



Student Internship Resource Guide

Developing Your Program

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| TO OUR MEMBERS

LeadingAge Illinois is listening to the workforce challenges facing our members. It is a complex issue spanning the entire state, with every region having its own unique circumstances. One solution will not fit all. In 2016, the association formed a Workforce Advisory Task Force, comprised of members from across the state, with the goal to create resources that could be applied most universally to the members. This guide is the by-product of the work of the taskforce with the goal to provide members a road-map to create a student internship program.

“We have no time to hesitate. The workforce challenge facing members is reaching a critical point. It is incumbent upon providers, with the support of their association, to address this problem with creative and proactive solutions.”

*Karen Messer, President/CEO
LeadingAge Illinois*

Why an Internship Program?

Data from the Illinois Board of Higher Education reveals that there were 600,610 undergraduate students enrolled in Illinois Colleges and Universities the fall of 2016. According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) (BLS), the healthcare industry overall will generate more new jobs through 2026 than any other industry, with a critical need for medical and health service managers, including the aging services industry. All Illinois public institutions of higher education, and many private institutions offer health care related programs. We have an opportunity to educate these students in the career opportunities in aging services. Creating strong partnerships with Illinois institutions of higher education is a win-win-win initiative. Attracting students to consider aging services as a legitimate career choice will assist members to address current and future workforce challenges. Colleges and universities will be able to offer their students experiences that cannot be obtained in the classroom, and students will be introduced to the rewarding and lucrative opportunities that exist in the aging services field.

Internships are defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) as: “a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.”

An Internship is Not...

- A volunteer program
- A clinical nursing rotation program
- Office work
- Access to unpaid labor
- To replace paid employees

An Internship is... A Mutually Beneficial Relationship

A successful program should be constructed to ensure that the student is receiving a valuable learning experience that fits with the needs and goals of the organization.

Internship Program Benefits

| For Students | For the Organization |
|---|--|
| Advances their learning | Purposeful intergenerational opportunities for residents, clients and older adults |
| Allows students to apply learning | Brings expertise into organization that might otherwise not exist |
| Access to engagement with residents, clients and older adults | Increases exposure and awareness in surrounding community, good PR |
| Learning from the wisdom of older adults | Recruitment- talent pipeline |
| Build experience and understanding regarding the physical, psychological and cognitive aspects of aging | Opportunities to execute creative projects that otherwise might not occur |
| Access to professional network and employment opportunities | Fulfills mission to serve the community |
| Real life experience/resume builder | Assists organization in application of latest strategies and techniques |
| To make a positive impact | Students can recruit others to the organization |
| | Provides professional development for organization leaders |

Core Standards for a Quality Internship Program

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) offers the following guidelines as requirements for effective and legitimate internship programs:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom.
2. The skills or knowledge learned in the internship must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
4. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience. Specific internship projects and initiatives should be largely based on the availability of a preceptor that will create the right environment for an intern. A skilled and qualified preceptor with time and interest is essential for a successful internship experience.
5. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
6. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.
7. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.

| Guide to Implementation

1. Research College/University Programs

Become familiar with surrounding college/university programs that offer students internship credits in areas conducive to aging services. Examples:

- Marketing
- Social Work
- Dietetics/Nutrition
- Information Technology

Develop relationships with academic and administrative personnel who coordinate/facilitate internship programs. Seek an understanding of the requirements for being approved as an internship site and determine the extent to which the identified internship needs match the capabilities of the organization.

2. Assess Your Organization's Readiness and Compatibility to Host an Intern

Utilize a Steering Committee to work through these and other questions that will help determine if the time is right to develop an internship program. Utilize the evaluation tool included in the appendix, or something similar.

- Does the organization's mission and goals align with establishing an internship program? Will it be supported by the Board of Directors and Executive Team?
- Are there other people within the organization that have an established relationship with a local Junior College, College or University?
- Is the current culture within the organization supportive and stable?
- Does the organization have a high performing department with current or future programs or projects that could be supported/developed by an intern?
- Does the organization have a qualified and motivated preceptor with time and skills necessary to develop and administer the program? (*Time requirements vary greatly depending on the number and frequency of interns*).
 - § *History of mentoring*
 - § *Strong manager*
 - § *Successful team builder and communicator*
- Can your organization offer opportunities for unique industry experiences?
- Are there available tools and workspace necessary to support an intern?
- What does the organization hope to gain from an internship program?
- What do you want the intern to learn about the industry?
- Review legal and insurance requirements.

3. Develop an Action Plan in Response to Assessment

Utilize the team to develop action plans that address improvement opportunities. Conclusion guidelines are based on the assessment score:

100 – 200 points: Probably not the right time. Develop and implement the action plan and re-evaluate in 6 – 12 months.

200 – 250 points: You have a good start. Develop and implement the action plan and re-evaluate in 3 months.

250 – 300 points: Systems are go- begin building your program (see sample timeline below).

4. Endorsement from Governance

Once you have reached the go-stage, the next step is to seek support and endorsement from the governing body. This is a strategic direction for the organization that should be wholly supported by the governing body. Take the time to nurture the board by educating them on the benefits, and how this program ties into organizational goals.

Example include:

- Increasing awareness of the organization in the broader community
- Growing depth of a leadership pipeline
- Enhancing resident/client programming

This must be an all-in endeavor. Creating a culture of acceptance and excitement about the benefits of an internship program, and the presence of interns within the organization is critical for a meaningful and successful experience for all. Board members may be a valuable resource to connect with higher education personnel.

5. Create Program Policies/Procedures & Documents (see examples in Appendix)

Program Policies and Procedures

- Intern program construct and guidelines
- Intern screening procedures
- Process for intern selection
- Process for intern orientation
- Role of the preceptor and mentor

Program Documents

- Internship Position Profile
- Intern Screening Profile (*used to evaluate candidates*)
- Intern Candidate Application
- Internship Agreement
- Intern Handbook and Orientation Materials
- Recruitment Materials/Flyers
- Communication Materials to Stakeholders
- Preceptor Responsibility and Conduct Agreement
- Internship calendar including key dates (*targeted semester, hours, submission and decision dates*)

6. Create Communication Plan to Stakeholders

It will be important for all stakeholders to have the opportunity to hear about the program and offer questions, concerns or comments. Specific communication pieces should be developed for each stakeholder segment that focuses on the ways that their work and lives may interact with interns.

- Residents/clients will be interested to hear about safety and security measures that will be in place
- Employees need to know how the organization differentiates an intern from an employee.
- Family members will be interested to hear the benefits to their loved one having an intern on site. What kinds of new programs and interactions can be expected?

7. Market the Program

Begin with utilizing the LeadingAge Illinois portal to post your internship opportunity. Expand your reach by communications through newsletters, Facebook pages and importantly, your web-site. It is your website where students will first look for opportunities. Make your internship program prominent and easy to navigate. Digitize the application process.

| Legal Compliance

The Department of Labor protects interns from performing unpaid work that is primarily for the benefit of the employer. If it is apparent that the employer gains an immediate benefit from activities of the student, or if the intern displaces regular employees, the student will be considered an employee under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Fact sheet #71 from the U.S Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division uses the following criteria to determine whether an intern or student is, in fact, an employee under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

1. The extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation, express or implied, suggests that the intern is an employee and vice versa.
 - Provide a written offer letter to the intern, stating that the internship is unpaid and there is no guarantee of employment upon completion of the internship.
2. The extent to which the internship provides training that is similar to what would be given in an education environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions.
 - State in the internship posting that college credit applicants are preferred
3. The extent to which the internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework to the academic calendar.
 - Incorporate regular feedback and access to a variety of disciplines.
4. The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.
 - Structure the internship program to mirror the academic calendar.
5. The extent to which the internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
 - Emphasize and put into practice close supervisory characteristics. Help the student to be well-equipped to use their skills in multiple employment settings.
6. The extent to which the intern's work complements, rather than displaces the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern.

It is incumbent upon the employer to determine that an internship program satisfies every element of the test. It is recommended that you include legal counsel review of your program structure and documents.

| Key Factors that Influence the Intern Experience

Key findings based on research conducted by the Scott Resource Group reveals that the three most impactful unmet expectations of student interns were:

1. Being challenged
2. Having enough meaningful work to remain busy
3. Having a prepared supervisor

However, across all internship disciplines included in the study, all reported that expectations were exceeded in working with people they liked and respected.

| Best Practices

- Develop strong leadership relationships with key higher education personnel.
- Speak to university classes to recruit interest.
- Focus student application on personal skills and talents, find different ways that the student can impact the organization.
- Have current intern(s) interview future intern(s).
- Create supplemental projects (like reading assignments) for students during down time.
- Introduce student to other organizations with field trips.
- Have a strong internship program presence on your website and the LeadingAge Illinois website.
- Have students submit weekly reflections to mentor which is a good way to monitor intern satisfaction and areas for improvement.
- Have an internship buddy.

| Conclusion

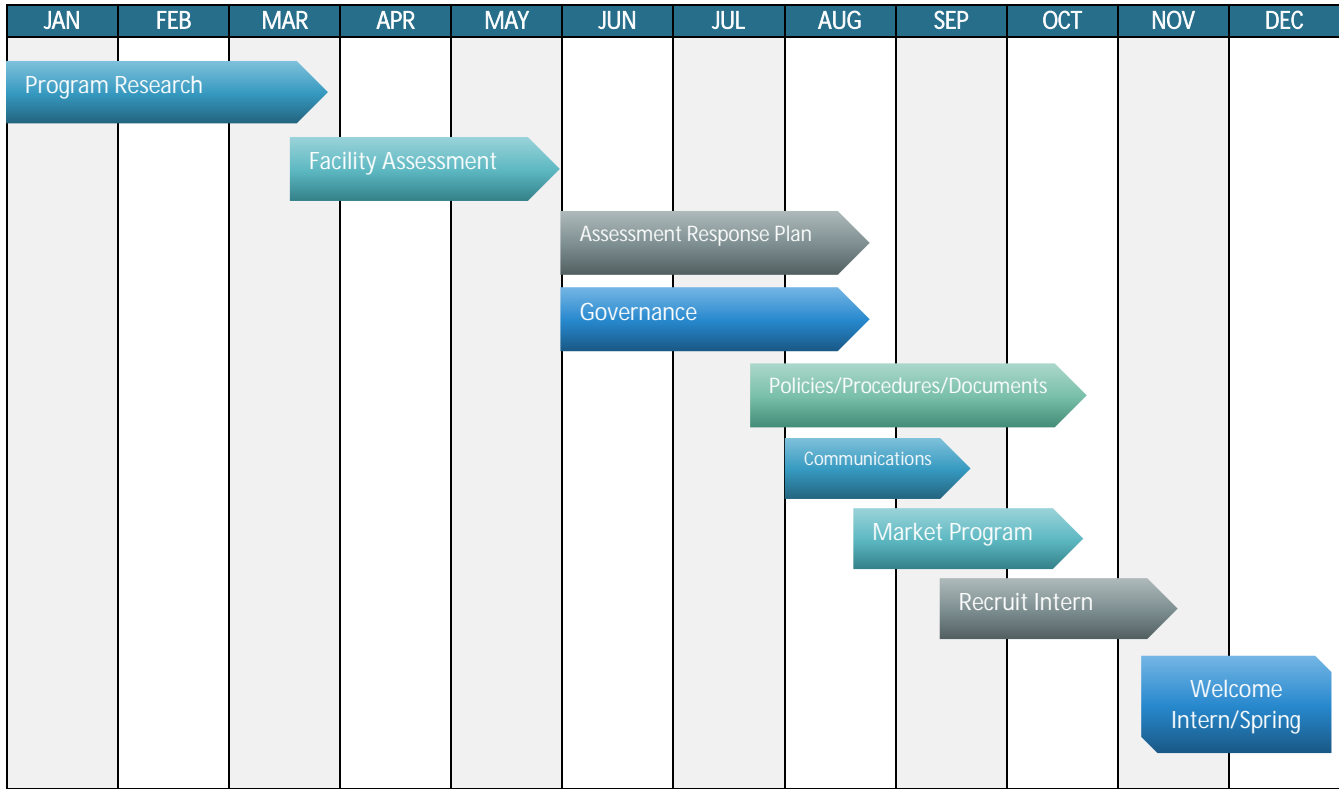
An internship program is a cost-effective approach to address workforce challenges facing aging services providers. An honest assessment regarding the readiness of your organization to host an internship program is a critical factor for success. Start small and grow the program as your organization becomes more confident and experienced.



“The best way a mentor can prepare another leader is to expose him or her to other great people.”

John C. Maxwell

Sample Implementation Timeline



Additional resources can be found at the following:

<http://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/internships/impact-of-the-internship-experience/>

<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>

<https://internbridge.com/>

<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/8394-create-internship-program.html>

<https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2014/spring/art03.pdf>

| APPENDIX

1. Potential Intern Focus Areas/Projects:
 - Research and Advocacy on topics of interest to the organization
 - Data Analytics
 - Assist with Specific Project Execution
 - IT plan
 - Marketing plan
 - Meal planning
 - Process re-design
 - Space design
 - Landscape design
 - Resident satisfaction interviews
 - Resident Programming/Life Enrichment
 - Music/art/gardening/current events
 - Dementia training
 - Educational programs
 - Employee Engagement
 - Human Resources/Employee Engagement
 - Admissions
 - Community Relations
 - Dietetics
 - Inventory and Supply Management
 - Fitness/Therapy/Wellness Services
 - Social Work
2. Program Policies
 - Unpaid Internship
 - Intern Selection and Screening
 - Intern Orientation
 - Preceptor Guidelines
3. Program Forms
 - Intern Screening Form (*used to evaluate candidates*)
 - Internship Position Profile
 - Internship Candidate Application
 - Precept Responsibility and Contract Agreement

| Contributors

Special thanks to the members of the LeadingAge Illinois Workforce Advisory Task Force who have contributed their time and expertise to the development of this resource guide.

Joan Bertucci | Peace Village

George Block | Our Lady of Angels

Krista Borbely | Clark-Lindsey Village

Carol Houle | Christian Horizons

Cal Isaacson | Village at Victory Lakes

Patty Sanches | Friendship Senior Options

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Program Policies

STUDENT INTERNSHIP RESOURCE GUIDE

PROGRAM POLICIES

Policy: Unpaid Internship Program Guidelines

Facility Name: _____

Effective Date: _____

1. Preference is given to students in good standing with a college or university that will earn college credit as an intern.
2. All internships will be unpaid with no guarantee of employment upon completion of internship. Therefore, at no time will an intern ever be considered an employee.
3. The internship program is developed to provide training and education similar to that provided in an educational environment.
4. The program is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework to the academic calendar.
5. Regular feedback and evaluation will be provided by the preceptor, shared with the student and academic coordinator.
6. The duration of the internship will be limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
7. Each intern will sign an Internship Agreement.

PROGRAM POLICIES

Policy: Intern Selection and Screening

Facility Name: _____

Effective Date: _____

1. Preference is given to students in good standing with a college or university that will earn college credit as an intern.
2. Utilize the Intern Selection Form to focus on the student's level of preparedness to enter the internship and their future goals in place of professional experience.
3. Determine if student interest, skills and abilities support organizational goals.
4. Once student is selected, the student is required to have drug screen and background check prior to beginning internship.

PROGRAM POLICIES

Policy: Intern Orientation

Facility Name: _____

Effective Date: _____

1. Selected intern(s) will receive orientation to organizational policies and procedures that ensure the safety and well being of the intern, residents and employees. The subject matter will include, at a minimum:
 - a. Facility Tour/History/Mission
 - b. Safety and Security procedures (door alarms, access restrictions)
 - c. Resident Rights
 - d. Abuse Prevention Policies and Procedures
 - e. Drugs and alcohol
 - f. Dress code
 - g. Fire Procedures and other disaster responses
 - h. Harassment
 - i. Solicitation and sales
 - j. Termination of internship
 - k. Reporting an incident

PROGRAM POLICIES

Policy: Preceptor Guidelines

Facility Name: _____

Effective Date: _____

1. A leadership employee will serve as the Internship Program Preceptor. The person in this role is responsible for supervising and coordinating the activities of interns and has the ability to allocated sufficient time to execute responsibilities.
2. The preceptor will provide meaningful work assignments and projects for interns that is in alignment with work scope.
3. The preceptor must complete the "Preceptor Responsibility and Conduct Agreement.

Program Forms

STUDENT INTERNSHIP RESOURCE GUIDE

Intern Screening Form

Student Internship Program *(Example)*

Organization Name: _____

Student name: _____

Screened by: _____ Date: _____

1. What do you know about the field of senior living?
2. Share your strengths/weaknesses
3. What are your areas of interest and/or specific skills you can bring to the organization?
4. How do you feel your prior experiences and education have prepared you for this internship?
5. Do you prefer working independently or working with people?
6. How do you think this internship experience will prepare you for your career?
7. Why do you want to intern for this organization?

8. What appeals most to you about this internship?

9. What are your plans after graduation?

10. Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?

11. What are your short-term and long-term goals?

12. Semester/day/time availability:

Internship Position Profile

Student Internship Program *(Example)*

Project Profile:

(Organization name) is seeking an intern to assist with developing landscaping plans for the refurbishment of a garden/gazebo area located on the campus. Plans must reflect the needs and wishes of the residents at (Organization's name), be consistent with budget goals, and appropriate and accessible for older adults.

We are looking for a self-driven and outgoing individual capable of creativity around greening projects.

Preferred Fields of Study:

1. Natural Resources and Environmental Studies
2. Urban and Regional Planning
3. Landscape architecture

Intern tasks may include, but are not limited to:

1. Developing a resident query form for collecting opinions/ideas
2. Set up and execute resident/customer/employee interviews that represents a reliable reflection of the organization
3. Summarize the qualitative data into a report for Administration
4. Develop a sketch plan with corresponding budget
5. Submit plan for comments/review
6. Edit plan, and make presentation to administration, residents, customers and employees

Please send cover letter with statement of interest to:

Internship Candidate Application

Student Internship Program *(Example)*

| | |
|---|--|
| First, Last Name | |
| Address | |
| Phone | |
| E-mail | |
| Year in College | |
| Area of Study | |
| Focus area of Internship | |
| Term Looking for Internship | |
| Availability | |
| How did you learn of our internship program | |
| Why are you interested in Aging Services | |
| Do you know any current or past interns? | |
| Best time to contact you | |

Precept Responsibility and Contract Agreement Student Internship Program *(Example)*

I, _____ agree to serve as a preceptor for intern, _____ and agree to the following conditions:

Overseeing intern conduct

1. I understand that I am responsible for supervising the conduct of the intern while in the facility, and ensuring standards of privacy, confidentiality, respect and dignity toward all persons in the organization.
2. I understand that it is my obligation to enforce policies related to the prevention of abuse or harassment of anyone within the organization.
3. I will work with the student to set realistic expectations, goals and timelines for what the intern is able and willing to do.
4. I understand that the student should not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, nor will any such items be brought anywhere on the premises.
5. I will provide meaningful work assignments and projects for this student in alignment with my work scope.
6. I will maintain a professional relationship limits with this student and all other interns during their internship service.
7. I understand that I am the supervisor of this student and will enforce all applicable policies, procedures and regulations.

Preceptor Signature

Date

Preceptor's Supervisor Signature

Date

Facility Internship Readiness Evaluation

<Enter company name here>

| Evaluation Criteria. Team assign a weight to each criteria. 1 = no confidence 2 = some confidence 3= high confidence | % Weighting | Score | Points |
|---|-------------|-------|--------|
| | (Quality) | | Totals |
| 1 An internship program supports our mission and goals | 20 | | 0 |
| 2 Leadership will be supportive of an internship program | 20 | | 0 |
| 3 Our current employee culture support an internship program | 25 | | 0 |
| 4 We have strong relationships with college/university programs | 5 | | 0 |
| 5 We have a strong department with a preceptor capable of providing an excellent experience | 25 | | 0 |
| 7 We can offer tools and workspace to support an intern | 5 | | 0 |
| | | | |
| | 100 | | 0 |

Comments