



# COLORADO

## Department of Local Affairs

Division of Local Government



School of  
Public Affairs  
UNIVERSITY OF  
COLORADO DENVER



PUBLIC POLICY AND  
ADMINISTRATION  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

## Department of Local Affairs Best and Brightest Management Internship and Fellowship Program

### Program Purpose

The Department of Local Affairs Best and Brightest Management Internship and Fellowship Program, formerly the Cathy Shipley Best and Brightest Internship Program, partners with counties, municipalities and universities across the state, striving to meet the needs of communities, engage future leaders, and meet students where they are in their professional development, connecting them to community work that sparks their curiosity and leads them to work in public service. Initially named in recognition of a former DOLA Regional Manager whose career trajectory, dedication and love of local government exemplified the model of earning a Master's in Public Administration while working in the field, this program combines classroom studies with the real world experience of working in the public sector. Cathy's professional life proved to be an inspiration to those who followed her footsteps and it is with this model in mind that the Department of Local Affairs has long supported increasing capacity in rural Colorado, finding innovative ways for communities to meet their current administrative needs and look towards the future. This program actively forwards equity, diversity, and inclusion in public service and public administration studies. An integral component of that work is helping to mold new community leaders and setting the stage for their success. It is important that future leaders of our communities reflect our communities and this Internship and Fellowship Program is a natural pipeline to make that happen.

To do this, the program will work with local governments, students and educators in various ways:

- Paid summer or semester internships for high school seniors
- Paid summer or semester internships for undergraduate students
- Two-year paid fellowship for MPA students studying at the CU Denver's Center for New Directions (Political Science), CU Denver's School of Public Affairs, Adams State University, or College of Liberal Arts at Colorado State University.

These partnerships meet the following objectives:

- To increase the likelihood of high school students choosing a public service path once they enter post-secondary education

- To introduce local government real-world work at the undergraduate level, ensuring higher success at the graduate level
- To provide a unique opportunity for students to complete their graduate degree while gaining invaluable real world learning experiences
- To develop potential local government managers, planners, economic and community development directors
- To provide a way for DOLA to support small and/or rural jurisdictions in meeting their administrative staffing needs in the most cost effective way possible.

### **Eligibility**

DOLA Regional Managers will identify potential jurisdictions and work with local managers to determine possible participation. Each jurisdiction will determine its own needs and job requirements for an intern or fellow. Local government managers considered for the program must develop a work plan and job description, including job duties. Mentorship plans are required for the 2-year fellowship program.

High school and undergraduate students selected as interns will have unique learning opportunities as they are exposed to the myriad public administrative requirements typical of small and/or rural jurisdictions. As a result of this real working environment, their academic program will no longer be solely a theoretical learning experience, and they will be exposed to a possible career in public service early in their academic career. For Master's students, upon completion of the two-year program, a student will have completed all of the requirements for the master's degree in Public Administration or Political Science with emphasis in politics and public policy while, at the same time, having gained two years of invaluable applied experiences.

### **Grant requirements**

Participating municipalities and counties will be able to work with:

- An incoming or outgoing high school senior focused on a specific task or opportunity with the jurisdiction. Internships will last up to 12 weeks. Each jurisdiction will match DOLA's award up to \$500.
- An undergraduate student studying any number of public service-focused curricula, focused on a specific task or opportunity with the jurisdiction. Internships will last up to 16 weeks. Each jurisdiction will match DOLA's award up to \$1,000.
- A graduate student able to work, full time, on a myriad of tasks and opportunities. Each jurisdiction will match DOLA's award with \$40,000 (\$20,000 annually) toward each student's annual salary and benefit package. Students will receive an annual salary and benefits package totaling at minimum \$42,000. In addition to the salary and benefits costs, DOLA will include \$2,000 in each contract for training and travel for the intern. These funds can be spent on various conferences, workshops or other local government approved training opportunities as well as the annual program meeting.

### **Application process**

Requirements of participating jurisdictions:

- For high school or undergraduate internships, a letter, signed by the Chief Elected Official, requesting to participate in the program with the following information:
  - Supervisor, name, and position
  - Budget, including total and local government match
  - Short description of the work and deliverable
  - Anticipated start and end date
  - Partnership agreement with academic institution attached (this should include how much the intern will be making, either an hourly wage or stipend and the

class they are taking that pertains to the work they will be doing for the local government)

- For the Fellowship program, a letter, signed by the Chief Elected Official, requesting to participate in the program with the following information:
  - Mentor, name, and position (It is preferred that the manager/administrator will be the mentor.)
  - Budget, including total and local government match
  - Short description of the work and mentoring plan
  - Anticipated start date
  - A work plan describing potential special projects as well as daily duties
  - A mentoring plan identifying the mentor's approach to mentoring, how often the mentor will meet with the fellow, and the various departments the fellow will work with during the internship. First year work responsibilities must range from public works, to helping prepare the annual budget, time spent within the planning staff and other activities that will help them focus on professional development in a municipal or county organization. The second year can be more tailored to work the student is more interested in, with the guidance of the local government manager. Generally, during the final 6 months of the fellowship, some students will complete their master's project, tailoring it to a specific problem, issue or need identified with help of the jurisdiction.
  - A community profile, letting potential fellows know about the community, housing, industry, recreation, etc.

It is expected that the fellows will attend commission or council meetings as well as other designated meetings as part of their regular job description, and be encouraged to attend workshops and conferences that will enhance their ability to better serve the jurisdiction.

The designated Regional Manager from DOLA will be responsible for the final selection of participating jurisdictions and will also serve in a liaison and supportive role with the selected jurisdictions and student.

Each jurisdiction will be required to sign a contract with DOLA as well as a Four-Party Roles and Responsibilities document.

#### **Requirements of Student Candidates –**

- This is a learning opportunity for students. Government experience is not required.
- High school seniors must:
  - Be recommended by their school, either a teacher, guidance counselor or principal
  - Maintain good academic standing
- Undergraduate students must:
  - Be recommended by their school, either Department Chair, Program Director, Professor
  - Maintain good academic standing
- Graduate students:
  - Individuals accepted into the fellowship program will be expected to take all necessary credit hours according to the academic program in which they are enrolled and maintain good academic standing. Potentially, two semesters of the internship will be primarily devoted to completing the 3-6 credit hours of the master's project, which will address a specific issue, problem or need in the jurisdiction. Students may be eligible for tuition reimbursement once they are formally admitted into the program.

- Each fellow's academic program will be coordinated and monitored through their academic program. Each fellow will be required to sign a Four-Party Roles and Responsibilities document.
- Each University Partner has an identified a verification process by which students are selected to apply and interview for a Fellowship position.

**Application deadline**

To participate in the internship program, jurisdictions are asked to submit a letter and work plan to their Regional Manager. Because interns could be placed on a rolling basis, depending on the jurisdiction's needs or location, each request will be reviewed individually.

To participate in the two-year fellowship program, mentoring plans are due to the Regional Manager by February 15, 2021. The program year begins July 1, 2021, unless specific requests for a later start date are approved.

**Award process**

The final selection of an intern or fellow will be determined solely by the jurisdiction. Interviews will be held at designated locations. Final grant awards will be made through the DOLA funding portal.

**Program contact information**

For more information about participating as a host jurisdiction, contact your DOLA Regional Manager. <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola/regional-managers>

**Program Manager**

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