

Hidalgo County Internship Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to offer experiential learning experiences for college students in County offices and departments. This policy applies to student volunteers, interns, and externs.

POLICY

Hidalgo County offers volunteer opportunities, internships and externships in an effort to provide college students from a wide variety of educational disciplines the opportunity to apply traditional academic classroom learning to actual work experience. The County strongly believes that internships are an important tool in recruiting, developing and retaining innovative people in local government and an important part of assisting the County in meeting the needs of today while preparing the workforce of the future.

Internship opportunities may be paid or unpaid, subject to budgetary constraints and departmental recommendation. All placements must be approved by Commissioners' Court, and approval must include the following items:

1. Job description & responsibilities
2. Placement location & supervisor name
3. Duration of internship
4. Agreement with educational institution (if applicable)
5. If appointed, internship application, resume, and signed internship agreement
6. If paid, funds must be appropriated and fiscal note and budgetary impact must be included
7. Any other relevant information as required by Commissioners' Court

Each participating office/department will be responsible for administering the student internship within their department and ensuring the policies and guidelines set forth herein are followed. All interns (paid or unpaid) must comply with the Hidalgo County Personnel Policy Manual and/or Hidalgo County Civil Service Commission Rules (as applicable), and must complete the pre-employment training and enrollment requirements prior to commencing.

REQUIREMENTS

All interns must be citizens of the United States, or if not, must be legally authorized to work in the United States. Proof of citizenship or authorization will be documented during the training and orientation process. Interns must be 18 years of age or older, and must be enrolled in an institution of higher education. Interns must complete an internship application and agreement, and must meet the pre-employment training and enrollment requirements. Interns must sign a Waiver of Liability Release, agreeing to assume any risk of injury that may occur while rendering services to the County.

UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

1. Hidalgo County may accept student interns on a volunteer basis. Unpaid students may be appointed or may be selected through the Human Resources Department announcement and selection process. All unpaid internship placements must be approved by Commissioners' Court.

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- II. Unpaid student interns are considered "Volunteers," receive no compensation or benefits, are not covered under worker's compensation, and must sign a Waiver of Liability Release agreement prior to commencing the internship.
- III. Hidalgo County may enter into an agreement with an educational institution to provide college credit or required work experience for the internship, as applicable. The units of credit earned for participating are authorized and conferred by the school of attendance. All agreements with educational institutions must be approved by Commissioners' Court.
- IV. Students who are interested in seeking to gain work experience in a specific field or area may choose to independently volunteer as an unpaid intern. In such instances, students may or may not receive credit from the educational institution they attend.

PAID INTERNSHIPS

- I. Hidalgo County may offer paid internships to students. A department's ability to use paid student interns will be based on their internal budget constraints.
- II. Paid student interns are considered "Temporary Employees," receive compensation for the duration of the internship, but receive no other benefits, are not covered under worker's compensation, and must sign a Waiver of Liability Release agreement prior to commencing the internship.
- III. All paid internship placements must be approved by Commissioners' Court, and must be selected through the Human Resources Department announcement and selection process..
- IV. Hidalgo County may enter into an agreement with an educational institution to provide college credit or required work experience for the internship, as applicable. The units of credit earned for participating are authorized and conferred by the school of attendance. All agreements with educational institutions must be approved by Commissioners' Court.
- V. Students who are interested in seeking to gain work experience in a specific field or area may choose to independently apply for a paid internship opportunity. In such instances, students may or may not receive credit from the educational institution they attend.

RECRUITMENT OF INTERNS

Each participating office/department will be responsible for identifying and recruiting interns, and, if they desire, to establish partnerships with educational institutions that enroll students in a degree or area of study that could be utilized by the office/department.

Unpaid interns may be appointed by the office/department or educational institution, or may be selected through the Human Resources Department announcement and selection process; paid interns are subject to the Human Resources Department announcement and selection process.

TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

Prior to beginning an intern assignment all student interns will be required to meet the pre-employment training and enrollment requirements.

All student interns (paid or unpaid), will be provided a copy of the Hidalgo County Personnel Policy Manual and/or Hidalgo County Civil Service Commission Rules (as applicable), must complete the pre-employment training and enrollment requirements prior to commencing, and will sign all relevant forms and acknowledgments as applicable, including but not limited to, personnel policy acknowledgement, harassment, nondiscrimination, and waiver of liability release form (as applicable).

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The participating office/department will be responsible for orienting students to the organization. Orientation should include:

- A clear list of expectations, job duties and goals;
- Departmental-specific policies and procedures;
- A list of the resources available to the student intern (i.e., a workstation that has been set up for the student intern, supplies and items needed by the intern); and
- Any other relevant information for the intern to be successful in the performance of their job duties.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

All interns must abide by the standards of conduct as outlined in the Hidalgo County Personnel Policy Manual and/or Hidalgo County Civil Service Commission Rules (as applicable), and are responsible for complying with the required standards of conduct.

At a minimum, all interns are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and to use discretion when dealing with sensitive matters and confidential information. Students must maintain professional attire, hygiene and grooming in a professional business-like manner that is appropriate to the field of placement and which reflects positively on the County.

If any policy or standard of conduct is violated by the intern during the internship period, the intern will be terminated at the discretion of the County.

EVALUATION

All interns should be provided with ongoing feedback on how well they are meeting the goals and expectations of their position. Participating offices/departments should provide interns with a formal written evaluation at the end of the internship. If applicable, participating offices/departments will be responsible for abiding by the requirements of the educational institution as per the agreement.

TERMINATION/COMPLETION

All interns are considered at-will placements, and the placement can be terminated at any time at the discretion of the County.

Upon completion of the internship period, interns are not automatically entitled to a paid position within the County.

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INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

I, _____, agree to participate in an internship with The County of Hidalgo, Texas in either a paid or unpaid capacity, as outlined in this agreement. I hereby certify that I am at least 18 years of age at this time, and I am a student at _____.

I hereby agree to comply with all relevant policies, procedures and requirements as outlined in the Hidalgo County Internship Policy, Personnel Policy Manual and/or Civil Service Commission Rules. I understand that I may or may not receive compensation for my services provided during the internship period, and that no other benefits will be provided. I understand that my placement in this internship is at-will and that I may be terminated at any time at the discretion of the County.

I hereby voluntarily release, discharge, waive and relinquish any and all action or causes of action for personal injury, property damage, or wrongful death occurring to me as a result of my internship with Hidalgo County. I hereby release, waive, discharge and relinquish any actions or causes of actions aforementioned, which may hereafter arise for me and my estate, and agree that under no circumstances will I prosecute or present any claim for personal injury, property damage or wrongful death against Hidalgo County or any of its agents and employees for any said cause of action, whether the same shall arise by negligence of any said persons, or otherwise. It is my intent by this instrument to exempt and release, indemnify and hold harmless Hidalgo County and any of its employees, its elected or appointed officials, employees and agents for any personal injury, property damage, or wrongful death cause by negligence.

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ THE FOREGOING PARAGRAPHS AND HAVE BEEN FULLY AND COMPLETELY ADVISED OF THE POTENTIAL DANGERS INCIDENTAL TO PARTICIPATING IN AN INTERNSHIP AND AM FULLY AWARE OF THE LEGAL CONSEQUENCES OF SIGNING THIS INSTRUMENT.

Signature

Date

10. EDUCATION: Are you a High School graduate? Yes No
 Do you have a G.E.D. certificate? Yes No

Name of high school:

Location:

School(s) attended other than high school	Location	Courses Major/Study	Credits Completed	Degree or Certificate Received

11. Other training you received (for example: special courses, work-training programs, armed forces training). Please estimate the number of training hours.

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12. May inquires be made of your present/past employer(s) regarding your character, qualifications, and record of employment? Yes or No

13. Special qualifications/skills: List qualifications/skills you possess which are required for the job you are applying for, such as driver's license (give type and number), typing and/or shorthand proficiency (give speeds), ability to operate specialized machinery or equipment, or job related training.

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DRIVING JOBS ONLY: Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes No

Driver's license #: _____ Class of license: _____

Has it been suspended or revoked in the last five (5) years? Yes No

If yes, give details. _____

List professional, trade, business or civic activities and offices held. You may exclude membership, which would reveal gender, race, religion, national origin, age, ancestry, disability or other protected status:

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14. WORK HISTORY: BEGIN WITH YOUR MOST PRESENT AND RECENT JOB and list every employment. Attach extra pages if needed. Account for part-time employment, temporary or seasonal employment, self-employment, military service or unemployment.

[Dates] From _____ to _____	Employer: _____
Employer's address: _____	
Telephone #: _____	Job Title: _____
Salary: _____	Duties/responsibilities: _____

Reprimands, suspensions: _____	
Supervisor: _____	Co-worker: _____
Reason for leaving: _____	

[Dates] From _____ to _____	Employer: _____
Employer's address: _____	
Telephone #: _____	Job Title: _____
Salary: _____	Duties/responsibilities: _____

Reprimands, suspensions: _____	
Supervisor: _____	Co-worker: _____
Reason for leaving: _____	

[Dates] From _____ to _____	Employer: _____
Employer's address: _____	
Telephone #: _____	Job Title: _____
Salary: _____	Duties/responsibilities: _____

Reprimands, suspensions: _____	
Supervisor: _____	Co-worker: _____
Reason for leaving: _____	

[Dates] From _____ to _____	Employer: _____
Employer's address: _____	
Telephone #: _____	Job Title: _____
Salary: _____	Duties/responsibilities: _____

Reprimands, suspensions: _____	
Supervisor: _____	Co-worker: _____
Reason for leaving: _____	

Circle Yes or No for questions 15-19.

*****If you answer any of the following items "Yes", explain on No. #20 below. *****

15. Have you been fired or asked to resign from a job within the last five (5) years?
 YES NO
16. Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty/no contest to a crime in civilian or military court within the last ten (10) years? (You may exclude minor traffic violations). A criminal record will not necessarily disqualify you from employment. Your case will be considered in relationship to the requirements to the particular job.
 YES NO
17. Have you ever been discharged from the Armed Forces under other than honorable conditions?
 YES NO
18. Are you working or have you ever worked for Hidalgo County?
 YES NO
19. Do you or does your spouse have any relatives working for or holding office in the county government? County policy prohibits or limits hiring of relatives of county employees in certain circumstances.
 YES NO

20. Remarks or additional information. Please explain any "Yes" responses.

Certification: I certify that all the statements made in this application form are true, complete, and correct, to the best of my knowledge. I understand false information may disqualify me from further consideration for employment.

No questions on this application are intended to secure information to be used for discriminatory purpose, as the County is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, national origin, age, veteran or marital status, disability, or any other legally protected status.

I give my permission to the County to contact any of my former employers or references shown above to verify the information I have given. I authorize previous employers to release all records of my employment, including assessments of my job performance, ability and fitness. I release such persons and entities from legal liability.

In the event of employment, I understand that false or misleading information given in my application or interview(s) may result in discharge.

I understand that I may be required to successfully pass a drug screening exam. I consent to a pre and/or post employment drug screen as a condition of employment.

I certify that I do not have any detectable amounts of prohibited substances in my system. I understand that if my drug and alcohol screen turns out positive for a prohibited substance, I will not be eligible for hire, or if I am hired pending the outcome of such a test, I will be subject to immediate termination.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

DATE