

Civic Affairs Foundation

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Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP)

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MEMORANDUM

To: County Commission Chairmen, Sole Commissioners and CEO

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

Re: Summer 2019 Georgia County Internship Program Grant Opportunities

Date: September 27, 2018

The ACCG Civic Affairs Foundation is a nonprofit organization established by ACCG in 2006. Its mission is to help strengthen Georgia counties by undertaking programs and projects that enhance citizen education, encourage civic engagement and community improvement, and promote participation in government.

The Foundation operates the Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP) which offers grants to counties to recruit and hire college and university students for county internships. These grants are made available thanks to generous financial contributions of supportive donors from the private sector including individuals, corporations and businesses, and philanthropic foundations.

County internship grant opportunities are exclusively available for summer. The goals are to enable counties to hire talented college students for specific projects that will benefit county government and citizens; give students a chance to learn first-hand about the role of counties and functions of local government; provide practical work experiences that students can use in the job market upon graduation; and inspire young people to a life of public service leadership.

Any ACCG member county that has a substantive internship project proposal may apply for a grant. Details about the grant application and internship requirements can be found in the enclosed Application Process and Guidelines. **Please read the entire grant application packet before submitting the application.**

2019 Summer GCIP grants will be awarded for the period of May 1, 2019-September 1, 2019.

The deadline for counties to apply for summer internship grants is Friday, December 14, 2018 with recipients notified by Friday, February 1, 2019.

It will be the responsibility of the county to collect and review internship applications from college students or recent college graduates, and interview and hire the intern. The Foundation will assist counties that receive GCIP grants with recruiting by posting internship positions on its website.

All county grant recipients will be required to sign an agreement with the Foundation and adhere to the terms of that agreement. County grant recipients will be required to submit an accounting of all internship expenditures and will be awarded grant funds at the end of the grant period.

A grant will cover 200 internship hours at a pay rate of \$10 per hour. It will be the decision of the county and the intern to determine the work schedule in terms of number of hours worked per week and total number of weeks worked for the internship. If a student needs academic credit, it will be the responsibility of the county to work with the student and his/her academic institution to fulfill this requirement.

For more information about the Foundation, please visit our website at www.civicaffairs.org.

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Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP) Application Process and Guidelines

GCIP grants to counties

As described below, counties may apply to the ACCG Civic Affairs Foundation for GCIP grant funding that will allow them to recruit and pay college students for college internships. GCIP is funded through grants and private donations to the Foundation. As a result, this is a competitive program and not every application that is submitted will be able to receive a grant due to limited funding.

Counties can create intern positions for any department within the county that seeks assistance with a project that, within the grant period, can produce a specific outcome defined by the department. As a general matter, this would not include day-to-day administrative or operational jobs.

2019 Summer Grant Period

Based on available funding, the Foundation is awarding grants for internships for the Summer Grant Period from May 1 - September 1, 2019.

The deadline to submit applications for the 2019 Summer Grant Period is Friday, December 14, 2018.

While the availability of GCIP grants has fluctuated in the past, the Foundation has established an ongoing fundraising effort so that at least some number of internships can be supported each summer. It should be noted that intern project topics sometimes may be specified if required by a donor's contribution to the program.

Application Process

In order for an application to be considered, all grant application guidelines must be met.

As noted above, the deadline to submit applications for GCIP funds for the 2019 Summer Grant Period is December 14, 2018. **Applications received by the Foundation after midnight on this deadline will not be eligible for consideration.**

Applications should be sent to Michele NeSmith at the Foundation: via email to mnesmith@accg.org or by mail to ACCG Civic Affairs Foundation / 191 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 700 / Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

In order for an application to be considered, all GCIP grant application requirements and program guidelines must be met.

All applicants must submit the 2019 GCIP Grant Application which must include a project statement of no longer than two pages that includes:

1. A detailed overview of the project(s) that the intern will complete during the grant period,
2. A description of the need for the project(s),
3. A statement of the overall benefit the project(s) will provide to the county and the community, and
4. If the project(s) involve a partnership of the county with other counties, a regional commission, or a nonprofit organization or college or university, a description of the partnership arrangement. All partnerships with nonprofits organizations, colleges or universities must include funding for at least 25% of the internship cost. No funding is required for multiple county or regional commission partnerships. The project statement should be submitted as part of the GCIP Grant Application form as Section II of the application.

In addition to the project statement, a county must also complete the GCIP Grant Application.

A county may apply for grant funding for more than one internship, meaning that more than one department may apply, or a request may be made for more than one intern for a particular department. Each department requesting an intern(s) must submit a separate application.

There should only be one primary contact person per grant application. The primary contact should be the grant coordinator, or if the county does not have a grant coordinator, the person who will be responsible for managing the grant application process, preparing the accounting of internship expenses at the end of the grant period, and receiving the grant funds. While not required, it is recommended that this person be the human resources director or county clerk. **It is the responsibility of the county to notify the Foundation if the primary contact person for the grant has changed from the point of application. Failure to do so may cause the county to miss notifications and critical information distributed to grant recipients.**

If a grant application is being submitted on behalf of a partnership arrangement, the primary point of contact should submit the application. The primary contact should be the person who will be responsible for receiving and managing the grant. Any changes to the primary contact during the grant period should be communicated to the Foundation as soon as possible.

Payment of grants to counties

The Foundation will notify grant applicants if their funding has been approved for the 2018 Summer Grant Period by February 1, 2019.

All GCIP grant recipients will be required to sign a Grant Agreement and adhere to the terms of that Agreement.

At the end of the grant period, all grant recipients will be required to submit an accounting of eligible expenditures related to the internship and, upon review of this accounting and approval by the Foundation, will receive grant funds as reimbursement for eligible expenditures. The Foundation will send grant funds to a county by check via U.S. Mail.

Factors that will be considered in awarding grants

Grants will be awarded to counties based on a number of factors, including but not limited to:

1. The competitiveness of a county's proposed intern project compared to other internship applications seeking funding.
2. The overall impact and benefit to the county of the project(s) proposed.
3. Whether a county can provide the appropriate supervision of and support for an intern, as well as provide the physical facilities or special equipment needed by an intern for a project and meet program criteria regarding pay, insurance and any other noted requirements.
4. Whether partnerships have been formed with other counties or regional commissions in order to maximize the benefit of an internship project by sharing it across multiple counties to address shared issues or needs (see below). No financial contribution from other counties or regional commission is required for this type of partnership.
5. Whether counties are able and willing to absorb a portion of the internship cost from its own resources or resources donated by members of the community, in order to help stretch available Foundation funding to as many counties as possible (see below).
6. Whether counties have formed partnerships with nonprofit organizations or colleges or universities that will agree to absorb a portion of the internship cost (see below). These partnerships must include funding for at least 25% of the internship cost from the nonprofit, college or university.
7. Whether counties that have previously participated in the GCIP properly adhered to grant requirements, guidelines, deadlines, and information requests made by the Foundation.
8. Counties that have submitted competitive projects that have not previously participated in the program.

Partnerships for interns

Counties are encouraged to develop partnerships with other counties or with local regional commissions for shared intern projects. Working cooperatively on common interests and issues will allow more efficient use of limited intern funding to benefit as many counties as possible, and will be a factor in considering applications.

A county also may partner with a nonprofit organization or college or university for a project funded by a GCIP grant. **However, in order for a county to be eligible to apply under this provision, the partnering organization or college or university must fund from its own resources at least 25% of the internship cost for which the grant application is made.**

County funding for a portion of intern costs

Counties are encouraged to identify local funding sources that can be used to pay a portion of the intern costs. Such sources might include county funds or private funds donated from local businesses, organizations or individuals. There is no minimum county-funded or privately-raised matching amount required under this provision. However, to the extent counties can help stretch available funding from the Foundation, to hire as many interns as possible, such a contribution to the program will be a factor in considering applications.

If a project proposed by a county requires an intern with higher level specialized skills for which the job market normally would pay above \$10 per hour, the county may use its own funding sources under this provision to increase the amount needed to recruit a qualified intern. GCIP will not provide funding for wages over \$10 per hour or for more than 200 hours.

It should be noted that ACCG and the Foundation recognize the enormous fiscal constraints on county governments. However, it is believed that counties can use GCIP as an incentive to encourage local donors to support interns and projects in that, if a donor provides funding, they know their dollars will be matched with GCIP funds.

Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP)
Frequently Asked Questions

Who should be the grant contact person for my county?

If the county has a grant coordinator, that person will need to serve as the point person for the grant. Absent having a grant coordinator, it is up to the county to determine the point person for any given position. It is strongly recommended that the human resources director or clerk be considered for this position and that at the very least they are consulted throughout the process considering that several components of the grant may require their participation. **If the point person changes after the application has been submitted and/or approved, it is the responsibility of the county to inform the Foundation of this change as soon as possible. Failure to inform the Foundation may cause the county to miss important information regarding the administration of the grant.**

Can applications be submitted that only contain projects that impact certain geographic parts of the county, such as a particular district?

While there are no prohibitions against submitting such applications, it is recommended that a project's impact be applicable to the county as a whole. In that the Foundation has limited resources, there are a finite number of grants available. As such, not every county can receive a grant which makes it difficult to justify awarding a grant that only impacts a particular district of a county.

Can a commissioner submit a GCIP grant application?

Yes, however, the projects submitted must not be personal in nature, such as campaign work or projects unrelated to county operations, and should be applicable to the county as a whole and not a particular district. If the intern is to work with the board of commissioners, it may be best to have the chair serve as the supervisor unless the commissioner who has applied for the grant is the point person for the project(s) requested.

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

This will depend on the county's policy. Some counties require all contracts to go before the board whereas others have a dollar amount requirement. Whatever the policy is for the county should be the policy that is followed. If the county has a grant administrator, consult with him or her to ensure that the proper guidelines for the county are being followed.

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 one year of the start date of the internship. High school students and recent high school graduates who have not yet started college **are not** eligible.

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.

Interns are not required to work the total 200 hours in order 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. Also, if a grant for multiple interns is awarded to a county, the interns can work different schedules and hours as long as the total number of hours worked under the grant does not exceed 200 for any one intern. Further, 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 as long as the county abides by all the requirements of the grant agreement. If the county needs to split the grant, the Foundation must be contacted first to ensure that the requested split meets all the grant requirements.

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

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

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

The wage for interns paid using GCIP grant funds is \$10.00 per hour. Grant funding also will pay counties for the employer share of FICA costs associated with an intern. An intern paid using GCIP grant funds must be covered under the county's Worker's Compensation Plan, but this cost also will be reimbursable to the county based on the formula allowed as calculated by the Foundation.

Given the 200 maximum on internship hours that may be funded from a GCIP grant, total hourly pay per intern may not exceed \$2,000. This amount does not include the employer share of FICA costs and Worker Compensation coverage that will be reimbursed as part of the grant.

If a county wants to pay an intern more than \$10 per hour, that amount over \$10 will need to be paid by the county along with the additional FICA and worker's compensation costs applicable to the additional salary. The GCIP grant does not cover wages paid over \$10 per hour nor does it pay for more than 200 hours of employment during the grant period. The grant also does not pay for overtime costs. All hours must be accrued during the regular workweek.

What are counties responsible for if they receive a GCIP grant?

Counties are responsible for finding and hiring the intern. While the Foundation will post internship positions on their website, it is ultimately up to the county to advertise the position locally, contact area colleges, and hire the intern.

Counties are also responsible for withholding all applicable state and federal income taxes on a GCIP intern's earnings and for withholding the employee share of applicable FICA costs. Counties must make timely payments of these monies withheld (as well as any other payroll taxes due) to the appropriate federal and state agencies.

Counties are additionally responsible for 1) submitting the prerequisite grant paperwork to the Foundation in a timely manner, 2) verifying the intern's eligibility to work for the county through E-Verify and 3) adhering to the grant agreement requirements.

Counties are further required to provide adequate work space for an intern and to provide an intern supervisor. Depending on the project, a county also may have to provide equipment, technical assistance or training to the intern.

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 a college intern for the 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 grant period.

Who is responsible for recruiting interns?

It will be the responsibility of the county to collect and review internship applications, and interview and hire the intern.

The Foundation will assist in identifying potential interns by posting county positions on its website www.civicaffairs.org to provide statewide exposure to interested students. If needed, the Foundation also will assist a county with its intern search process by contacting colleges, universities and technical colleges in your area.

What happens if a county isn't able to recruit an intern for its GCIP grant?

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

What happens if an intern is fired or quits before the term of employment is completed?

The county is required to notify the Foundation within five business days of termination of the intern. If the county is able to find an intern to fulfill the rest of the internship within the grant period, it may do so. If another intern is not found, the Foundation will reimburse the county for the time that the original intern worked for the county as long as the prerequisite paperwork is submitted as provided for in the grant agreement.

Can interns be hired to exclusively perform administrative or clerical work or to perform the duties of a full-time or part-time position that is currently unfilled?

No. Interns cannot be hired to perform solely administrative or clerical work or to perform the work of a particular unfilled existing position. The internship must be project-oriented. Although some administrative work may be required if related to the internship project, such work cannot be the basis for the internship.

Can interns be hired to perform private projects for commissioners?

No. Interns are not allowed to work on projects that are not county-related. In particular, interns funded by GCIP are prohibited from participating in any type of political campaign work. The purpose of the internship is for the student to learn about county government through a project that benefits the county as a whole.

Are there hiring restrictions regarding family or personal relationships?

Counties that have a nepotism policy for their new hires are required to apply that policy to the hire of any intern through the Georgia County Internship Program that is paid through this grant. In the absence of such a policy, the county should refrain from hiring interns who are closely related by blood or marriage to an elected or appointed county government official for that county or who has a hiring or supervisory role over the intern. Counties should also apply their personnel policies on dating in the workplace to any intern hired through this grant. Counties that fail to follow these requirements will not receive grant funding for any of the interns who have been involved in any of the aforementioned activities.

Will grant opportunities be offered for any period other than summer?

No. Due to the high demand from counties and students for summer internships, the GCIP will be exclusively providing summer grants in 2019, and for the foreseeable future, to maximize the number of program participants.

**Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP)
County Grant Application Check List**

- Read all provided information before completing required forms, including the “Grant Memorandum,” the “Grant Application,” the “Application Process and Guidelines,” “Suggested Tips for Writing a GCIP Grant Application,” and the “Frequently Asked Questions.”

- Submit completed GCIP Grant Application form by the grant deadline which includes a 1 to 2 page description of the internship project being proposed, the need it addresses, and the expected benefits to the county (**by the grant deadline Friday, December 14, 2018**).

- Ensure that the county is able to provide adequate work space for an intern, that a qualified person has been selected to be the intern’s supervisor, and that any necessary equipment, technical assistance, or training that an intern may need can be made available.

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Georgia County Internship Program (GCIP) **Tips for Submitting an Internship Grant Application**

Do:

1. Provide a detailed project description that specifically includes the intern's role in completing the project and what the final product or outcome of the project will be.
2. Explain the "Who, What, Where, Why and How" of the intern project in a way that provides a clear understanding of the proposed internship.
3. Explain clearly the need for the project, why it is important to the county, and the benefits that will result to the county and/or the community.
4. Write project descriptions in layman's terms since it may be difficult to understand the intern position if only highly technical terminology is used to describe the project and intern duties. This is especially true of IT and GIS project descriptions.
5. Ensure the skills requested for the intern are appropriate for a college student. For example, it is highly unlikely a student will have 3-5 years of experience in a specific field of government work.
6. Make sure that the intern has an active, substantive role in the proposed project. A great project doesn't provide much benefit if the intern is on the sidelines.
7. Obtain prior permission from the county to act as fiscal agent for the grant if the county does not typically act in this capacity for your local agency or department.
8. Consider submitting a project that involves a partnership with other counties, regional commissions, nonprofit organizations or institutions of higher education. These types of projects maximizes grant funding, which can factor into the grant selection process.

Don't:

9. Submit proposals that are actually unfilled county job descriptions. Internships need to be project-oriented and created specifically for the work being done by a college student or recent college graduate.
10. Submit projects that merely provide administrative assistance or entail only administrative duties. While most interns expect some administrative work, the core of the internship needs to be a substantive project(s).
11. Submit, for example, a project where the sole purpose is to scan records. There has to be a substantive element such as redesigning or creating a records management system, retention schedule, or historical preservation process.

12. Submit, for example, a project where the sole purpose is to perform data entry that requires no analysis, research or collection of information.
13. Submit, for example, a project that only benefits one district or area of a county. Projects should have a broader impact.
14. Submit the same project as the previous year with no new tasks or requirements, unless it is a continuation of the previous project.
15. Submit a project that is much too ambitious or complex for an intern to complete within the timeframe allotted.
16. Be afraid to think outside the box. Some of the best projects are those that are unexpected, interesting, and imaginative. Be creative!
17. Submit proposals that provide vague details. If we can't understand the project, there is a lesser chance of your county being selected for a grant.