

Appendix C: Identifying Internship Projects and Roles

Before you begin crafting position descriptions for potential interns, spend time brainstorming potential projects, tasks, and roles for them. Ask yourself – as well as staff peers and library leadership – questions like the following:

- What are some skilled projects or tasks that you just don't have time to get done?
 - How might an intern be able to assist with this? Can they take the lead? Assist with specific pieces of it?
 - What skills and/or education would they need to have to succeed?
 - Do you suspect that the time spent training and managing an intern to take on this role will be worth it for the final product?
- What is on your wish list of new projects and tasks to try? For example, a new approach to an old problem or a new idea/project entirely?
 - How might an intern help you accomplish this? Might they take the lead on it? Can they get started on one part of it?
 - What tasks or responsibilities might an intern be able to free you from so that you can focus on this new project?
 - What skills and/or education would they need to have to succeed?
 - Do you suspect that the time spent training and managing an intern to take on this role will be worth it for the final product?
- If you were in charge of educating the next generation of library leadership, what would you want them to know?
 - What are the top five things you think an intern should know about our library and/or library careers?
 - What are the top five skills you think an intern should learn in order to be prepared for a career with libraries?

Once you have a working list of potential projects or tasks, it's time to break them down into the component parts of the work. For example:

- What specific tasks and responsibilities are associated with this role or project?
- How many hours per week will it likely take an intern to do these tasks?
 - Should they be full-time? Part-time?
- What training might they need to succeed? Who can provide this?
 - What do they need to know coming into the position that training and orientation likely won't cover?
- What resources will they need to do this work? Keep in mind that this can range from financial resources to having a place (and a computer with which) to work.

- Who is available to supervise an intern in this role? How much time will this likely take?
- Are you open to accepting interns from out of town?
 - If so, can you help them find accommodations?
- Are any of these projects amenable to finding online interns? This can be an especially good option for libraries located in rural areas and/or far from universities.
 - Keep in mind that many writing, research, and web-related projects can be completed from anywhere in the world, using the Internet and phone to collaborate between staff and intern
- Are these projects open to people with varying degrees of mobility or other potential physical limitations? How can we ensure that these projects are accessible to a broad pool of potential candidates?

So what are some potential library internship projects to consider? Here are just a few that other libraries have tried:

- Developing programs for children, youth, and teens
- Planning and coordinating community events
- Assisting with technology and media projects, including website development/management, social media, digital collections, digital publishing, and systems administration
- Archiving and digitizing library materials, including converting files and encoding
- Assisting with ongoing library tasks and programs like cataloging, references, instruction, collection development/management, weeding, circulation, Summer reading programs, book clubs, storytime programs, after-school mentoring/tutoring/homework help
- Designing and delivering internal trainings for staff on topics like effective social media and conducting outreach to diverse communities
- Designing marketing and outreach materials – from blogs to newsletters
- Conducting assessment and research projects on topics like working with special needs patrons, distance education tools, and community needs
- Assisting with fundraising and grant writing
- Developing research and subject guides
- Creating videos and photography to exhibit or supplement library materials and programs ●

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