

Preparing the Next Generation - Mini-Grant Proposal

*Submitted to the California affiliate of the
International City/County Management Association
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1. Project Title: High School Summer Intern Program

2. Name of Agency: County of Yolo

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4. Total Funding Request and Budget: \$5,000

The budget for the program is estimated as follows:

a. Staff time to develop, market and implement program (Approximately 368 total hours at an average of \$37 per hour)	\$ 13,600
b. Supplies and materials	\$ 605
c. Giveaways and rewards	\$ 700
d. Domain name and hosting services for intern webpage	<u>\$ 95</u>

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$ 15,000

The total funding request is \$5,000. Grant funds will be used, in part, for supplies, materials, giveaways and rewards not already purchased. The remaining grant funds will be used to develop, design and print a full-color brochure/booklet to market the County of Yolo High School Summer Intern Program for next year. Yolo County Human Resources is also exploring the possibility of producing a 15 to 20 minute feature video detailing our program experience and results. This video, if produced, and all program materials would be made available to interested parties upon request.

5. Issue Addressed:

Yolo County is a middle-sized rural/suburban county with a strong commitment to the preservation of agriculture and open space. Over 88% of Yolo County's population lives within its cities, and almost 99% of its land is designated for agricultural use. Almost 68% of the county's acreage are in Williamson Act (land conservation) contracts. This preservation of agricultural lands comes at a cost to the county. Yolo County performs all the same core services as its 57 sister counties, but it holds the

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unenviable distinction of meeting those demands with the lowest share of property tax in the state. In addition, the county receives almost no significant sales tax revenue as a result of its longstanding policy of preserving agricultural lands and directing urban development into its cities.

Despite this reality, the County of Yolo has made great strides in providing competitive pay and benefits for its employees. To be competitive with the large urban counties surrounding Yolo County that have a greater ability to pay, Yolo County relies on factors other than salary to attract the limited number of workers available to backfill behind the retiring baby boomers. Those factors include a commitment to staff development and training, flexible work schedules, and a robust employee events and recognition program.

The new High School Summer Intern Program enhances Yolo County's recruitment and retention efforts by viewing interns as potential new hires who are worth cultivating. The intern program is a way to create a new pool of young workers who have already been exposed to working in government. Our ultimate goal is for student interns to remember their positive experience with Yolo County and seek regular employment with us upon graduation from high school and/or college.

6. Program Description:

The County of Yolo 2008 High School Summer Intern Program is an eight week program open to Yolo County residents age 15 to 19. Internships may be paid or unpaid depending upon funding availability at the department level. For paid internships, a participant must possess a valid work permit. For unpaid internships, students may earn hours toward the forty (40) hour community service graduation requirement. All internships are part-time and hours are flexible in order to meet the needs and desires of students and their families during the summer months. The program starts June 16, 2008 with a mandatory orientation and ends August 5, 2008 with a closing recognition ceremony.

The High School Summer Intern Program was developed to attract young people to local government careers. This will be achieved through learning activities designed to introduce students to county government, the services it provides, and the benefits of public employment. As part of the program, students will be placed into assignments in county departments that match their future career and college goals.

Human Resources staff began marketing the program in late January 2008. Staff attended high school career fairs, posted the program announcement on the Jobs page of the county website, and sent the program announcement and an invitation to participate to every high school and continuation high school in the County.

As applications are received, an introductory packet is sent to students containing a letter with more details about the program; a questionnaire that is used to determine student interest, skills and abilities; a program calendar of events; and a flyer announcing the Yolo Bus "Summer Sizzler" bus pass for those students in need of transportation. All students that complete and return the intern questionnaire will be invited to a screening interview conducted by Human Resources. Human Resources staff will make all department placements.

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The program has been carefully designed to ensure participants remain excited, engaged and supported throughout the program. Key elements of the program include:

- a. Human Resources Mentors. Human Resources Department staff at every level serve as mentors to intern program participants. Each student is assigned a single mentor, and HR mentors are assigned more than one mentee. The role of the HR mentor is to provide the student with a personal connection and support to complete the program. Mentors will check in with their assigned mentees on at least a weekly basis, will ensure all students are made welcome at weekly learning activities, and will encourage the students to make connections with other program participants. Most importantly, mentors are local government ambassadors who are excited to share their passion about choosing a career in local government.
- b. Weekly Learning Activities. Every week of the program includes a student activity. The first week is a mandatory intern orientation and the last week of the program is a closing recognition ceremony. For the intermediary weeks, six different learning activities are scheduled to teach participants about the services and functions of the County, personal responsibility, decision making, leadership and innovation in government, the benefits of public employment, and job search and interviewing skills. Students are expected to attend at least four of the six weekly learning activities to be considered full participants of the program. The Calendar of Events is attached.
- c. Weekly County Value Focus. The middle six weeks of the program each emphasize a different County value and that value relates to the planned weekly learning activity. To reinforce learning and encourage contemplation of the value, a voluntary activity will have students write a blog about the weekly value. Value blogs will be posted on the intern webpage and the best blog each week receives a prize valued at approximately \$50.
- d. Department Placements. In addition to the weekly learning activities, students are placed into "jobs" in county departments. Students are expected to participate in department assignments a minimum of five hours per week. To date, 23 placement opportunities have been identified in 14 different county departments including, but not limited to, the Assessor, Auditor-Controller, Board Clerk's Office, Department of Employment and Social Services, Health, Public Works, Library and Probation Departments. The department contact for each intern assignment is responsible for orienting the student intern to the local government workplace, overseeing the student's work, and recognizing the student for his or her contribution.
- e. Communication. There are several ways information about the program will be shared. A website devoted to the intern program is currently under development. High school interns will be assigned to create content and make updates to the site. A weekly e-mail message with announcements and updates will be sent to HR mentors. A tailored e-mail message will also be sent on a weekly basis to department contacts. An article will be placed in the county-wide employee newsletter, and press releases will be sent to local media.

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f. Rewards and Recognition. Continuous rewards and recognition are embedded in the program. Students will receive a "Summer Intern Rock Star" drawstring backpack at orientation that will be filled with orientation materials as well as goodies donated from community organizations and businesses. There will be weekly raffle prizes for those in attendance, and a weekly "Super Star" award will be presented to interns from nominations received by department contacts. The most substantial prizes will be reserved for the best weekly "Value" blog submitted by a student. A closing recognition ceremony is also planned for the last week of the program. Members of the Board of Supervisors will present students with certificates of participation, and Human Resources will provide students with a formal letter that details the student's individual achievements during the program.

7. Program Objectives:

The anticipated benefits of the program include:

- a. Giving High school students real-world experience to highlight on an employment and/or college application as well as providing students with experience in government that will help them make informed choices about a career in government;
- b. Providing students with community service hours required for graduation from high school;
- c. Courting a large local candidate pool to a career in government and ideally to a career with Yolo County government;
- d. Providing the County with a forum to communicate our workforce needs with respect to knowledge, skills and abilities of employees. With that knowledge, students can pursue education and training that will in turn give Yolo County a higher skilled workforce;
- e. Exposing county departments to a young workforce and their strengths. The goal is to assist departments to overcome stereotypes about younger workers and to encourage the hiring of full and part-time high school graduates; and
- f. Demonstrating Yolo County's commitment to partner with its community by hosting an enriching program for local youth.

8. Key Outcome:

There are a number of measures that will be used to gauge the success of the program. The most important measure will be the number of students that start and complete the entire eight week program. Other measures include the level of department participation, and the level of satisfaction with the program by department contacts and Human Resources mentors.

Ultimately, the best measure of program success will be how well the program is received by students. An initial survey will be taken at the beginning of the program regarding participants' desired goals and objectives for the program and to allow the County to gauge students' initial perceptions about a career in government. A formal

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evaluation to gather feedback about the intern experience will be administered at the conclusion of the program and follow-up contact will be made with student participants one year from the completion of the program to determine if the program had a lasting impact on their view of a career in government. Lastly, Human Resources will gather trend data about the number of new hires in the 20 to 25 year age bracket to determine whether the intern program had an impact on the County's hiring for this age group.

9. Other Resources:

The Yolo County Human Resources Department is providing the staff time for development and administration of the program. Human Resources will also cover the cost of program materials. To augment the program, Human Resources staff have secured donations from community partners for giveaways and rewards. For example, the Yolo County Transportation Management Association has agreed to sponsor \$15 summer bus passes for any student in need of transportation, and local businesses have donated more than \$200 to date in gift certificates and gift cards to be used for program rewards. Lastly, county departments will partner with Human Resources by conducting the Board of Supervisor, personal responsibility, and job search and interviewing skills learning activities.

All program sponsors and partners will have their logo prominently displayed on the Intern webpage along with a link to their respective websites.

10. Statement of Commitment:

The County of Yolo is committed to continuing its High School Summer Intern Program beyond the 2008-09 fiscal year and has already begun planning improvements for next year. Areas to be pursued for next year's program include:

- a. Provide placement opportunities for students in 100% of county departments;
- b. Implement program in cities and other local government agencies within Yolo County; and
- c. Share program, curriculum and materials with other local government agencies upon request and through presentations at professional association meetings.

ATTACHMENT:
Calendar of Events

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High School Summer Intern Program Calendar of Events

Week	Date	Location/Time	Value Focus	Event	Description
1	June 16	Erwin Meier Admin Building 625 Court Street, Room 101 Woodland - Atrium Training Room 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.		Orientation - MANDATORY	Students will receive department assignments and an orientation that includes information about program requirements, time reporting, expectation of students, county policies, and workplace safety. Photos for ID badges will be taken, HR mentors will be introduced, and the calendar of events will be discussed.
2	June 24	Harris Park, Woodland 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.	Service	Learning Activity: County Department Scavenger Hunt	This activity takes students on a scavenger hunt to nine different county departments within a two block radius. Students will work in teams and gather information about the services provided by each department. The department information must be assimilated into a completed crossword puzzle in order to complete the mission and win a prize. The activity serves as a teambuilding exercise and teaches students about the services provided by local government.
3	June 30	Herbert Bauer Public Health Building 137 N. Cottonwood Street Woodland - Conference Room 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Performance	Facilitated Panel Discussion: Public Service as a Career Choice	Students will have the opportunity to observe a panel of County leaders, both elected and appointed, in a discussion about a career in public service. The leaders will discuss their education and experience path leading to their career in government, the rewards of public service, and challenges facing county/government employment in the future. The panel discussion will be followed with a student question and answer session.

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Week	Date	Location/Time	Value Focus	Event	Description
4	July 8	Erwin Meier Admin Building 625 Court Street, Room 101 Woodland - Board of Supervisors Chambers 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Integrity	Seminar: Board of Supervisors and Public Accountability Learning Activity: Mock Board of Supervisors Meeting	The first 30 minutes of the session introduce students to the authority and duties of an elected Board of Supervisors, the Brown Act, and the Public Records Act. The seminar is followed by a learning activity in which students participate in a mock Board of Supervisors meeting. The mock meeting will be recorded and students will receive a CD containing the meeting video.
5	July 15	Erwin Meier Admin Building 625 Court Street, Room 101 Woodland - Board of Supervisors Chambers 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.	Responsibility	Introduction at Board of Supervisors meeting	During the first half hour of this session, students will be introduced to the Board of Supervisors at a regular Board meeting. In the second part of the session, students will complete an exercise to gain insight into their personal values, attitudes and behaviors that influence the work environment.
6	July 22	Erwin Meier Admin Building 625 Court Street, Room 101 Woodland - Meet at East Entrance 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Innovation	Tour: Bioreactor Project, Yolo County Central Landfill	The Yolo County Central Landfill is one of the most innovative, environmentally conscious landfills in the country! Students will tour the Yolo County Bioreactor Project which is an innovative landfill management strategy called "enhanced or controlled" landfilling to manage solid waste. Controlled landfilling provides reliable energy generation, as well as significant environmental and solid waste management benefits including the reduction of greenhouse gases.

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Week	Date	Location/Time	Value Focus	Event	Description
7	July 29	Department of Employment and Social Services 25 N. Cottonwood Street Woodland - Community Room 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Teamwork	Seminar: Benefits of Government Employment Learning Activity: "Get a Job, Man!" (Job Search and Interviewing Skills)	The Yolo County Benefits Manager will spend the first 30 minutes of this session discussing the benefits of government employment such as salary, health insurance and retirement. The second part of the session will provide training to students on job search and interviewing skills. The "Get a Job, Man!" curriculum will be presented by the County of Yolo Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Department Friday Night Live! Program staff.
8	Aug 5	Erwin Meier Admin Building 625 Court Street, Room 101 Woodland - Atrium 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.		Closing Ceremony	Students receive individual recognition for participation in the program during a lunch time ceremony.