



employing interns



> G U I D E T O >

Hiring Successful Community Association Management Interns

► **Community Associations Institute** provides an overview of employing interns in today's workforce. Our guide offers your company practical solutions and considerations for recruiting, hiring, mentoring, and evaluating internships.

Steps to internship success: **Prepare** » **Recruit** » **Motivate**



Overview:

► **Prepare**

- » Learn about internships
- » Evaluate your organization
- » Determine legalities

► **Plan**

- » Gather support in your company
- » Design the program
- » Create a compensation plan and budget
- » Delegate duties to key staff
- » Pick a target start

► **Action**

- » Advertise the position
- » Evaluate candidates
- » Interview candidates
- » Hire!
- » Train

► **Samples**

- » Job descriptions
- » Learning objectives
- » Evaluation

► **Summary**

- » Create a best practice report or case study
- » Ask questions for consideration
- » Identify the company benefit
- » Identify the intern benefit



prepare

Before we begin learning about internships let's talk about why we should even entertain the idea. It is important for business owners and industry leaders to know and understand the value propositions of establishing an internship program. A thoroughly developed program will help your firm identify future leaders, help students reach the prospective professions involved with common interest community management, and help identify careers and opportunities.

► Learn about internships

Routinely, an internship is the ideal fit for an individual and employer. An internship is any carefully monitored, meaningful learning experience in which an individual has intentional professional goals and reflects actively on what he or she is accomplishing throughout the experience. Developing an internship program is an excellent strategy for investing in your organization's future success, and often leads to discovering future colleagues and leaders. As you discuss the prospect of creating an internship program in your company, you should review your Mission and Vision Statements to determine if they need to be modified to include this initiative.

► How can your organization benefit from internships?

One of the more significant advantages to providing internships is the opportunity to select and develop your future talent. You have the opportunity to evaluate and screen potential employees prior to making a full-time position offer, which leads to financial savings. Employers have reported converting more than half of eligible interns into full-time hires. If hired in a permanent position, previous interns assimilate faster to their new roles and have shorter learning curves than external hires.

- ✔ Supports temporary or seasonal positions as well as fills busy positions or projects.
- ✔ Identify and train potential future employees.
- ✔ Brings new ideas, skills, and points of view.
- ✔ Provides an opportunity for supervisory experience to current staff members.
- ✔ Fulfills a civic and professional responsibility by providing young professionals with real work experience.

A typical internship:

- Includes developing intentional learning objectives that are structured into the experience and supervised by a professional with relevant and related background in the field.
- Promotes academic, career, and/or personal development.
- Includes learning objectives, observation, reflection, and evaluation.
- Balances the intern's learning goals with the organization's needs.
- Lasts three months, and may be part-time or full-time.
- Involves industry related and soft skill development.
- Is carefully monitored and evaluated for academic credit.
- Provides adequate supervision in a reasonably safe environment with the necessary tools to perform the learning goals agreed upon for the duration of the internship.

An internship is not:

- Free help
- Meant to replace an employee
- More than 20 percent busy work



► Evaluate your organization

The questions below are designed to help you determine if your company is prepared to manage an internship program, how your organization can benefit from hiring an intern, and how a student-intern would benefit from working with your organization. These questions do not require a formal response; however, it is recommended that you think about the answers to these questions to find if you are prepared to hire an intern. You may also find that the answers provide a foundation for creating the internship position description.

- 1 Is a change to your company's Mission or Vision Statement necessary? How do you inform others in your organization of the internship program and get them on-board?
- 2 How do you see your company benefitting from hosting an intern? Would your company benefit from the work of interns to write letters, perform property inspections, identify business leads, handle customer service, or provide overall administrative support? Will it help create interest in your business or profession?
- 3 What are the goals of your organization's internship program? Do you need assistance completing a particular project? Are you supplementing staffing needs (though not using an intern as a replacement for a permanent employee)? Do you hope to use the program as a pipeline for potential full-time employees? Do you seek to cultivate talent in young professionals?
- 4 What do you want the intern to learn while working in your organization?
- 5 Would having interns benefit current staff members by providing managerial and supervisory experience?
- 6 What type of work needs to be completed?
- 7 Is there an individual in the organization who will serve as the intern's supervisor?



- 8 Do you have the support of senior management?
- 9 Does your company have the space and resources to support an intern and his or her duties?
- 10 What is the intended duration of the internship? Will the need to fill this position be on-going or short term / seasonal?
- 11 What time of year can you host an intern? What are ideal start and end dates for the internship? Is this a part-time or full-time internship?
- 12 Are specific skills or technical knowledge/experience required to adequately complete the assigned tasks?
- 13 Can your organization offer opportunities for unique industry experiences during the internship?
- 14 Is this a paid or unpaid internship? If unpaid, are there alternative forms of compensation that could be offered (transportation/parking reimbursement, meal stipend, scholarship, tuition, working agreement/contract)?
- 15 Are you able to develop and implement a training and orientation program for new interns?



Do I have to pay an intern?

To fully protect your company from legal issues, you should obtain advice from your legal counsel. However, to ensure the best pool of applicants for the internship—not just those students who can afford to take on an unpaid position—it is prudent to pay your intern at least minimum wage or the equivalent to minimum wage if paying a stipend. It's not unusual for private, for-profit companies to host unpaid interns, while nonprofit and government agencies have more freedom in choosing to pay their interns. Be sure to double check with your attorney before deciding not to compensate. The U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division offers general information to help determine whether interns and students working for “for-profit” employers are entitled to minimum wages and overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). For more information, visit www.dol.gov.

How much do I pay an intern?

It's a good idea for your company to always pay an intern at least minimum wage. To get the best pool of applicants and to show that you value the work of the intern, you should strive to pay them a fair, competitive wage that matches the responsibilities of the position. The discussion of how much you intend to pay the intern can wait until during or after the interview.

- Wages for most internship opportunities are usually determined before the intern is hired and are not typically negotiated.
- Consider paying consistent wages to all interns within each department.
- Students in technical fields are generally paid more than nontechnical fields.

Insurance considerations

Employers should be aware of insurance considerations including state/local statutes.

- Accident/liability insurance: provided by the intern/parent/guardian
- Automobile accident insurance: provided by the intern
- Health/life insurance: provided by the intern
- Worker's compensation: does not apply for interns participating in non-paid internship experiences, but if injured at the internship site, should be covered by the intern





plan

- ✔ Gather support in your company
- ✔ Design the program

▶ Writing the internship position description

What do you need to include?

Just like writing a job description for a community manager, accounting personnel, or maintenance staff, it is important to create a clear, detailed job description that outlines the responsibilities and qualifications of the internship position.

Items to include in the internship position description:

- Name of your organization
- Location
- Contact person to whom application/resumes will be sent
- The contact's phone number and email address
- The internship position title
- Description of responsibilities and tasks
- Qualifications or required skills
- Information about schedule and hours
- Desired start date and end date
- Compensation
- Desired majors
- Travel percentage
- Application materials

Tasks for the intern

Does your company have a wish list of projects that you would like to accomplish but can't find the time or manpower to complete them? Does a specific department or manager need additional support? Training on risk management both within your organization and within the clients/communities? Hosting an intern can be a great solution as it supports the needs of the organization while providing real-world experience to a student.

Think about the intern's purpose

What tasks would you like an intern to complete while he or she is with the company? What skills will be used, and what knowledge will be gained? If you're looking to train potential long-term employees, you'll want to think about training them in all aspects of community association management that your company performs.

Accounting/ Finance

- ✓ Create documents/spreadsheets
- ✓ Review financial information
- ✓ Participate in training sessions
- ✓ Analyze data to identify areas of opportunity and efficiency
- ✓ Engage in activities related to accounts payable/ accounts receivable
- ✓ Participate in document generation for audits and tax reports
- ✓ Analyze reserves and Planning

Human Resources

- ✓ File applications from prospective candidates, process applications, and purge outdated applications
- ✓ Schedule interviews, generate letters/emails confirming receipt of applications from job candidates
- ✓ Plan, arrange space for, and set up for classes and meetings
- ✓ Check candidate licensures and verify professional references
- ✓ Prepare materials for workshops or new hire orientations

Administrative

- ✓ Observe operating systems (access, cyber protection, servers, VoIP, internet/Wi-Fi, data protection)
- ✓ Observe team and department scheduling, meetings, safety meetings, issue solving, committee participation, use of task forces
- ✓ Attend committee meetings
- ✓ Attend annual meetings
- ✓ Prepare meeting minutes
- ✓ Create or modify documents and letters, i.e. violations
- ✓ Assist with research and information gathering for RFP preparation
- ✓ Compare RFP spreadsheets
- ✓ Perform inspections
- ✓ Coordinate volunteer activities
- ✓ Set up client files and data entry of client information
- ✓ Communicate with clients
- ✓ Draft newsletters and correspondence
- ✓ Organize/create spreadsheets
- ✓ Write handbooks or manuals
- ✓ Design event flyers or announcements
- ✓ Develop presentations
- ✓ Create annual calendar and reminders
- ✓ Observe professionals in the industry
- ✓ Attend and/or participate in staff meetings

Information Technology *(Assume this is for an IT trained student intern)*

- ✓ Update and install hardware and software
- ✓ Take Help Desk calls and provide customer service to callers
- ✓ Create and maintain spreadsheets, databases, and reports
- ✓ Perform equipment maintenance
- ✓ Maintain social media or company website
- ✓ Troubleshoot equipment issues

Marketing/ Advertising/ Public Relations

- ✓ Create, edit, and implement marketing plans
- ✓ Create newsletters and client/member communications
- ✓ Maintain blog, social media, and websites
- ✓ Prepare press releases and communications
- ✓ Research potential new clients
- ✓ Schedule and/or attend client/member meetings
- ✓ Support trade show and third-party partner initiatives

Facilities Maintenance

- ✓ Process work orders
- ✓ Grounds cleanup
- ✓ General cleaning
- ✓ Carpentry
- ✓ Snow removal
- ✓ Evaluate calendar and maintenance schedules, team scheduling, keep records

► Create a compensation plan

Who in your firm will have specific responsibilities directly related to the intern(s)? Assign tasks and oversight to the appropriate department personnel.

✓ Start Date

Interview, supervision, evaluation in:

- ✓ Accounting
- ✓ Administration
- ✓ HR
- ✓ IT
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Facilities maintenance





action

- » Establish a relationship at designated college or university.
- » Post the position at local colleges and universities or other career center websites.
- » Evaluate candidates.
- » Review applications and resumes to determine which candidates are appropriate for the internship.
- » Select candidates to interview.
- » Interview candidates.

Focus on the students' level of preparedness to enter the internship and their future goals in place of professional experience:

- How do you feel your prior experiences and education have prepared you for this internship?
- How do you think this internship experience will prepare you for your career?
- Why do you want to intern for this organization?
- What appeals most to you about this internship?
- What are your plans after graduation?
- Where do you see yourself in 5–10 years?
- What are your short-term and long-term goals?

Q Look for...

Answers that indicate that the student has thoughtfully considered his or her career path and is, or may be, planning to pursue a career related to your industry after graduation. In addition, an ideal internship candidate will express a strong interest in the educational and learning value of the opportunity rather than to simply to fulfill a requirement even though he or she may be fulfilling a requirement measured by the college in some manner.

Inquire about academic experiences rather than professional:

- Tell me about a time when you had a heavy course load. How did you manage your time?
- How do you feel your campus involvement (if any) relates to the professional workplace?
- What has been your most rewarding college experience thus far?
- Why/how did you choose your major?
- What was your greatest achievement?
- What courses in your major have you completed thus far? Which of these do you feel have helped to prepare you for an internship and why?

Q Look for...

Answers that highlight the student's decision-making skills as well as his or her ability to manage deadlines and academic coursework. Also, look for a student who can transfer the skills gained via campus involvement and coursework into the professional workplace. It is also important to make sure that the student has completed sufficient coursework and has the knowledge necessary to work at an internship level.



Ask questions to determine the candidate's work ethic:

- Tell me about a time when you had to work as a member of a team to complete a task. What role did you fulfill?
- Have you had a job before?
- What was your favorite summer or part-time job? Why?
- What have you learned from your part-time or student jobs? (If listed on resume)
- Why did you choose the career field you would like to work in?
- What will motivate you in this position?
- Why do you think you will be successful in your chosen field?
- Give me an example of a time when you worked on a project successfully with little supervision.
- Tell me about a time when you made a mistake, and describe how you solved the situation.

Q Look for...

Answers that show a student has found value in past experiences, including part-time or temporary jobs. Also look for student responses that express responsibility, dedication, and a willingness to learn by experience.

Questions to identify the student's analytical and problem-solving skills:

- Describe a situation when there seemed to be no way to complete a project and yet you found a way. What happened?
- How do you handle projects with short deadlines that require precise calculations and analysis? What is your approach?
- What kinds of problems have people recently called on you to solve? Tell me about your contribution to solving the problem.

Questions to identify the student's leadership and interpersonal skills:

- What do you do differently from your classmates? What will you bring to the position that other candidates with similar academic and work experience may not offer?
- Give an example of a situation when you had to compromise your own goals/objectives for the sake of the team.
- Talk about a group project when a team member was not fulfilling his or her commitments. How did you deal with the person? What were the end results?
- Describe a time that you led a group on a project or activity.



Orientation Checklist: Onboarding the Intern

Just as you would provide orientation for a new employee, you should familiarize the intern with your company and help him or her acclimate to the new work environment. Many students are unfamiliar with the activities, environment, and objectives of business and industry; a thorough orientation can help with this. The sooner your intern understands what your organization does and how it operates, the sooner he or she can assume assigned responsibilities and become active and productive in your company.

Prior to the start of the internship:

- Establish and agree upon the start date, end date, and work schedule. During the internship, discuss schedule changes in advance.
- If the student is completing the internship for academic credit, provide assistance with granting credit as needed.
- Set up an organized workspace for the intern. Set up phone, computer, email, and any other resources necessary for the intern to fulfill the responsibilities discussed.
- Establish expectations regarding the organizational dress code.
- Review employer expectations and job description. Outline work expectations for the duration of the internship.
- Review and discuss the mission of the organization and how the intern fits into that role.



Within the first two weeks of the internship:

- Provide a tour of the facility and introduce the intern to other employees.
- Provide an overview of the company culture.
- Further discuss the position description and specific project details.
- Discuss absences, such as how and when to notify the supervisor (provide phone numbers).
- Discuss timesheets, including proper completion and deadlines, time off, and overtime rules (if applicable).
- Explain use of equipment such as phones, making long-distance calls, computer, copier, fax machine, and supplies.
- Provide intern with organization chart and contact list of key personnel.
- Review company policies and emergency policies. Interns should be made aware of your company's sexual harassment policy.
- Establish project timeframes and expectations on how to complete projects.
- Review procedures for travel expenses payment and reimbursement (if applicable).
- Outline opportunities to network within the organization.
- Give your intern company materials to read such as newsletters, annual reports, and organization charts.
- Encourage your intern to spend breaks and lunchtimes in places where employees gather.
- Schedule regular one-to-one meetings with the intern.
- Give the intern opportunities to observe or participate in professional events and seminars.
- Allow the intern to interview company personnel to learn more about their positions and roles.

► Evaluating the Intern

Supervisors should provide periodic formal and informal feedback and evaluations of the student, whether through a conversation or a written evaluation. Most academic departments require a written evaluation to be completed by the student-intern and the site supervisor at the completion of the internship if the internship is for academic credit. Check with your local college or university for their requirements, if any.



Interpersonal/Organizational Skills Self-Assessment

Review Information

Your Name: _____

Date: _____

Review Period: _____

TO: _____

Guidelines

Complete this review, using the following scale:

NA = Not Applicable | **1** = Needs Work (Unsatisfactory) | **2** = Gets By (Marginal)

3 = Meets Requirements (Acceptable) | **4** = Exceeds Requirements (Strength) | **5** = Exceptional

Repeat the review annually and compare your yearly scores.

Communication

	5 = EXCEPTIONAL	4 = EXCEEDS REQUIREMENTS	3 = MEETS REQUIREMENTS	2 = GETS BY	1 = NEEDS WORK
Processes received information					
Listens to others					
Communicates effectively					
<i>Verbal communications</i>					
<i>Written communications such as reports</i>					
<i>Email etiquette</i>					
<i>Telephone etiquette</i>					

Leadership

	5 = EXCEPTIONAL	4 = EXCEEDS REQUIREMENTS	3 = MEETS REQUIREMENTS	2 = GETS BY	1 = NEEDS WORK
Leads by example					
Finds realistic solutions					
Acts decisively; meets problems head-on					
Brings out the best in team members					
Resolves conflicts					
Establishes clear expectations					
Provides necessary resources					
Delegates clearly					

Relationships

	5 = EXCEPTIONAL	4 = EXCEEDS REQUIREMENTS	3 = MEETS REQUIREMENTS	2 = GETS BY	1 = NEEDS WORK
Strong customer advocate					
Sets aside personal biases and wants					
Gives good, practical advice					
Fosters loyalty in employees					

Project Management

	5 = EXCEPTIONAL	4 = EXCEEDS REQUIREMENTS	3 = MEETS REQUIREMENTS	2 = GETS BY	1 = NEEDS WORK
Prioritizes tasks					
Responds quickly and well to problems					
Manages costs effectively					
Develops new strategies					
Organizes tasks					

Productivity

	5 = EXCEPTIONAL	4 = EXCEEDS REQUIREMENTS	3 = MEETS REQUIREMENTS	2 = GETS BY	1 = NEEDS WORK
Makes realistic goals					
Meets deadlines					
Comes in under budget					
Works smarter, not harder					
Looks for efficiencies					
Completes tasks					

Personal Development

	5 = EXCEPTIONAL	4 = EXCEEDS REQUIREMENTS	3 = MEETS REQUIREMENTS	2 = GETS BY	1 = NEEDS WORK
Even tempered under pressure					
Sets high standards for self					
Sets challenging goals					

Please list internship accomplishments

Comments

► **About Community Associations Institute**

Since 1973, Community Associations Institute (CAI) has been the leading provider of resources and information for homeowners, volunteer board leaders, professional managers, and business professionals in 344,500 homeowners associations, condominiums, and co-ops in the United States and millions of communities worldwide. With nearly 40,000 members, CAI works in partnership with 36 legislative action committees and 64 affiliated chapters within the U.S., Canada, United Arab Emirates, and South Africa, as well as with housing leaders in several other countries including Australia, Spain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom. A global nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization, CAI is the foremost authority in community association management, governance, education, and advocacy. Our mission is to inspire professionalism, effective leadership, and responsible citizenship—ideals reflected in community associations that are preferred places to call home. Visit us at www.caionline.org and follow us on Twitter and Facebook @caisocial.



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► **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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