

Nevada County Internship Program

Executive Summary for the Challenge Award

Overview: Our Internship Program is like no other. We are inclusive, provide career opportunities, change lives, and positively enhance County operations at no additional cost.

Challenge: Launch a non-traditional solution with no upfront funding for training and skill-based development of a talent pipeline for the County of Nevada through unique and innovative internship opportunities while partnering with local government, business, and educational agencies. Our goal: An easily understood and intuitive process where candidates can apply, gain knowledge through an interactive internship experience with concise training and skills expansion while enhancing County services. We accomplish this by using metrics and job delineation on established timelines, associated learning plans, and assistance in tracking the internship to completion. We leverage relationships with local businesses, colleges, and agencies to synergistically identify career opportunities for candidates within and outside our County. The result has been to launch the [Nevada County ACHIEVE MORE Internship Program](#).

Solution: We threw-out the rulebook and implemented a County-wide internship program. The uniqueness of the program is in its architecture and management. Utilizing available funding from federal, state and local sources, interns were recruited to create and then run the program! No source speaks louder to potential intern recruits than an intern him or herself. The Department of Defense's SkillBride program, Veterans' Affairs programs, Army PaYS program, CalWORKS, Handshake (online college recruiting portal), and local colleges, were tapped to obtain the very interns who created the program. At no cost to the County. None. Not only were the intern-architects obtained through these sources, but relationships built with these sources. The flood gates have been opened for greater mining for interns!

Innovation: The difference, our program is beyond the normal internship experience, with full 'buy-in' from leadership at all levels to include entry-level employees. Through deliberate planning, consistent optimization of methods blazes the trail for the future talent for the county. The process, recruitment, application, background, interview, to potential hire follows a predictable and repeatable workflow with results 21-28 days on average for placement. The metric-tracked training plans, constant communication with interns afford an expansive learning experience, with quick pivot capabilities to attain individualized success. Our Internship Coordinator (IC) team personally touches each Intern weekly gathering information, answering questions to personalize and ensure a successful experience. Invention of the "ACHIEVE MORE" branding and our focus drives the creativity, unique perspective, personal growth, mentorship, critical thinking skills, and talent pool development through our caring attitude intimately connecting talent to future jobs in County of Nevada government offices, local businesses and even candidates' desires for placement to other counties.

Results: Our Program creates internship opportunities while offering non-supervisory County staff the soft skill development of mentoring an intern. In May 2019, our first intern (a Veteran) was hired, as of August 2021, we have 8 active and over 47 interns who have graduated the program. Of those 47, 31 have received full-time equivalent positions throughout the community. The interns have collectively worked more than 22,600 hours and contributed over \$431K in salaries funded by our partners. Utilizing grant dollars from the Alliance For Workforce Development, six interns worked over 2100 hours at a savings of \$47,000. CalWORKs saw promise in our program using it for 32% of their total enrolled applicants to partner with us for internships, for a total of 117 weeks, yielding 9,200 hours, each averaging 25 hours a week at more than \$118k. Moreover, our Veteran programs saw eleven veterans working over 8,280 hours, saving the County \$186k in salary. The Internship Program was called to action to support COVID critical tasks and was able to fill 4 positions within 4 hours though HR's normal time to hire can be over 100 days. This provided critical nexus to assist in the pandemic and setup of a COVID testing center the Grass Valley Veterans Hall, enabling economic recovery across the County.

We truly care about the outcome of our interns' experiences. As an example, A retiring military officer interned with us for 5 ½ months, was exposed to County operations and got to be known by the County. He ended up transitioning to fulfill a fulltime critical staffing need as an Office of Emergency Management Program Manager. A college student, throughout her 3-month internship, changed her career plans to Human Resources based on her positive Internship experience. Interns have edited over 175 of the 350 job postings in our library, using a product called Textio, which resulted in posts attracting talent across an ethnically diverse candidate pool. Postings initially rated 20-45 out of a scale of 100, now average range from 90-100.

Replicability: Ease of replication across California Counties of the Internship Program is made possible through template sharing. The Internship Program uses unique non-traditional programs and schools to provide opportunities for talent and skill development without corresponding funding from the County. Human Resources Director has shared our program and resources with the Counties of Contra Costa, Fresno, Yuba, Sutter and Tulare, City of Napa, CSU Monterey Bay to name just a few and shared the program at the spring CPPAC conference (All 58 county HR directors in CA).

Project/Program Contact:

Steve Rose, Director of Human Resources, County of Nevada, Steven.Rose@co.nevada.ca.us

Achieve More PowerPoint can be viewed here: [“Achieve More”](#) this may take a few minutes to load.