

## Student Projects and Internships

### Head Start Performance Standards

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§ 1302.53 (1)

#### Policy

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Community Action Head Start acknowledges the benefits of building partnerships with colleges and universities. Our expertise in early childhood development and our experience operating early childhood education programs is valuable to students. Collaborating with college students on assigned research, capstone projects, and internships helps us build relationships with local colleges and universities for recruiting and volunteer purposes as well as increase community knowledge about the importance of early childhood development.

We will collaborate with community students on a case-by-case basis, subject to the following conditions:

- Before the internship begins, students must provide the Professional Development Supervisor (PDS) with contact information for the instructor assigning the project and a syllabus with assignment description. We will use this information to determine if we can participate.
- The PDS is responsible for obtaining a current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the University and the Executive Director of Community Action Organization.
- Any intern/student working more than a 20 hours/year need to provide their Central Background Registry number (CBR).
- The student project must be planned and executed by the student in collaboration with an appropriate Head Start Staff member as a field supervisor.
- Students/interns working in classrooms are considered Community Volunteers and must adhere to the requirements contained in the **Volunteers in Head Start Centers Policy and Procedure**.
- All students must attend an orientation with the Professional Development Supervisor.
- Students/interns must read and sign the Head Start Standards of Conduct.
- Students/interns are never left alone with children unsupervised and are not counted in ratio.
- After the internship or project hours are complete, the student(s) may be asked to develop a brief report or presentation of the project results for distribution to Head Start staff and/or parent(s).

For staff who are attending a college program that require practicum or internship hours, these will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the above conditions, as well as the following:

- Internship/project tasks must be substantially different than their current job duties. This will allow staff to learn new skills and have new experiences outside of the scope of their daily work.
- The field supervisor for their internship/project must be different than their currently assigned supervisor.
- The internship/project cannot exceed more than 8hrs a week of required participation.

Policies and Procedures Referenced:

*Volunteers in Head Start Centers*

Forms Referenced:

*Orientation Checklist*

*Student Intern/Project Request*

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- When possible, the Head Start program can choose to consider a position swap for a set number of hours between two staff working requesting an internship/project placement.
- Internship opportunities may be limited or unavailable depending on staff availability.

All student interns will be required to complete a criminal background check, child abuse training, and a volunteer orientation as outlined in the **Volunteers in Head Start Centers Policy & Procedure**.

If the student is seeking an intern opportunity that is not related to early childhood education, but within the agency, the student will be redirected to the manager of the desired program.

### Procedure

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#### Student/Intern Projects: Community Requests

##### Initial Contact

When a student/educational institution first contacts Community Action Head Start about a project or internship, they should be directed to the **Professional Development Supervisor (PDS)**, who will guide the process and consider the request.

The following information will be collected and shared with the appropriate manager:

- Contact information at the university or college for the instructor or advisor requesting internship or project.
- Names of all students associated with the project. This is especially important if multiple groups from the same class plan to contact us.
- A written description of the intended project or internship, including timelines for assignments due and expected learning outcomes.
- Estimate of the time commitment and expected schedule for internship.
- The PDS and program manager will review the request and determine the following:
  - Is this project appropriate for our program?
  - Will our program benefit from participation or align with the Community Action mission statement? (Consider the indirect benefits of building relationships with colleges and students who may be interested in further involvement with our program or whether the project will create opportunities for people and/or the community to thrive.)
  - Do the requested staff members have time, expertise, and availability to help?
  - If the project requires the help of a particular staff member or group —such as the Director, the Health Services Supervisor, or a group of teachers — we will not commit to the project unless the affected staff members have been asked, have time, and agree in advance to participate. If classroom staff are affected, please see the CAO Teaching Staff and Intern Agreement
- Upon approval, the PDS will assign a single point of contact for the student project.
- Depending on the specifications and hours of an internship request, an interview may be requested.
- If there is no MOU with Community Action Organization, then there will need to be one in place before interns begin their placement.

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### Student/Intern Projects or Observation Student: Less than 100 hours

The student must contact the PDS. The PDS will assign a single point of contact. The assigned single point of contact will act as a site supervisor of the student project.

The student will provide the site supervisor with:

- The goals of the assignment and the timeline for completion.
- The education agreement (such as Learning Agreement or Learning Outcomes document). The agreement is to be completed with the site supervisor, and a copy needs to be sent to the PDS.
- An accurate and complete description of the project and/or any other requirements and expectations given by the instructor.
- Any needs or requests for office space, meeting rooms, or access to printers and copiers.

As the project progresses, the supervisor for the project will check in periodically and at regularly scheduled intervals to answer questions, provide supervision and feedback as appropriate, and to ensure the student/intern can access agreed upon resources and are not making extra demands on staff time and/or agency resources.

### Student/Intern Projects: More than 100 hours

Intern assignments must comply with federal requirements for the use of unpaid interns. For more information, contact Human Resources.

### Student/Intern Projects: Staff Requests

Staff will meet with their supervisor to complete their Professional Development Plan as part of their employee evaluation, which indicates the goal of completing their internship with Community Action.

Staff will need to complete a **Student Intern Project Request** form and provide supporting documents to send to the PDS for review. The PDS will send this to the appropriate manager(s) for approval and inform the staff member once a decision has been reached.

Upon approval, Community Action will offer a paid internship program for the staff member. A meeting must be held to discuss options for field work, assign a field supervisor, and other requirements per the institution. The meeting should include the staff member making the request, staff member's supervisor, PD supervisor, and the proposed field supervisor. The PDS will route the institution's application/site agreement to the appropriate staff members for signatures.

\*All internal student/intern project requests must be in a program or component area outside of typical daily work.