

Qualified Action Plan Intern Nebraska (InternNE) Grant Program

Prepared for
Governor Pete Ricketts

by the
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Effective January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021

InternNE

DEPT. OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Definition of Terms

Internship – the employment of 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 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 12 months prior to the date of application).~~

Net New Internship – an internship position that is filled on or after January 1, 2021.

~~Student – any person who: (a) is in 11th or 12th grade in a public or private high school; or (b) is enrolled full time in a college, university, or other institution of higher education; or (c) applies and is hired for an Internship within six months following graduation from a college, university, or other institution of higher education.~~

Student – any person who is (a) enrolled full-time in a college, university, or other institution of higher education and has achieved senior status by such institution’s criteria by the start of the internship; or (b) applies and is hired for an Internship within six months following graduation from a college, university, or other institution of higher education.

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

1. Nebraska schools serving high school senior 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% more of the total student are Pell Grant recipients.
3. Nebraska private non-profit, four-year postsecondary colleges, universities or institutions where 25% or more of the total students are Pell Grant recipients.

H3: High wage, high skill and high demand jobs as defined by the Nebraska Department of Labor.
<http://h3.ne.gov/>

Section One: Introduction to the InternNE Program

Program Summary

The intern Nebraska program (InternNE) was introduced under LB386 to the 102nd Nebraska State Legislature in January of 2011. LB386 was part of the Talent 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. LB38, which was operative June 1, 2011, has been codified in the Nebraska Revised Statutes at §§81-1210.01 to 81-1210.03.

The purpose of InternNE is to support Internship opportunities for 11th and 12th grade students in public and private high schools, as well as college and university students, in an effort to “retain such students and attract workers to Nebraska.” Since its inception, the InternNE program has supported approximately 2,600 internships spanning 641 Nebraska businesses, in industries ranging from agriculture to public administration.

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 1 of each even numbered year and must be submitted to the Governor for approval. The 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 in-state institutions of higher education, with an emphasis on marketing to Underserved Student Populations.

~~This Qualified Action Plan, which will be in effect January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021 has been developed by the Department to meet the statutory requirements specified in Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-1210.02.~~

This Qualified Action Plan, which will be in effect for awards granted in January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 and the Amended Qualified Action Plan will be in effect for awards granted January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. The Qualified Action Plan 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 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 14-day public review and comment period. At the end of the 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 conducting a public comment period. The Qualified Action Plan, including any amendments, will be made available on the Department's website at:

<https://opportunity.nebraska.gov>.

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 amount allocated depending on available funds. 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 have a high percentage of Internships convert to full-time permanent employment.
- ~~To increase and/or maintain the number of Internship opportunities in Nebraska.~~
- ~~To provide grants to Nebraska businesses 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 work experiences that will help them in future careers, while successful Internships help Nebraska businesses develop tomorrow's workforce.

Nebraska businesses and non-profit organizations with physical operations facilities in Nebraska may apply for an InternNE grant in order to provide 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 funds 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 Program, a Student is any person who: (a) is in 11th or 12 grade in a public or private high school; (b) enrolled full time in a college, university or other institution of higher education; or (c) applies for an Internship within six months following graduation from a college, university or other institution of higher education.~~

For the purpose of the InternNE grant, a student is any person who: (a) is enrolled full-time in a college university, or other institution of higher education and has achieved senior status by such institution's criteria by the start of internship; or (b) is hired for an Internship within six months following graduation from a college, university or other institution of higher education.

Amount of Funding Available, Grant Limitation, 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.~~

Businesses may be initially awarded grants reimbursing up to 50% of the wages paid to an intern. Internships filled by Students who are Federal Pell Grant recipients may receive up to \$5,000 per internship; internships filled by Students who are not Federal Pell Grant recipients may receive up to \$3,500.

Businesses may be awarded additional funds reimbursing up to 75% of the wages paid to an intern for Internships where the student has accepted full-time, permanent employment with the business. In this situation, Internships filled by Students who are Federal Pell Grant recipients may receive up to \$7,500 per internship; internships filled by Students who are not Federal Pell Grant recipients may receive up to \$5,000 per internship.

Businesses must submit a supplemental application providing documentation regarding the Student's Federal Pell Grant status and/or documentation regarding the Student's acceptance of full-time permanent employment in order to receive the higher award levels.

Grants are provided on a reimbursement basis for wages paid to the Intern. Under 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 12-month period, and no more than 10 grants total in any 12-month period.

Application Timing and Process

The Department will make application forms available for the purpose of applying for grants under the InternNE program. Applications will be accepted and reviewed at least once a year, depending on the availability of funds. The Director of the Department or a designee maintains the discretion to award grants at any time.

Eligible 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 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.

Grants will be provided as a reimbursement by the Department to the company; grants will not 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 business interns to convert the Internship into a full-time permanent position at the end of the internship.
2. The internship provides valuable work experience in a technical or professional career field.
3. The Internship increases the knowledge of the student regarding career decision making.
4. The Department may preference Internships with competitive wages in their occupation/major.
5. The Internship will be completed within the State of Nebraska.
6. The Internship is an H3 (high wage, high skill, high demand) occupation in Nebraska.
7. The Internship will be for a duration sufficient to allow the Student to gain significant valuable work experience and knowledge.
8. The Internship has a mentor/supervisor.
9. The Internship will not take the place of a permanent, full-time positions within the company.
10. The Internship is not provided for the purpose of meeting required residency or clinical hours per the Intern's institution's 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 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 12 months prior to the date of application).~~

Section Three: Marketing Internship 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 or other institution of higher education in Nebraska, in order 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.