

**Summary of Public Comments for the
Proposed Qualified Action Plan for the State of Nebraska InternNE Grant Program
Effective January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2017**

The Department of Economic Development received two public comments for the proposed 2015 Qualified Action Plan for the State of Nebraska InternNE Grant Program. The Department has listed a synopsis of each comment received. The response is written in italics.

Comment #1

Recommendation: As small business owners and Nebraska taxpayers, the partners of BCDM Architects have found the InternNE program to be an excellent tool for economic development in Nebraska in the following ways:

- 1) The program supports University of Nebraska students, who are more likely to be retained in the state as part of our professional work force due to their InternNE experience.
- 2) Interns in our firm are working toward professional positions which require a high degree of technical literacy and creativity with above-average compensation. They ARE the “creative class” we work hard to attract – and they are already here!
- 3) The program allows us to create more opportunities for interns, doubling our intern staffing in 2014 and 2015; thus, it has a compound effect.
- 4) InternNE interns who remain in the state will no doubt have a positive impact on the state in their professions, as citizens and as taxpayers. Some will work for large firms, some for small. And eventually, some will start their own businesses – and hire other Nebraskans!
- 5) Verbatim comments from our interns support the fact that positive experiences are being created.
- 6) BCDM has made one regular full-time hire in both 2015 and 2016 (offers made and accepted) from our intern pool, thus we see the interns growing into full-time positions.
- 7) We consider this program to be an excellent and compounding positive use of a taxpayer dollar. We hope it continues for a long time.

Thank you for your comments to the proposed Qualified Action Plan. We are excited to hear that the program has had a positive outcome for your business.

Comment #2

Recommendation: I have two children currently enrolled at UNL, both of whom receive Pell grants. One of them looked into the work program suggested by Pell during his freshman year, however opportunities were extremely limited (such as working in the cafeteria for example – not relevant to his major). He recently asked his advisor about paid internships and was told there wasn’t anything related to his course requirements (although I offered to set one up through my employer which would have been relevant).

These experiences lead to my concerns:

- A. That the InternNE program is (1) not fully supported by UNL, and (2) insufficiently marketed to/understood by UNL staff.
- B. I wasn't able to identify the source of funds for the InternNE grants, however I would be opposed to using state tax dollars for it. I believe the University should take a proactive position in this and provide all funding and programming for it.

Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed InternNE Qualified Action Plan. The InternNE Program was created in 2011 by LB 386, which authorized the Department of Economic Development to provide grants to businesses to assist them in hiring interns. Funding for the program is appropriated to the Department by the Nebraska Legislature. The InternNE Program statutes establish maximum grant amounts per internship; provided that the maximum grant amount is greater when an internship is provided to a Federal Pell Grant recipient.

The purpose of the InternNE Program is to provide students with valuable work experience, increase knowledge that assists with career decision making, and increase and/or maintain the number of internship opportunities in Nebraska. The program currently facilitates relationships between Nebraska employers and college students through an online environment.

The Department markets the InternNE Program to students at career fairs throughout the state, including Nebraska colleges and the universities. The Department has also strived to develop working relationships with the career services units of such colleges and universities. We will continue to work to grow these relationships, and enhance marketing of the InternNE Program.