



# State Manufactured Food Student Internship

## Sample Program & Activities Outline

### **Onboarding suggestions and recommendations:**

Once an intern has been selected, it is important to help provide them with resources to prepare them for joining your agency's workforce for the internship. Depending on what may be provided by the company's Human Resources staff, either they or you may need to provide the following types of information to the new temporary hire:

- Agency location directions and where to park, how to sign in on their first day
- How to set up any agency/job identification requirements (badge, parking pass, etc.)
- Email and computer login access and any best practices (prescribed "signature" to add)
- Any other equipment needs (phone, cellphone, lab coat, etc.)
- Physical on-site desk space versus any telework options or requirements
- Dress code policy, procedure, or general guidelines
- Agency mission, food program's mission or overview (any helpful overview materials); copies of organizational charts for the agency and/or food program
- Any training required for all employees (ex., active shooter event, sexual harassment training, IT training, etc.)

### **Sample outline of activities for the intern to complete:**

This outline is based on a summer internship program, with an average duration of 20-40 hours/week for 10 weeks. The program can be tailored to your agency's needs and availability, with more or less time devoted to certain activities, depending on your program needs and the intern's availability. Expanding on some of these concepts can provide additional weeks' worth of activities, along with some supplemental suggestions.

- **Meetings with the agency's program leaders**, to better understand the program's mission and objectives, showcase the program, help the intern acclimate to what is happening, provide networking and inter-office communication, and highlight potential areas where the intern can support others in the program throughout the duration of the internship. These can be done over the length of the internship, but any "onboarding" meetings planned early in the internship will help the intern acclimate into the program and your company culture. This may include:
  - a. Program leadership (Division and/or Association and/or Deputy Director(s))
  - b. MFRPS Coordinator
  - c. Manufactured Food Program Manager
  - d. Dairy Program Manager
  - e. Retail Food Program Manager
  - f. Produce Safety Program Manager
  - g. Rapid Response Team Program Manager
  - h. Complaints/Compliance or other Enforcement Coordinator
  - i. Training Coordinator
  - j. Meat Inspection Program Manager
  - k. Feed Program Manager
  - l. **Supplemental suggestion:** Plan in-person or virtual "shadowing" meetings with other stakeholders/partners in your state; if you are the agriculture agency, set up meetings with state and/or local health departments and vice versa; introduce the intern to others of

interest (this might include industry association leaders, academia or cooperative extension representatives, or other people your program works with throughout the year).

- **Sampling work**
  - a. Have the intern review sampling SOPs (and support any needed review, cross-comparison, updates, etc.)
  - b. Schedule the intern to support a routine sampling collection activity as part of shadowing an inspector in the field
  - c. Allow the intern to support pick-up and/or drop-off of samples to your lab, following chain of custody (if allowable)
  - d. Let the intern shadow the food and/or chemical laboratories (for a day or more), allow them to see what happens as samples come in and are tested
  - e. Consider additional opportunities if there is sample collection for an investigation (as a shadowing experience or ongoing field/lab support)
- **Inspectional shadowing out in the field**
  - a. Have the intern review related inspection SOPs (and support any needed review, cross-comparison, updates, etc.)
  - b. Work with program managers to establish planned visits into the field; this should include shadowing inspectors for manufactured food inspections, and may also include specific types of inspections such as produce/farm, dairy or seafood inspections, and any specialized facilities in your jurisdiction; it may also include retail field work, meat inspection, or other related programs under the agency's primary regulatory responsibilities
  - c. Attempt to schedule shadowing fieldwork at a minimum of once a month, up to once a week, if possible, with different inspectors for various types of different facilities and inspections
- **Recall, foodborne illness outbreak, complaint follow-up, or other regulatory response activity**
  - a. Have the intern review related food-related incident SOPs (and support any needed review, cross-comparison, updates, etc.)
  - b. Have the intern shadow and support the Rapid Response Team Program Manager (if applicable), and/or work with the staff who oversees recalls and complaint response
  - c. If your agency encounters a recall event, foodborne illness outbreak, or has complaint investigations to follow-up on, determine allowable areas for the intern to shadow and learn how the agency responds to these types of incidents (this could include sitting in on phone calls, helping plan calls or meetings, shadowing inspectors in the field, reviewing and linking incoming traceback documents, etc.)
  - d. The intern can support other special related activities (e.g., developing an RRT poster or using information from ICS forms and post-incident survey responses to generate an After-Action Report), help plan or attend related trainings, and assist with other annual documentation and planning needs
- **Documentation review and updates**
  - a. Based on the MFRPS strategic plan, are there areas of documentation work that an intern can support? After reviewing SOPs, can they do comparison reviews, updates, or other edits that would support the program's ongoing development and/or maintenance?
  - b. Develop timelines for them to support document review, and/or consider ways the intern can help organize or support document control work

- c. Example assignments can include translating PDFs into editable documents, updating spreadsheets, developing new spreadsheets or other data-capturing platforms, reviewing and summarizing data (e.g., developing a summary report based on agency data on complaints or recall events)
- **Online, virtual or F2F training and general education coursework**
  - a. Ensure the intern(s) meet the general education course requirements as per the grant FOA, at a minimum. *Note:* If your intern completes some (or all) of the gen-ed coursework that the food program staff complete as part of their new hire training, you are creating a benefit for both the student and your agency (and an asset for food protection, in general). After successfully finishing initial training requirements, they now theoretically can become a future hire for your agency's food program, or another related program hire. The training will also benefit them in the day-to-day work they will do during their internship.
  - b. Review the general education coursework new hires are required to complete when they onboard as inspectors; before the intern's start date, review that list of training courses and plan to assign the intern to complete required areas of training
  - c. There may be additional areas of training the intern has an interest in completing (which could be add-ons for their coursework)
  - d. If there are pre-requisites for any planned trainings during the intern's tenure, have them complete those to participate (for ex., completing FDA ORAU Traceback 01-05 and FEMA's online ICS courses in order to participate in a Traceback Investigations ER220 course)
- **Meeting participation, planning and/or execution**
  - a. Allow the intern to help support routine and/or special event planning to support the team and gain beneficial experience; this might include your state's upcoming Food Protection Task Force meeting, an RRT meeting or training, monthly or quarterly meetings
  - b. Example tasks can include: Email correspondence with planners/presenters, developing the agenda with event coordinators, designing promotional outreach materials, creating and analyzing meeting surveys, setting up registration and sharing reports or other status updates
  - c. Additionally, the intern and supervisor should plan regular check-in meetings to review progress, discuss present/future tasks, offer support and ensure the intern has what they need to be successful in the role they have for your program; these meetings could be weekly or more frequent
- **Communication and outreach**
  - a. Under MFRPS Standard 7, there may be opportunities for an intern to help develop outreach materials and support these types of activities conducted by your program
  - b. Example tasks can include: Updating brochures or other program materials, helping with website content updates, organizing photos, working with your agency's press office on related projects, tracking outreach activities for the program, physically conducting or attending/supporting an outreach activity themselves
- **Special projects**
  - a. It is meaningful for an intern to have something that they can call their own before they leave your program; a special project can be something you already have in mind as something needed for your program that no one has had time for in the past, or it might be

- something the intern has an interest in coming in to achieve, or it might be something that arises as an opportunity for the intern during their tenure
- b. Projects should be short-term (or broken into phases) to ensure an intern has time and ability to complete the project (or piece of a project) during the course of the summer internship; there should be clear goals and expectations along with flexibility to allow the intern to lead the project

**Reporting for this project:**

*Required:*

- Intern post-survey responses completed by the intern
- Intern PPT slide summary on their special project submitted to AFDO
- Agency final report and budget reimbursement request in AFDO Student Internship grant portal; report will capture general education courses completed, details about field shadowing completed, special project updates and other related goals and objectives the agency indicated in the original application
- Any required paperwork for the student, as per their college or university (e.g., if the internship is for credit)

*Optional agency considerations:*

- Monthly: Updates on the intern's ongoing job description and/or summary of duties and tasks
- Optional check-in calls with AFDO and the supervisors with their interns for updates, questions, and other feedback about how the programs are working