

## **INTERNSHIP POLICY**

### **A. PURPOSE**

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

### **B. POLICY**

Hidalgo County offers volunteer opportunities, internships and externships in an effort to provide 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 are unpaid. 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)

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5. Any other relevant information as required by Commissioners' Court

Each participating elected official/department head will be responsible for administering the internship within their office/department and ensuring the policies and guidelines set forth herein are followed.

All interns must comply with the Hidalgo County Personnel Policy Manual and must complete the pre-employment training and enrollment requirements prior to commencing.

### **C. REQUIREMENTS**

All interns must be citizens of the United States, or if not, must be legally authorized to work or study 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. The internship application, resume, and signed internship agreement will be kept on file by the Human Resources Department.

### **D. UNPAID INTERNSHIPS**

1. Unpaid interns may be accepted on a volunteer basis. Unpaid interns 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.
2. Unpaid 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.
3. 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

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credit earned for participating are authorized and conferred by the school of attendance. All agreements with educational institutions must be approved by Commissioners' Court.

4. Interns 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.

## **E. TRAINING & ORIENTATION**

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

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

The participating elected official/department head will be responsible for orienting interns to the organization.

Orientation should include:

- A list of expectations, job duties and goals;
- Departmental-specific policies and procedures;
- A list of the resources available to the intern (i.e., a workstation that has been set up for the 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

## **F. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

All interns must abide by the standards of conduct as outlined in the Hidalgo County Personnel Policy Manual, and are responsible for complying with the required standards of conduct.

All interns are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and adhere to the Hidalgo County Personnel Policy Manual when dealing with sensitive matters and confidential information. Interns 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.

## **G. EVALUATION**

All interns maybe provided with ongoing feedback on how well they are meeting the goals and expectations of their position. If applicable, the participating elected official/department head will be responsible for providing with the necessary feedback.

## **H. 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.

## **I. REFERENCE**

"Internship Agreement and Waiver of Liability"