

About the Program

BC First Nations have a connection to place based on thousands of years of history. Like many small local governments, many First Nations in the north face challenges recruiting and retaining staff to support leadership in achieving community goals. In response to this need, Northern Development Initiative Trust, in partnership with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and the University of Northern British Columbia has established the First Nations Government Internship Program. This program is meant to parallel the success of Northern Development's existing Local Government Management Internship Program by allowing rural, indigenous communities to recruit and retain talented young 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 First Nations government, while supporting capacity building and succession preparation for retiring senior staff in smaller, indigenous communities. The internship program provides funding for central and northern First Nations governments or Tribal Councils 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 First Nations government. Careers include opportunities in management and administration, corporate services, planning and development services, environmental services, finance, human resource, public works, external relations and membership engagement, health, education and economic development. 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 First Nations government. It will give them the knowledge and experience they need to take the next step in a fulfilling and satisfying career, as well as contacts within regional communities to assist in finding a permanent position.

Program Objectives and Overview

The internship program objectives are:

- To act as a pathway to accelerate operational learning and permanent placement into professional careers in First Nations government
- To build professional and institutional development capacity in First Nations government administration in central and northern B.C.
- To make First Nations government a career of choice by financially supporting internship opportunities for post-secondary graduates
- To allow for the flexibility of learning experiences where 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 First Nations government and public administration 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 First Nations governments may wish to consider undertaking consultation with their respective unions to clarify the objectives of this program.

A grant of \$20,000 from the applicable Northern Development account is provided to each First Nations government to assist with the cost of hosting an intern. As well, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada will also provide up to \$20,000 to assist with the cost of hosting an intern. First Nations 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. A maximum of three positions will be supported in 2017.

The internship program is administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust, with support from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and the University of Northern British Columbia. First Nations and Tribal Councils involved in the program will develop work plans for prospective interns and will be involved with candidate selection. Northern Development provides administrative support and program management to the internship program. Financial administration is shared by Northern Development and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.

Program Timeline

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 April 30th 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 or First Nations government in central or northern B.C. following (or during) their one year internship.

Summary of timelines (2017)

February	Northern Development, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and UNBC will publicly promote the program, identify host communities and accept intern applications
March	Northern Development, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and host First Nations governments will interview and select internship candidates and complete contracts for employment
May	Successful intern applicants will begin their work placements in their host communities
June	Interns attend BC Economic Development Association conference and spend three days at the Northern Development office in Prince George learning community economic development fundamentals
August	Interns attend week long training session (Municipal Administrators Training Institute Foundations Course)
November 30	First Nation submits interim report to Northern Development
April 30, 2018	Latest end date to complete internship
May 30, 2018	Latest date for submission of post-internship reports from First Nations governments and interns; First Nations governments receive remaining grant funding from Northern Development upon receipt of complete final report (due 30 days after completion of the internship)

Program Selection

Selecting host First Nations governments

The intent of the program is to provide management training for interns so that they may pursue a career in First Nations government administration. All First Nations bands, national governments and tribal councils located within the Northern Development Initiative Trust region are eligible to apply to host an intern and may apply either as a single applicant or as a joint applicant with other First Nations or Tribal Councils. An advisory committee for the program will review all applications from First Nations governments for this program to ensure that all criteria are met. In order to ensure that interns gain the greatest benefit from their internship, First Nations 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, band manager 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 First Nations 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 First Nations government duties/responsibilities in completing an agreed to work plan. This workplan must include a budget proposal outlining the activities and costs. Under the terms of INAC support for the project, approximately 50% of activities should be related to governance and administration, financial services, or HR management. The work plan may be designed by the host First Nations government:
 - To provide training opportunities and assignments in several functional areas of First Nations government
 - To focus on one or several major projects that have multi-operational aspects

Recruiting and selecting interns

Work in First Nations government provides an exciting opportunity for professional development, advancement and playing a role in the future development of communities. This internship provides a unique introduction to the world of possibilities within First Nations 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 or email info@northerndevelopment.bc.ca for an application package. Completed application packages must be received by Northern Development no later than March 15th 2017.

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 the proposed start date of the internship. Students graduating in May are eligible. Preference will be given to candidates in the following degree programs: First Nations studies, Northern studies, 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 or have recently completed a Master's degree program
- 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
- 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 First Nations government upon selection of intern)

Note: individuals already permanently employed in First Nation administrations or Tribal Councils are not eligible to apply for the internship program. Seasonal and auxiliary employees of First Nations or Tribal Councils are permitted to apply.

The final matching of the intern to a host government will be through an interview, conducted by the prospective host First Nations government in Prince George in late March. The host First Nations 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 accept an offer, candidates should consider in addition to the compensation package, the proposed work plan of the host First Nations government, the location and the amenities available in the community, and the calibre of the proposed mentor and the training opportunities.

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

Intern Funding and Support

Funding arrangements

Host First Nations will receive a reimbursement of up to \$40,000 under the internship program, which must be used towards the salary and benefits (a minimum salary base of \$40,000 is required). The First Nation must pay statutory benefits which include CPP, EI premiums and 4% vacation pay (unless vacation days are provided in lieu) in addition to the salary. The First Nations government may choose to offer additional benefits (medical, dental, etc.) to the intern. The First Nation will cover any training and travel expenses.

Internship work plan

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

- To support host First Nations 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 First Nations government administration to gain an understanding of local government structure, management and operations
- To help the intern develop competencies essential to First Nations 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 First Nations government and the objectives of providing the intern with exposure to the complexities of First Nations government operations. Again, First Nations governments may wish to partner with neighbouring First Nations or First Nation organizations (e.g. Tribal Council) to provide opportunities not otherwise available in their community. Under the terms of INAC support for the project, approximately 50% of activities should be related to governance and administration, financial services, or HR management. The work plan may be designed by the host First Nations government:

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

The host First Nation and intern will review the work plan at the beginning of the internship and set goals and objectives for the internship. The host First Nations 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 First Nations government administration.

Networking and professional development

Interns are also encouraged to attend relevant training, which can be determined with host organizations, such as Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of BC's workshops, or 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 MATI Foundations program which is offered by the Local Government Management Association as part of its professional development programming for individuals working in local government.

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 First Nations government and intern can expect support throughout the internship. The internship program does not guarantee permanent employment with the host First Nations 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 First Nations governments are expected to promote the interns to other First Nations and 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 First Nations governments may provide a complete interim report by November 30th. Upon receipt of the complete interim reporting, interim grant funding will be paid to the host First Nations government by December 31st. The host First Nations 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 First Nations government administration, and a program evaluation of the internship program with recommendations for program enhancements. The remaining grant funding will be forwarded to the host First Nations 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 First Nations and local government permanent positions. Reporting will be shared with Indigenous and Northern Development Canada.

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