



Billings**Works**
Workforce Council

EASY INTERNSHIP GUIDE



An internship is a form of structured, supervised experiential learning that provides students with practical experience in their field of study. Internships take classroom learning and apply it to real-life job experience, and offer students a valuable chance for career exploration and skill application. Organizations benefit as well from the skills and creativity that interns can bring to project work. Internships include learning objectives, observation, reflection, evaluation and assessment.

10 steps to implement your internship program:

This is a shortened version for reference. For a more in depth explanation of internships, experiential learning, and program implementation, please view “Build your Talent Pipeline: Yellowstone County Guide to Internships and Experiential Learning” available for free on the BillingsWorks website.

1) Decide if an internship program is right for your organization

When deciding if an internship program is practical for your organization consider these questions:

- What will be the duration of the internships?
- What is the best time for us to host an intern? How many will we host?
- Do we have enough staff to support an intern? (intern supervisor and mentor)
- Do we have meaningful project work to assign to the intern?
- Do we have the resources to support an intern? (Physically and financially)
- Would we benefit from a pool of potential future employees?
- Do we have projects that we need completed, but have not been able to yet?
- Could we benefit from fresh ideas and creativity?
- Could we benefit from assessing/training a potential full time employee?

If you answered yes, an internship program would benefit your organization.

2) Decide what kind of intern is right for your organization

- What kind of intern fits well into your organization? Will you prefer high school, undergraduate, graduate, career-changers or international students? Each intern type can bring unique perspectives and skills to your organization.

3) Plan a timeframe for your internship

- The following table was obtained from MSU-Billings Career Services:

If you would like an intern during:	Post your internship by the prior:
Fall Semester (August-December)	April
Spring Semester (January-May)	November
Summer (May-August)	March

	Beginning of Internship	End of Internship	Part time/Full time	Benefits
Summer	Mid-May	Mid-August	Both	Students can commit more time to internships
Fall	Late August	Early December	Usually Part time	More qualified intern applicants
Spring	Late January	Late April	Usually Part time	Organizations have more available work

4) Identify an intern supervisor and mentor

Selecting an intern supervisor is a vital part of a successful internship. Intern supervisors work with the intern to familiarize him/her with the organization and answer any questions that the intern may have. The supervisor should be connected in some way to the work that the intern will be performing, preferably in the same department.

It is crucial that the intern supervisor remains accessible. Many students work in a professional workplace for the first time during their internship, so they will have questions. As a supervisor, encourage them to ask questions, check in with the student's progress and provide assistance when necessary. Provide feedback and constructive criticism to help your intern get comfortable within your organization. As the internship goes on and the intern settles in, the role of intern supervisor will become less hands-on.

In addition to having an internship supervisor, you can appoint an intern mentor. Mentors help the intern learn the ropes of the organization, extend the intern's professional network, provide answers when the intern supervisor is unavailable, and provide general information and advice about the internship, company, and work.

5) Identify meaningful project work for your intern

This is perhaps the most important part of starting a successful internship program. An organization must identify meaningful work to complete before hiring an intern. Keep in mind that internships are designed to be a form of experiential learning where students apply their education in a professional setting, so the work assigned should reflect that.

- MSU-Billings and Rocky Mountain College both recommend to the "20 % Guideline"- meaning that an intern's work responsibility should be no more than 20% busy work. This includes day to day, menial tasks like filing, answering telephones, or other routine tasks.
- Every organization and internship will vary. Compile a list of your organization's needs to help develop some projects for your interns to work on. Brainstorm with coworkers to identify projects that need completed.
- Assign project work that is valuable for the intern. Include both projects with deadlines and less important projects that can be worked on during down time. This will provide the intern with plenty of work and make them a valuable and productive part of your organization.
- Creating a clear scope of work will make your internship experience better for both the student and your organization.

6) Write a detailed internship description

- Make your internship description detailed and effective. Remember, internship postings are a form of advertising; the more detailed and attractive you make the internship description, the more applicants you will get. Use BillingsWorks simple internship portal to create your own detailed, attractive internship offer and reach out to students across Yellowstone County.

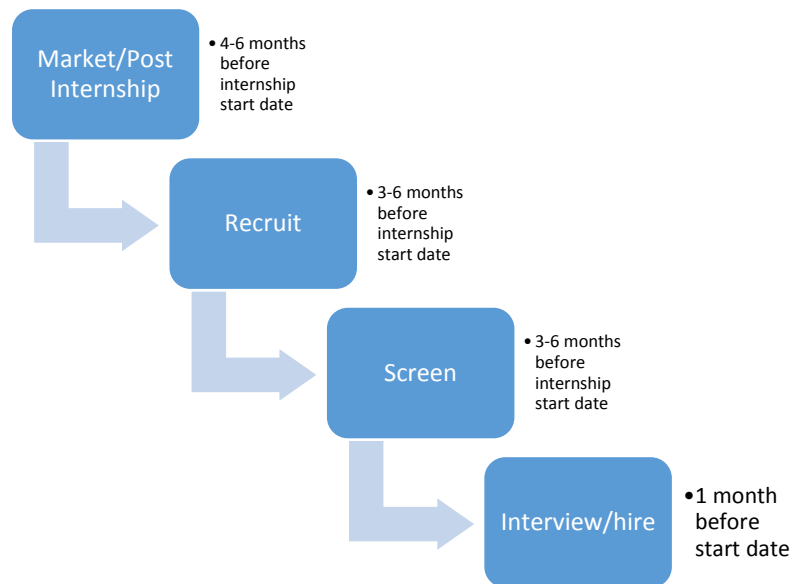
7) Post your internship offer on BillingsWorks.org and Career Services

- BillingsWorks is dedicated to developing our young workforce in Yellowstone County. At www.billingsworks.org, you will find an internship portal where you can post your internship description and market to hundreds of students looking for internships. Students from both Rocky Mountain College and MSU-Billings will have access to your post
- Post your opportunities free of charge with BillingsWorks easy-to-use portal at www.billingsworks.org

- You can also reach interns through Rocky Mountain College and MSU-Billings Career Services, which both use CareerLink to help students and businesses connect. You will need to register with CareerLink before posting internship opportunities. To do so, visit the career service sites and follow the links. For additional help, contact career services at the numbers listed in the next section.

8) Market your internship through career fairs, career services, and social media

- Once you have completed the first 6 steps of developing your internship program, you can begin recruiting your intern. In many ways, recruiting an intern is similar to recruiting an employee. You need to post a job description, market your internship, go through an application process, and make an offer.



- Market your internship through BillingsWorks, Career Services, and social media to reach interns in our community.

RMC Career Services

careerservices@rocky.edu

406.657.1039

www.rocky.edu/student-life/career-services

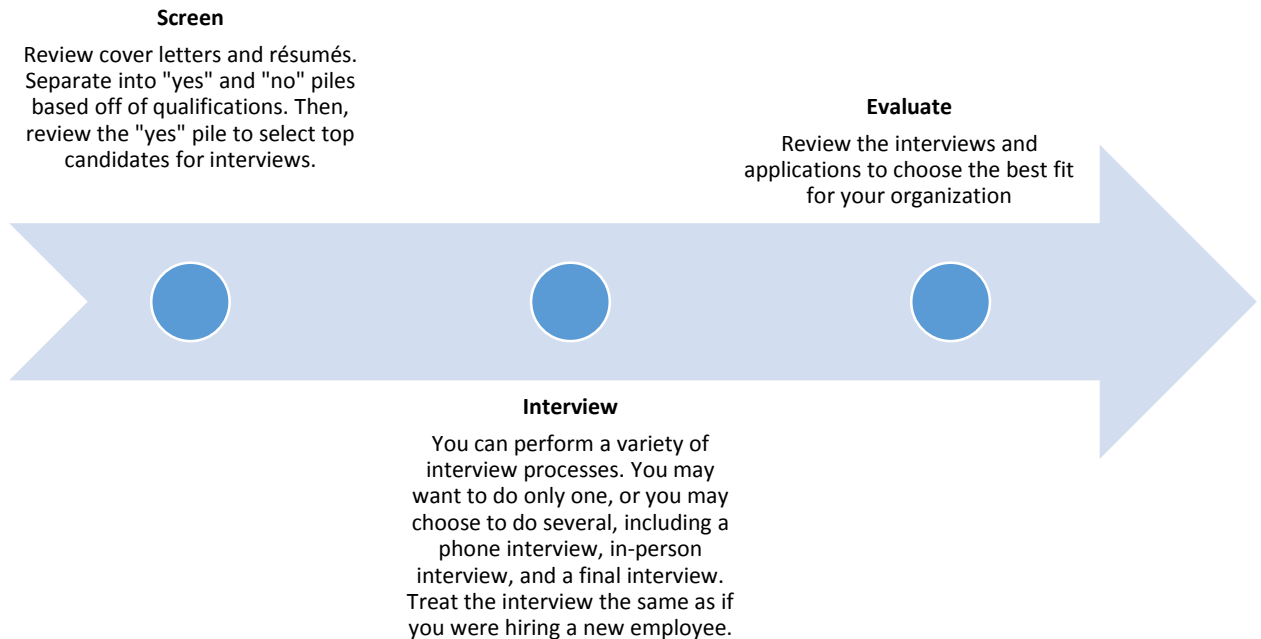
MSU-Billings Career

www.msubillings.edu/careers

406.657.1717

For upcoming career fair events and details, visit www.billingsworks.org or www.msubillings.edu/careers/empcareerfairs.htm

9) Conduct an application and interview process. Select a candidate and hire your intern.



- Once you have determined which applicant is the right fit for your organization, make an offer. It is best to make an offer as soon as possible due to the fact that your candidate likely applied to multiple internships. If the offer is accepted, a work schedule and compensation can be agreed upon, and appropriate paperwork for human resources can be completed. Students are responsible for handling the appropriate internship paperwork that needs to be completed with Career Services.
- After finding an intern, be sure to remove your internship posting from all places it is posted (such as BillingsWorks).

10)Begin the internship. Remember to provide an orientation on the first day and to perform periodic evaluations and assessments.

Orientation Checklist			
Workplace Tour:		Work Information:	
Location of restrooms, break room, mail room, supply room, special purpose rooms, and any other necessary facilities or locations		Confirmation of intern's work schedule	
Mail, Email, Telephone, and other Technology Operations		Meeting with intern mentor and supervisor	
Parking		Meetings with staff members that the intern will be working with	
		Pre-internship meeting	
		Training (if necessary)	
Human Resource Items		Organization information	
Introduction to staff		Mission, values, and goals (if applicable)	
Policies and procedures		Workplace hierarchy	
Dress code		Department overview	
Security and confidentiality policies		Details about the department that the intern will be working in.	
Safety regulations			
HR paperwork			
Internship paperwork			

Supervisors perform periodic evaluations of the intern in addition to daily or weekly check-ins. A mid-internship evaluation and final internship evaluation for must be submitted to the intern’s educational institution. The evaluations are quick and easy and help both the intern and institution gauge the effectiveness of the internship. Encourage your intern to keep a portfolio of accomplishments to review during the evaluations.

Mid-internship evaluation

- During this evaluation, the intern should communicate his/her experience so far and express areas in which he or she would like more exposure or responsibility. The supervisor should provide feedback on the intern's performance, recognizing both jobs well done and areas that need improvement. Remember to use constructive criticism to help the intern find ways to improve areas of weakness. Supervisors fill out a mid-internship evaluation form for the student to submit to their academic institution.

Final internship evaluation

- Performed at the end of the internship, this evaluation should be formal. The supervisor completes an evaluation for the intern to submit to their academic institution (to receive credit).
- If you are establishing an internship program, consider creating a survey for interns to take during final evaluations. You can use survey data from these final evaluations to track the progress and success of your internship program year after year and to enhance the learning experience for upcoming interns and increase the value of your internship program.

Self-Evaluation

- At the end of the internship, students will fill out and submit a self-evaluation.

Paid vs. Unpaid Internships

One of the most common questions from organizations in regards to internships is “what, if any, do I have to pay my intern?” While many internships are paid positions, internships do not necessarily have to include wages. Paid and unpaid internships are subject to federal and state labor regulations.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet #71:

“Internships in the “for-profit” private-sector will most often be viewed as employment, unless the test described below relating to trainees is met. Interns in the “for-profit” private sector who qualify as employees rather than trainees typically must be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek.”

The U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet #71 must be applied when determining whether an internship will be paid or unpaid. According to federal labor regulation, for an internship to be **unpaid** it must comply with the following 6 criteria:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

If all of the factors listed above are met, an employment relationship does not exist under the FLSA, and the Act’s minimum wage and overtime provisions do not apply to the intern.

Although unpaid internships are an option, employers should offer paid-internship opportunities when possible. Many students replace other part-time jobs or summer jobs with internship opportunities, but still have housing, living, and tuition expenses to pay. Offering paid positions will create a more desirable internship and attract a larger pool of qualified applicants towards your internship offer.