

Qualified Action Plan for the State of Nebraska InternNE Grant Program

Prepared for
Governor Pete Ricketts

by the
State of Nebraska
Department of Economic Development

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Submitted by
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Table of Contents

Definition of Terms

Section One: Introduction to the InternNE Program

Program Summary
Purpose of the Qualified Action Plan
Amendments to the Qualified Action Plan
Allocation of Funds

Section Two: Eligibility, Program Process and Selection Criteria

Priorities, Objectives and Goals of the Program
Program Eligibility
Amount of Funding Available, Grant Limitations, and Matching Requirements
Application Timing and Process
Selection Criteria

Section Three: Marketing Internships to Nebraska Students

Strategies for Affirmatively Marketing Internships
Definition of Underserved Student Population

Definition of Terms

Internship – the employment of a Student in a professional or technical position for a limited period of time, by a business in Nebraska, in which the Student (a) gains valuable work experience, (b) increases knowledge that assists with career decision-making, and (c) assists the business in accelerating short-term business objectives.

Net New Internship – an Internship position that is filled on or after the date of application and is (1) in addition to the company Internship baseline by location (the highest number of interns employed by the business and located in Nebraska at one time during the twelve months prior to the date of application), or (2) within a business division or location that has not employed a Student as an intern within the twelve months prior to the date of application.

Student - any person who: (a) is enrolled full-time in a college, university, or other institution of higher education in Nebraska; (b) has residency in Nebraska and is enrolled full-time in a college, university, or other institution of higher education in a state other than Nebraska; or (c) applies for an Internship within six months following graduation from (i) a college, university, or other institution of higher education in Nebraska or (ii) a college, university, or other institution of higher education in a state other than Nebraska if such person had residency in Nebraska during his or her enrollment in such college, university, or institution.

Underserved Student Population – While the Department will actively market Internships to all students in Nebraska, the Department will prioritize marketing Internships to the Underserved Student Population. For the purpose of the InternNE Act, the Department will consider Underserved Student Populations to include Students attending the following:

1. Nebraska schools serving high school seniors where 50% or more of the total students qualify for free or reduced lunch.
2. Nebraska public postsecondary colleges, universities or institutions of higher education where 25% or more of the total students are Pell Grant recipients.
3. Nebraska private nonprofit, 4-year postsecondary colleges, universities or institutions where 25% or more of the total students are Pell Grant recipients.

Section One: Introduction to the InternNE Program

Program Summary

The Nebraska Internship Program (“InternNE”) was introduced under LB 386 to the 102nd Nebraska State Legislature in January of 2011 at the request of Governor Dave Heineman. LB 386 was part of Governor Heineman’s Talent and Innovation Initiative, which was aimed at enhancing Nebraska’s economic momentum by focusing on opportunities that would strengthen job creation and education across the State of Nebraska. LB 386, which was operative June 1, 2011 has been codified in the Nebraska Revised Statutes at §§81- 1210.01 to 81-1210.03.

During the 103rd Nebraska Legislation Session, LB 476, which amended the InternNE, program statutes was adopted and signed into law by Governor Dave Heineman. This legislation enhances InternNE by increasing the accessibility and potential impact of the program.

The purpose of InternNE is to support Internship opportunities for college and university students in an effort to “retain such students and attract workers to Nebraska.” The Department has successfully implemented InternNE and has already awarded more than 700 grants to Nebraska businesses to create nearly 2,000 paid Internship positions for eligible students. Operating under the changes made to the InternNE program through LB 476, the Department hopes to continue and further expand the impact of the program.

Purpose of the Qualified Action Plan

Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-1210.02, as amended through LB 476, requires the Department to develop a Qualified Action Plan for the InternNE program. The Qualified Action Plan must be developed by January 1st of each even numbered year, and must be submitted to the Governor for approval. The Qualified Action Plan must set forth the Department’s priorities and selection criteria for awarding grants and Internships as well as strategies for affirmatively marketing Internships to Nebraska Students in high schools, colleges, universities and other institutions of higher education in Nebraska with an emphasis on marketing to Underserved Student Populations.

This Qualified Action Plan, which will be in effect January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2017 has been developed by the Department to meet the statutory requirements specified in Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-1210.02.

Amendments to the Qualified Action Plan

The Department reserves the right to make changes to the Qualified Action Plan at the Department’s discretion. If the Department determines that it is necessary to amend the Qualified Action Plan, the proposed amendment will be submitted to the Director of the Department of Economic Development for review and approval. If approved by the Director or a Designee, the proposed amendment will be made available on the Department’s website for a fourteen (14) day public review and comment period. At the end of the fourteen (14) days, the Department will consider any public input provided, and then the Director or a Designee will issue final approval on the amendment. The Department reserves the

right to make non-substantive changes to the Qualified Action Plan without a conducting a public comment period. The Qualified Action Plan, including any amendments, will be made available on the Department's website at: www.neded.org.

Allocation of Funds

The InternNE program statutes authorize the allocation of \$1.5 million in each fiscal year from the Job Training Cash Fund or its subaccounts for the InternNE program. The Department is authorized to receive funds from public, private or other sources for purposes of the InternNE program. The Department may limit the total amount allocated to \$250,000 for each bi-monthly award period. Any remaining funds from previous award periods and forfeited funds may also be available in future award periods.

Section Two: Eligibility, Program Process and Selection Criteria

Priorities, Objectives and Goals of the Program

- To provide Students with valuable Internship opportunities in order to retain such Students and attract workers to Nebraska.
- To increase and/or maintain the number of Internship opportunities in Nebraska.
- To provide financial assistance to Nebraska businesses in creating Internship opportunities.
- To provide tools for Nebraska businesses to create and leverage Internship programs.

Program Eligibility

The InternNE program seeks to connect Students and employers from across the state, providing a unique opportunity for co-investment in the future. Interns gain valuable business experience that will help them in future careers, while successful Internships help Nebraska businesses develop tomorrow's leaders.

Nebraska businesses and non-profit organizations with physical operations facilities in Nebraska may apply for funding from the InternNE program to assist in providing Internships to Students. State and federal government entities, governmental subdivisions (including counties, cities, villages, school districts, metropolitan utilities districts, or any other subdivision of the state, which receive revenue raised by taxation), and public and private colleges and universities are not eligible to apply for funding from the InternNE program. Internships shall not take the place of permanent, full-time positions within the Nebraska business, and InternNE program funding will not be provided for Internships which a Student completes for the purpose of meeting required residency or clinical hours per the Intern's institution's requirements. Each business will be limited to two grants for the same Student.

For the purpose of the InternNE Act, a Student is any person who: (a) is enrolled full-time in a college, university, or other institution of higher education in Nebraska; (b) has residency in Nebraska and is enrolled full-time in a college, university, or other institution of higher education in a state other than Nebraska; or (c) applies for an Internship within six months following graduation from (i) a college, university, or other institution of higher education in Nebraska or (ii) a college, university, or other

institution of higher education in a state other than Nebraska if such person had residency in Nebraska during his or her enrollment in such college, university, or institution.

Amount of Funding Available, Grant Limitations, and Matching Requirements

The Department may award businesses up to \$7,500 per approved Internship in the InternNE program. Businesses may request grants from the Department of up to \$5,000 per Internship and will be required to provide a match equal to 50% of the grant amount per Internship. Businesses will have the opportunity to submit a supplemental application to the Department requesting up to \$2,500 in additional funds and an increased match by the Department equal to 75% of the total grant amount per Internship. This supplemental application will require the business to hire Students who are Federal Pell Grant recipients at the time the Student applies to the Internship. The business will be responsible for providing the Department with documentation to prove that the Student is a Federal Pell Grant recipient.

Grants are provided on a reimbursement basis for wages paid to the Intern. In limited circumstances the Department may consider reimbursement of other costs incurred by a business in providing the Internship.

A business may apply for no more than two grants for the same Student. Businesses will be limited to no more than five grants at any one location in any twelve-month period, and no more than ten grants total in any twelve-month period.

Application Timing and Process

The Department will make application forms available for the purpose of applying for financial assistance under the InternNE program. Applications will be accepted continuously and will be reviewed bi-monthly at a minimum. The Director of the Department or a Designee maintains the discretion to award grants at any time. Application, review and contract schedules are as follows:

Application Deadline	Application Review Begins	Contract Start Date
June 30	July 1	July 15
August 31	September 1	September 15
October 31	November 1	November 15
December 31	January 1	January 15
February 28/29	March 1	March 15
April 30	May 1	May 15

Applicants must use the application forms provided by the Department, submit all required documentation or attachments, and must fully comply with all requirements within the time period specified. Applications that do not include ALL of the documentation or attachments specified, or that contain documents that have not been fully completed, may be returned to the applicant without further review. At its discretion, the Department may request supplemental materials from

applicants. If the Department requests supplemental materials, the Department must receive such materials within 15 days of the date of the request, or the application may be returned to the applicant without further review.

Financial assistance will be provided as a reimbursement by the Department to the company; no financial assistance will be provided for costs that were incurred prior to the contract start date.

The Department may develop InternNE Application/Program guidelines to further explain the application process and other conditions of the InternNE program.

Selection Criteria

Criteria used by the Department in evaluating applications include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The Internship meets the definition of an Internship for the InternNE program;
2. The Internship pays at least the state minimum hourly wage;
3. The Internship will be completed within the State of Nebraska;
4. The Internship will be completed within a period of no more than twelve months;
5. The Internship will be for a duration sufficient to allow the Student to gain significant valuable work experience and knowledge;
6. The Internship will not result in Internships constituting more than 50% of the company workforce in Nebraska;
7. The Internship will not take the place of permanent, full-time positions within the company; and
8. The Internship is not provided for the purpose of meeting required residency or clinical hours per the intern's intuition requirements.

If the company has 100 or more employees at the time of application the Internship must be a Net New Internship. This means the Internship position is filled on or after the date of application and is (1) in addition to the company Internship baseline (the highest number of interns employed by the business and located in Nebraska at one time during the twelve months prior to the date of application), or (2) within a business division or location that has not employed a Student as an intern within the twelve months prior to the date of application. Companies that hired one of their previous interns as a full-time permanent employee in the last 12 months, or the length of their participation in InternNE, whichever is less, may be able to retain their baseline from the previous application.

Section Three: Marketing Internships to Nebraska Students

Strategies for Affirmatively Marketing Internships

The Department will actively market Internships to all students in Nebraska, including those attending a high school, college, university and other institutions of higher education in Nebraska to encourage students to pursue Internships.

The Department will prioritize marketing Internships to the Underserved Student Population. This will include, but not be limited to, sharing information about the value of Internships and tips for finding and securing an Internship (e.g. using InternNE.com). As the Department is reasonably able, the Department

will promote Internships at Nebraska college career fairs and provide printed materials to counselors and career planning instructors for them to disseminate to students.

Definition of Underserved Student Population

For the purpose of the InternNE Act, the Department will consider Underserved Student Populations to include Students attending the following:

1. Nebraska schools serving high school seniors where 50% or more of the total students qualify for free or reduced lunch.
2. Nebraska public postsecondary colleges, universities or institutions of higher education where 25% or more of the total students are Pell Grant recipients.
3. Nebraska private nonprofit, 4-year postsecondary colleges, universities or institutions where 25% or more of the total students are Pell Grant recipients.