc.)

Develop a timeline of assignments and projects, including tentative due dates (see the sample Work Plan)

Set aside space for the intern to work (desk, office, cubicle, etc.)

Set up passwords for computers and/or phones if needed

Order name badge or employee ID if required

Send email to the intern regarding the 1st day of work (provide instructions on any documentation the intern needs to bring, appropriate dress, where to park, where to report to, etc.)

Set up a New Intern Breakfast/Luncheon to introduce the intern to the office staff (if resources are available)

Make arrangements with the Human Resources Department to schedule a time for the intern to be properly processed on the first day (fill out county personnel information, grant paperwork, etc.)

Sample Internship Project Plan

_____ **County**

Project Assigned:

Project Details:

Project Deadline:

Recommended Resources:

(Insert time frame) Tasks:

(Insert time frame) Tasks:

Mid-Project Review Date:

(Insert time frame) Tasks:

Final Project Review Date:

Processing the Intern on Arrival

Once the intern arrives, the Human Resources Department will need to meet with the intern so that he or she can fill out all applicable paperwork required by the county and required by the GCIP grant. All interns must be covered under the county's workers' compensation plan and should be processed as an employee of the county. Interns should be verified through the E-Verify program just as any other new hire for the county. The county is required to submit the E-Verify Acknowledgement Form to the Foundation as proof of this requirement.

GCIP grant-paid interns are also required to complete and submit the Intern Consent Form and Intern Information Form to the Foundation as part of the grant paperwork.

Establishing Goals for the Internship

On the first day of work, it is very important to meet with the intern in order to establish the goals that you want him or her to achieve during the internship. This should include discussion of projects, proposed timelines, available resources and general information about your expectations.

Furthermore, it is also very important over the course of the internship that you schedule periodic and regular meetings to ensure that the intern is meeting the required plan of action.

The following page provides a sample work plan you may wish to use for your county's program. Note that your work plan may not need to be as detailed as the one shown below, but it should contain at least one mid-term review of the project and the intern's performance. Not only will a work plan help the intern stay on track, it will also help you to adjust the workload in the event you need the intern to focus on certain tasks more than others due to changing priorities.

Sample Internship Work Schedule (for a 12 Week Internship)

Sample Project Assigned: Create a Record Retention Schedule and Record Management Database and Provide Instructions on How to Use Both

Project Details: By using Microsoft Access, create a database which will store all records for the county manager's office that provides for searchable categories. Using the local government retention schedule provided by Georgia Archives, develop a retention plan for all the records provided within the county manager's office.

Project Deadline: End of Internship

Sample Project Schedule:

Weeks 1-4: Review all records currently in manager's office. Provide an inventory of each record.

Weeks 5-6: Using the local government retention schedule listed on the Georgia Archives website, divide all records inventoried into categories based on the schedule.

Weeks 7-8: Meet with county manager and IT director about the records inventoried and discuss implementation of the retention schedule. Discuss suggested schedules for the documents identified and create schedule based on meeting outcome.

Weeks 9-10: Create database and input approved inventory list by category. Create queries as needed.

Weeks 11-12: Draft directions on how to use database and retention schedule

Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP) Intern Evaluation Form

Please answer the following questions thoroughly to help the GCIP learn about the details of your internship. When completed, submit to Michele NeSmith at mnesmith@accq.org.

Name: _____

County: _____

1. Before this internship, were you familiar with county government operations?
2. What have you learned about county government from your internship?
3. What were your major internship responsibilities as you understood them? Please specify.
4. What do you believe were your most significant successes during the internship? Please specify.
5. What was the favorite part of your internship?
6. What specific skills, experiences or knowledge did you gain during the internship? Do you believe these will be useful in helping you meet your future career goals and, if so, how?
7. What advice would give your peers who are considering a county internship?
8. Based on your internship, would you consider a career in county government?

9. How did you hear about this internship opportunity?

10. Do you have any advice for counties on how best to recruit high school, college, or graduate students for future county internships?

11. Do you have any recommendations on how this program can be improved?

County Considerations for Future Internships

The Foundation hopes that your county's experience with the Georgia County Internship Program is a success. Before applying for future GCIP grants, it may be helpful to review the following questions to ensure that your county is getting the most out of the program.

Questions about the Project(s) Assigned:

1. Was the intern able to complete the project assigned within the time allowed? If not, why?
2. Did the intern have too much "down time"? Was enough work available for the intern?
3. Was the type of project assigned suitable for the student hired (high school, college, or graduate student)? Was it too challenging or not challenging enough?
4. Is there enough project work available for a future internship?
5. What type of future projects does your office need assistance with that would be suitable for an intern?

Questions about Supervision of the Intern:

1. Did your schedule permit you to be available to assist the intern by answering questions and/or providing input on a project?
2. Were you able to provide the intern with detailed, clear instructions on how to complete a project?
3. Did the intern have other staff members who could answer questions and provide assistance?
4. Should you increase or decrease the number of interns requested for the GCIP grant period based on your availability to supervise?

Questions about Possible Future Requests for GCIP Intern Grant Support:

1. Did the previous intern have the right skill set for your office?
2. Should you change the skill or academic qualifications required for the next intern?
3. Are high school, undergraduate, or graduate students better suited for the types of projects that your office provides?
4. Did the applicants that interviewed for the previous internship meet your expectations and/or have the right type of qualifications for the position?
5. Was your previous internship posting detailed enough to generate interest?