

Guide to Finding Internships for CI Students

**Community Informatics
Graduate School of Library and Information Science
University of Illinois**

Produced as part of the Community Informatics Corps grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Programs to Build Institutional Capacity, January 2009

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND
INFORMATION SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



Table of Contents

What is an LIS Internship?.....Page 3

Tips for finding an internship.....Page 4

Resources for finding an internship.....Page 5

Internship Checklist.....Page 6

What is a library and information science (LIS) internship?

An internship is a work experience that occurs during or upon completion of a graduate degree program that provides students or recent graduates with field experience that allows them to integrate previous work experience, as well as the knowledge and skills gained through LIS coursework into an information services role in a library, museum or cultural center, a community or non-profit organization or other setting. The goals of an internship for a Community Informatics (CI) student are to:

- Increase student understanding of the information needs and processes of the community with which they are working.
- Provide students an opportunity to work with an underserved group or community (for example, rural, recent immigrant, ethnic minority, at-risk youth, elderly people).
- Help communities reach their goals with regard to access to information, education, technology infrastructure and training, or civic engagement and renewal.
- Allow students to work with others in their field and develop professional contacts.

The terms of the internship placements will vary. Internships can be part time or full time and can last anywhere from 8 weeks to 12 months. Internships can be paid or unpaid. Compensation is negotiated between the organization and the student. Typically, an intern might earn an hourly wage for a shorter term of service or a monthly stipend for a longer term of service. Additional forms of compensation may include a scholarship to fund educational costs such as tuition and student loans.

This document contains tips, resources and contact information that will assist you while you are searching for your internship.

Currently, there is no formal internship “program” for Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) students. Work experience is usually gained through assistantships and practicum courses, so you will not receive course credit for an internship. However, you do have the option of doing a semester-long internship as a practicum course for two credit hours. For more information visit: <http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/courses/practicum/>. Contact Lynn Hanson (lmhanson@illinois.edu), Practicum Coordinator, to learn about CI-related options or talk to your appointed faculty advisor.

Resources for finding an internship

CII Internships page (<http://www.cii.uiuc.edu/careers>)

This page contains RSS feeds to CI-related internship positions around the country.

Career Center Internships Page (<http://www.careercenter.uiuc.edu>)

This page provides resources such as resume help software, links to Web sites and databases to help you in your search, and information on other career services including the mock interview program.

GSLIS bulletin board (<http://www.lis.uiuc.edu>)

You must log in with your confluence wiki username and password. You could also contact GSLIS practicum and internship coordinator Lynn Hanson at lmhanson@illinois.edu or 217-333-6202 and set up a meeting to discuss other possibilities.

The practicum page lists past practicum sites. These organizations might also host a non-credit internship: <http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/courses/practicum/sites.html>.

Metropolitan Library System (MLS) (<http://www.mls.lib.il.us/jobs>)

MLS (Chicago and surrounding suburbs) launched an internships page to complement its jobs site. You might find a paid position that would provide work experience by searching positions advertised by the Illinois library systems. These are mainly part-time or assistant positions.

Americorps (<http://www.americorps.org>)

You might also consider an Americorps VISTA position. The overall goal of this Americorps program is building capacity to end poverty in communities, and positions exist across several different types of community development activities including asset mapping, working with youth, job training and building technology infrastructure. VISTA members make a one-year commitment for which they receive a living allowance, health insurance and an education award upon completion that can be used toward loan repayment.

Some other examples of organizations where you might find a CI-related internship:

- Local public TV and radio stations,
- Local Housing Authority
- History Makers
- Urban League
- Youth Serving Organizations (e.g. Chicago Youth Centers)
- Faith-based organizations
- Public Health Departments
- Urban planning offices
- Chicago Public Libraries - Mary Dempsey, CPL Commissioner is a GSLIS alum. Under the Cybernavigators program, Dempsey has created positions in branches across the city to help residents learn basic computer skills. The program was expanded in 2008.
- County Commissioner's office
- Museums or historical societies

Tips for finding an internship

Create your own - Think about your goals and try writing a description of your ideal position. Many times, what you are looking for doesn't exist on an internship bulletin board. You need to be prepared to articulate to an employer what you want to accomplish, how the internship will help you reach your career goals, and how you might fit in with the organization.

Try Jon Gant's Follow the Money search strategy – Search the Web sites of major foundations such as Ford, Gates, MacArthur, Annie E. Casey and see who they're funding. You might find some organizations that are doing some great work. They might have internship programs or at least contact information where you might inquire about internship opportunities (Note: Before contacting an organization, you may want to check with Rae Anne Montague (rae@illinois.edu) and Lynn Hanson (lmhanson@illinois.edu) to see if GSLIS has any connections with them or similar organizations). Try the foundation directory (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/rex/erefs/grants.htm>) to view a list of foundations (you will be asked to log in with your UIUC NetID and password).

Network, network, network! - Reach out to your personal network of academic contacts, friends, family, and classmates for leads. People want to help, so tell everyone you know what you are looking for and they might be able to connect you with an employer.

Use GSLIS staff members as a resource: Sharon Irish, CII Coordinator, Rae-Anne Montague, Dean of Students, Sharon Johnson, Associate Director of Advancement and Diana Stroud, Assistant Dean of Advancement & Alumni Relations (in that order) may be able to give you advice or even contact information for possible internship sites.

In addition, U of I keeps an alumni directory that you can search to find alumni to connect with: <https://www.uiaaconnect.org/UIAA/Login.jsp>.

Offices of corporate responsibility

You may not have thought about working at a for-profit company or large corporation, but many companies have offices of corporate responsibility with opportunities for people who have community relations or organizing experience. Searching the company Web site might tell you whether or not a "responsibility" office exists. In addition, the Career Center offers a database called CareerSearch where you can find information on companies by location and type, including contact information for certain positions.

A Checklist for your use:

_____ Consider your career goals including short term and long term goals. What kind of job do you want? What type of setting would you like to work in? Write a description of your ideal internship to help articulate your goals and desired learning outcomes.

_____ Meet with your Academic Advisor or other trusted faculty member to discuss your goals and options

_____ Search the GSLIS Practicum and Internship Bulletin Board.

_____ Explore the resources on the CII Web site.

_____ Explore the resources on the Career Center Web site.

_____ Reach out to your network including friends, family, classmates and GSLIS faculty/staff.

_____ Contact the Career Center for help with resumes, cover letters and interviewing skills.