

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT INTERNSHIP

## About the Program

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In these times of change, local governments play an important and increasing role in building and maintaining viable economies and sustainable communities. Excellence in local government management staff is essential to maintaining the effectiveness of our local governments. Local governments in the north face unique challenges of recruitment and retention. In response to this need, the Northern Development Initiative Trust, in partnership with the University of Northern British Columbia and the Local Government Management Association established the Northern Development Local Government Management Internship Program. This program is meant to parallel the success of the Northern Medical Program by allowing rural communities and UNBC to partner in training and retaining talented professionals in the north.

This management internship program recognizes and builds on the education, training and career opportunities that exist in central and northern British Columbia communities. The program prepares young people for an exciting career in local government, while supporting capacity building and succession preparation for retiring senior staff in smaller, rural northern local governments. The internship program provides funding for central and northern local governments to host and mentor an intern for a 12 month period with the internships starting in May of each year.

One of the goals of the internship program is to provide insight into the wide range of rewarding careers available within local government. Careers include opportunities in management and administration, corporate services, planning and development services, environmental services, finance, human resource, public works and economic development to name just a few. Local government has something for everyone, allowing professionals to use their skills while enjoying their career. Local government offices in smaller communities provide even more opportunity to learn and work in various management career areas. The internship program promises to provide a high level of professional development and training that will prepare university graduates for more senior leadership roles in local government. It will give them the knowledge and experience they need to take the next step in a fulfilling and satisfying career, and the contacts within local governments to obtain a permanent position.

## Program Objectives and Overview

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The internship program objectives are:

- § To act as a pathway to accelerate operational learning and permanent placement into professional careers in local government management
- § To provide results focused economic development professional training with Northern Development Initiative Trust and host communities
- § To make local government management a career of choice by financially supporting internship opportunities for post-secondary graduates
- § To allow for the flexibility of learning experiences where local governments or local governments and First Nations governments wish to jointly offer a placement for an intern
- To allow communities under 1,500 population with challenging recruiting locations to provide management internships at the same time that post-secondary courses in local government management are being completed

The focus of the internship program is on providing **management** training opportunities. Internship opportunities are not intended to be for positions covered by collective agreements and local governments may wish to consider undertaking consultation with their respective Unions to clarify the objectives of this program.

A grant of \$35,000 from the applicable regional development account is provided to each local government to assist with the cost of hosting an intern. Local governments hosting an intern are required to provide a financial contribution toward the costs of the intern and commit sufficient human resources by senior management to support the mentoring and coordination aspects of the program.

The internship program is governed by an advisory committee comprised of representation from UNBC, the Local Government Management Association, and the Northern Development Initiative Trust (Northern Development). Northern Development provides administrative support, program management and financial administration services to the internship program.

### Program Timeline

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The program is designed to provide 12 months of training for each intern. The program starts at the beginning of May and ends by no later than June 30<sup>th</sup> the following year. This starting date has been designed to capture the greatest number of students who are graduating from post-secondary institutions. Students are encouraged to gain contacts and pursue permanent employment within a local government in central or northern B.C. following (or during) their one year internship.

#### *Summary of timelines*

<b>November 30</b>	<b>Deadline for interested local governments to submit their host local government grant application package</b>
<b>November 30</b>	<b>Deadline for interested internship candidates to submit their intern application package</b>
January	Internship program advisory committee will have reviewed applications and created a short-list of candidates. Candidate application packages are provided to host local governments
February	Northern Development and local governments will collaboratively conduct interviews, negotiate with candidates and select interns
March	Final assignment of interns to host local governments; host local governments and intern complete contract for employment
May	Group orientation session for interns and positions commences. A four week economic development training opportunity is required for interns with Northern Development in Prince George prior to the community placement
May	Interns attend the North Central Local Government Management Association Conference in Prince George
August	Interns attend week long training session (Municipal Administrators Training Institute Foundations Course) in Victoria
November 30	Local government submits interim report to Northern Development. 50% of the grant funding will be paid by December 31 <sup>st</sup> upon receipt of complete interim report
June 30	Latest end date to complete internship
July 31	Latest date for submission of post-internship reports from local governments and interns; local governments receive remaining 50% grant funding upon receipt of complete final report (due 30 days after completion of the internship)

## Program Selection

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### Selecting host local governments

The intent of the program is to provide management training for interns so that they may pursue a career in local government administration. All municipalities and regional districts within the Northern Development Initiative Trust region from Lytton north to Fort Nelson and Valemount west to Haida Gwaii, British Columbia are eligible to apply to host an intern and may apply either as a single applicant or as a joint applicant with other local governments. Local governments are encouraged to apply, and preference will be given to proposals that consider work arrangements with neighbouring local governments to provide opportunities that might not be available in their local government. The advisory committee for the program will review all applications from local governments for this program to ensure that all criteria are met. In order to ensure that interns gain the greatest benefit from their internship, local governments are expected to meet the following criteria:

- § A strong organizational commitment to the vision and goals of the program
- § A strong council/board – administration relationship exists
- § The chief administrative officer or senior manager has agreed to serve as the mentor throughout the internship
- § A sufficient commitment of resources, both financial and staff has been made. This includes a local government financial contribution toward the intern's salary and expenses, a commitment to provide mentoring, training and professional development opportunities for the intern, and a commitment to provide a positive work environment for the intern
- § A demonstrated willingness to provide training in, and exposure to, a range of local government duties/responsibilities in completing an agreed to work plan
- § Evidence of support for superior workplace standards of conduct, including a workplace harassment policy and a current health and safety policy. Local governments who do not have formal policies will be asked to endorse the internship program workplace code of conduct policy statement

### Recruiting and selecting interns

Work in local government provides an exciting opportunity for professional development, for advancement, and for playing a role in the future development of communities. This internship provides a unique introduction to the world of possibilities within local government management. It can also provide a bridge to the next steps in career development.

Candidates interested in applying for this internship opportunity can visit [www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca](http://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca) or email [info@northernndevelopment.bc.ca](mailto:info@northernndevelopment.bc.ca) for an application package. Completed application packages must be received by Northern Development no later than November 30<sup>th</sup>.

It is expected that prospective interns will come from a variety of backgrounds and education. In order to ensure candidate suitability, candidates are expected to normally meet the following criteria:

#### Academic criteria:

- § Undergraduate students are eligible if they have completed a Bachelor's degree within the previous two years of proposed start date of internship. Students graduating in May are eligible. Preference will be given to candidates in the following degree programs: Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Public Administration and Community Development, and Geography; Bachelor of Planning; Bachelor of Commerce. Undergraduate students can use the internship as a way of completing their co-op terms, as long as they have completed all the other requirements of their degree program prior to starting the internship

- § Graduate students are eligible if they are enrolled in a Master's degree program. Successful candidates will be expected to complete their degree requirements by the end of the internship
- § Diploma and Certificate students are eligible if they have completed a two year diploma or public administration certificate/First Nations Public Administration Certificate by the proposed start date of the internship

Other required criteria:

- § Willingness to relocate to the community of the host local government
- § Work, educational or volunteer-related references
- § Valid B.C. driver's license
- § Ability to work in Canada for duration of the internship
- § Satisfactory criminal reference check (to be undertaken by local government upon selection of intern)

*Note: individuals already permanently employed in local government are not eligible to apply for the internship program. Seasonal and auxiliary employees of local governments are permitted to apply.*

The final matching of the intern to a host local government will be through an interview, conducted by the prospective host local governments in Prince George in February. The host local governments are in the best position to determine who will be the most suitable candidate to work as an intern in their community.

In making a decision to select an offer, candidates should consider in addition to the compensation package, the proposed work plan of the host local government, the location and the amenities available in the community, and the calibre of the proposed mentor and the training opportunities.

Local governments that have been selected to host an intern must have chosen their intern by March. Upon acceptance of the internship by the candidate, the host local government and intern will sign a contract for employment that will set out the salary and expectations for the position.

## Intern Funding and Support

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### Funding arrangements

Host local governments will receive a reimbursement of \$35,000 under the internship program, which must be used to contribute \$30,000 to salary and benefits, and \$5,000 for expenses. It is expected that the salaries will be a minimum of \$40,000 for the 12 month internship, although housing allowances may be offered in some locations. Host local governments are required to supplement the intern's wage and expenses above the \$35,000 grant provided to them as a participant in the program.

### Internship work plan

Host local governments are expected to create and carry out an agreed upon work plan. The objectives of the work plan include:

- § To support host local governments with a structure to guide the intern's mentoring, training and learning
- § To ensure that the intern is exposed to the key aspects of local government administration to gain an understanding of local government structure, management and operations
- § To help the intern develop competencies essential to local government administration

- § To support the intern's training through contact with a number of experienced and knowledgeable individuals, and information from various resources

The work plan will need to reflect and balance the operational needs of the host local government and the objectives of providing the intern with exposure to the complexities of local government operations. Again, local governments may wish to partner with neighbouring local governments or First Nations to provide opportunities not otherwise available in their local government. The work plan may be designed by the host local government:

- § To provide training opportunities and assignments in several functional areas of local government
- § To focus on one or several major projects that have multi-operational aspects

The host local government and intern will review the work plan at the beginning of the internship and set goals and objectives for the internship. The host local government and intern are expected to undertake periodic reviews of these goals and objectives. This review will enable all parties to monitor and measure performance and determine the success of the intern in meeting competencies of local government administration.

### **Networking and professional development**

Interns are required to participate in an orientation session at the beginning of the internship hosted by Northern Development. Interns are also required to attend the Municipal Administrators Training Institute Foundations course (MATI Foundations) in Victoria in mid-August that will provide an overview of local government administration. Positions are reserved for interns to participate in this annual program which is offered by the Local Government Management Association as part of its professional development programming for individuals working in local government. As well, interns are required to attend a North Central Local Government Management Association conference.

Interns are also encouraged and supported to participate in on-going discussions with each other including monthly group conference calls, to document and share learning and experiences during the internship.

### **On-going support**

The host local government and intern can expect support throughout the internship. The internship program does not guarantee permanent employment with the host local government at the end of the internship. However, many northern communities are facing significant staffing challenges with retirements of senior staff. Northern Development and host local governments are expected to promote the interns to other local governments in central and northern B.C. to fill permanent career opportunities.

### **Reporting requirements**

Interns are required to provide a report (no longer than five pages) within 30 days of the end of internship that will include at minimum, a summary of the year's activities, signed off by the intern's mentor, an evaluation of their personal learning outcomes, and a program evaluation of the internship program with recommendations for program enhancements.

Host local governments are required to provide a complete interim report by November 30<sup>th</sup>. Upon receipt of the complete interim reporting, 50% of the grant funding will be paid to the host local government by December 31<sup>st</sup>. The host local government is required to provide a concise final report plus financials within 30 days of the end of the internship that will include at a minimum, an evaluation of the intern's competencies in the field of local government administration, and a program evaluation of the internship program with recommendations for program enhancements.

The remaining 50% of grant funding will be forwarded to the host local government upon receipt of the complete final report (due 30 days after completion of the internship).

A report will be issued by Northern Development at the end of each year that provides a summary of evaluations from participants and an evaluation of the success of the program, including a report out of retention of interns, post-internship in local government permanent positions.

For program enquiries contact: **Northern Development Initiative Trust**  
301-1268 Fifth Avenue, Prince George B.C. V2L 3L2 Canada  
tel 250-561-2525  
email [info@northerndevelopment.bc.ca](mailto:info@northerndevelopment.bc.ca)  
<http://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca/>