



Internship Program Study Session

May 2, 2013



Today's Discussion

1. Why have an internship program?
2. Suggested guidelines regarding unpaid interns.
3. Costs of paid interns.
4. Where to get interns.
5. Pre-employment screening.
6. Program administration.
7. Program evaluation.
8. Decisions to be made.

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Why Have an Internship Program?

- An internship program supports the District's Strategic Business Plan: **Ensure Financial Stability and Improve the District's Public Image**
- Positive learning experiences through internships will increase the pool of qualified candidates for examinations.
- Internships provide increased exposure to the District and help build and maintain a positive public image.

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Internship Rules Under the Fair Labor Standards Act

- An unpaid internship in the public sector where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation is generally permissible.
- An unpaid intern cannot replace a paid employee and may receive more intense supervision than paid employees.

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Suggested Guidelines for MWRD Internship Program

- The District should ensure that the intern receives ongoing instruction and close onsite supervision throughout the internship.
- An internship should increase the intern's chances of being hired in the job market or should earn the intern academic credit toward graduation.
- The primary focus for unpaid interns should be to provide a useful educational or training experience for the student.

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Suggested Guidelines for MWRD Internship Program

- The interns cannot displace regular employees.
- The interns cannot result in employees being laid off or fewer hours for regular employees.
- The District should not expect or entrust an intern to do the same work as regular employees.

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Suggested Guidelines for MWRD Internship Program

- Interns are not entitled to a job at the end of the training.
- The District should draft a written agreement with the intern stating that the intern should have no expectation of employment and should not presume any guarantee of employment after the internship.
- However, the District is still permitted to offer jobs to interns through the regular employment process.

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Suggested Guidelines for MWRD Internship Program

- If the program is unpaid, the interns understand that they are not entitled to wages for the time spent in training.
- Before beginning the relationship, the District should draft a written agreement stating that payment for the intern's services is neither intended nor expected during the internship.

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Paid Interns

- Paid interns would be limited to 119 working days per calendar year. (No limit for unpaid interns)
- Paid interns would receive at least the Illinois minimum wage of \$8.25 per hour (\$6300 per year).
- Paid interns who work over 40 hours per week would receive overtime of 1.5 times hourly rate.
- Paid interns would receive no benefits or paid days off.

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General Costs of Internship Program

(Based on 20 interns working 95 days)

<u>Background/Screening</u>	
Physical Exam and Drug Test (\$94 x 20 interns)	\$1,880
Background Check (\$13.00 x 20)	260
	<hr/> \$2,140
<u>Wages for Paid Interns Working 95 Days</u>	
Wages (\$8.25 x 8 hours x 95 days x 20 interns)	\$125,400
<u>Administrative Overhead</u>	\$25,000
<u>Total Estimated Annual Cost</u>	\$152,540

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Partnering With a School or Organization

To attract qualified interns, partner with a school or organization with an established internship program or wanting to establish a program.

- Provides structure to the process by identifying individuals pursuing a specific area of interest or study.
- Provides students credit for completing internships and provides guidance to help them succeed.
- Provides organizations assistance such as helping veterans obtain new job skills.

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Partnering With a School or Organization (continued)

- An established internship or organizational program offers candidates who have met initial screening criteria.
- An established internship program helps provide objectivity in the selection process.

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Possible Work Assignments

The District can match prospective interns' areas of interest:

Department	Area of interest/study
Engineering	Engineering, engineering technology
Information Technology	Computer science
Monitoring and Research	Biology, chemistry
Human Resources	HR, public administration
Public Affairs	Public relations, graphics, communication
General Administration	Business, public administration, finance
Maintenance and Operations	Engineering, sciences, process technology
Law Department	Real estate, environmental law

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Internship Program Administration

- Establish budget and other program parameters.
- Identify criteria for schools or organizations who may provide candidates.
- Advertise program and invite applicants.
- Encourage departments to establish meaningful internships that provide learning opportunities.
- Match applicants to opportunities in departments.

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Pre Employment Screening

- Interns should sign a Release and Waiver of Liability.
- Interns would undergo a background check prior to employment.
- The District would not allow an intern to work if it is found that he or she poses a security risk or potential threat to the workplace.
- A physical and drug test prior to employment would be required.

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Internship Program Administration

- The HR Department would review department internship requests and work with schools and organizations to identify potential candidates.
- Potential candidates would be screened by the HR Department and then referred to the requesting department for further review of qualifications.
- Interns would be placed after concurrence of the department head, direct supervisor, and Executive Director.
- The HR Department would provide supervisors with guidelines on their roles and responsibilities.

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Internship Orientation

- The HR Department would provide interns with an orientation to the District and a point of contact for any problems or concerns that may arise during the internship.
- Each department would provide an orientation specific to its operations to further enhance the learning experience.

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Evaluation Process

- Most schools monitor the progress of their interns and often require a written evaluation in the middle and/or conclusion of the internship.
- All internships would be evaluated to measure effectiveness. Interns and their supervisors would be interviewed in this process.

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Decision Points

1. Does the Board wish to establish an intern program?
2. When will the program begin?
3. Will internships be paid or unpaid?
4. If paid, what is the hourly rate?
5. Which schools or organizations will be utilized?
6. Are there any other criteria to be considered?