

AASPIRE

(Affirmative Action Student Professionals in Residence)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND COMPONENTS

Professional Project/Task Area Assignment

Intern assignments should be designed around specific activities. If at all possible, interns should be assigned to work on limited term projects with defined objectives. The assignments must foster the application of professional levels of skill and responsibility. Under no circumstances should assignments be limited to only one operating task or clerical duties.

Exposure to Managerial/Policy-setting Operations and Activities

Professional assignments should be designed to foster an intern's understandings of his/her working unit, the City of Madison's organizational structure and how City Agency operations are interdependent. Where possible, interns will be permitted to observe work group and policy development meetings (which might include staff committees or citizen oversight commissions).

Public Policy and Administrative Oversight / Department of Civil Rights Retreat/Reception

During the course of the program, interns will have the opportunity to observe one Department/Division Head meeting. Managers will be notified of the scheduled date for interns to attend. In the event that managers will not be able to attend the scheduled Department/Division Head meeting, managers will have the option of having the DCR Director accompany their intern to this meeting in their place.

To better ensure that the AASPIRE Internship offers insight to the political realities of administrative oversight and government services, interns will receive an audience with the Mayor. This meeting will be scheduled to allow interns a modicum of time to discuss their respective assignments with the Mayor and to ask the Mayor questions concerning City of Madison government. The actual meeting with the Mayor will occur as a group.

The Department of Civil Rights will host a Retreat/Reception for AASPIRE interns. The purpose of this event is to allow the program participants to meet one another and to share their personal experiences with their internships. An important aspect of this retreat is to allow interns the opportunity to meet with the DCR Director and program staff in an environment, which is supportive of the needs of Affirmative Action Group Members. For this reason, only interns and DCR staff are invited to participate in this event. Interns will also attend the State of Wisconsin's TOP Jobs Employment Seminar; supervisors will be encouraged to participate in this event.

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Host Agency Proposal Guidelines

The City of Madison's Department of Civil Rights, in concert with City Managers, sponsors internships for members of Affirmative Action target groups who are engaged in college level studies compatible with a Public Administration career track. Internship consideration will also be given for individuals who have experienced a period of long-term unemployment or underemployment. Approval will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Director of the Department Of Civil Rights. The individuals that are selected will be hired as City employees in the hourly classification of Management Intern I.

The purpose of this program is to:

- 1) Provide a beneficial mentoring experience to managers who are selected to supervise AASPIRE interns.
- 2) Provide a Citywide project that encourages interdepartmental cooperation toward the accomplishment of an optional Affirmative Action Initiative.
- 3) Provide Affirmative Action target group individuals who are selected for AASPIRE internships with a meaningful exposure to Public Administration careers.
- 4) Provide the City with a future professional applicant pool of highly qualified Affirmative Action Target Group Members.

Operating Procedures

AASPIRE Internships will be limited in number and will be for a temporary period of 8 to 9 weeks in duration. Each placement will be made very carefully on the basis of a match between an Intern's course work, work experience, and personal interests, and the operations of the respective agency.

Management officials who wish to sponsor an Intern must be devoted to the concept of serving as a guide and a mentor. Internships will focus heavily on exposure to divisional operating procedures and policies. This exposure will include attendance at departmental management team and staff meetings. It is recommended that observational activities may be preceded by an information sharing session to explain the purpose and objectives of time spent. Time should also be taken to review the intern's understanding of where a Department or Division fits into the City organizational structure. Interns should be assigned to activities that will foster an understanding of the operations unit to which he/she has been assigned. This can include the sharing of information regarding departmental funding sources and related administrative guidelines (e.g., City Ordinances or other laws, personnel procedures, collective bargaining agreements, etc).

Under no circumstances will AASPIRE interns be assigned to only one operating task or to clerical duties. Duties and assignments will be rotated to maintain a pre-established plan that will promote professional development.

In order to participate in this process, Department/Division Heads are required to submit an application to the Department of Civil Rights. For additional clarification please contact Harper Donahue, Civil Rights Recruitment Specialist, at 266-6511. The application must clearly describe the manager's plan to develop an intern's understanding of public administration and organization. The narrative description should contain activities that will be assigned and should detail proposed objectives and goals including a timetable in which each activity is projected to be accomplished.

Management Benefits by...

City Management officials who are selected to host AASPIRE Program Interns will gain the experience and understanding necessary to develop and guide an individual who is from a background that may be unlike existing managers. While serving as mentors to individuals from diverse backgrounds, managers will also experience the fulfillment of facilitating a college student's introduction to employment opportunities within the public sector.

Intern Benefits by...

AASPIRE Interns will be provided with an environment in which it will be possible to explore and hopefully establish career goals. Interns will acquire practical experience with the art of engaging in the employment interview process. Interns will gain exposure to managerial operations and to the organizational structures of City government. Interns will also be provided with meaningful work experience that will be individually tailored to cultivate their specific areas of interests.

City Benefits by...

The City of Madison can hope to gain future employment candidates who are familiar with the City government structure and functions. This initiative will also foster greater collaboration between City agencies that choose to participate in this project.