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# BUILDING COMMUNITY

GRANTMAKING CONSULTING PROGRAM

*Sponsored by:*

PHILANTHROPIC VENTURES FOUNDATION

BILL SOMERVILLE, PRESIDENT

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# FOUNDATIONS

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## USING INTERNS IN COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

Interns offer a wonderful opportunity for community foundations to bring young people into philanthropy. For the most part, these are college students (undergraduates and graduate students).

An increasing number of community foundations are offering internship opportunities. Likewise, universities and colleges are showing more interest in placing students with foundations.

A case in point is Stanford University and its Haas Center for Public Service, which places five undergraduate students full time for the twelve-week summer break with five foundations. Each student is paid \$5,000 for the summer, which works out to about \$10 an hour.

In addition, the Haas Center places three recent Stanford graduates at foundations for full-time work for a one year period. These interns are given a stipend of \$25,000 each for their year of work.

Both of the above intern programs were proposed by a foundation executive who found a donor to underwrite the costs. The Haas Center assigns a staff person to publicize, recruit, select, and place the students. The foundation's executive is an integral part of the entire program, playing a part in orienting the interns and meeting with them throughout the summer.

Both intern programs are popular with the university students. Numerous applications are received. The selection process is a critical component involving personal interviews and essays, and needs to be thoughtfully designed.

The Haas Center for Public Service has developed literature for the participating foundations and interns covering the learning plan, objectives, priorities, evaluations, and for foundations, expectations, tasks, orientation, and evaluation.

The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties in Utica, New York has used interns with considerable success. The most recent intern made site visits to fifty-six grantees over the summer to evaluate grants and write reports on each visit for use by the foundation staff.

The intern experience of this foundation is outstanding. The foundation receives quality work and the intern receives extensive experience and an introduction to the foundation arena.

## WHAT CAN INTERNS DO?

With the proper orientation, interns can be very useful to foundations especially for evaluating the effectiveness of grants. Interns can be taught how to review grantee folders, how to conduct evaluation visits and interviews, and how to review applications for grants.

It is important to understand that when an intern starts to work at a foundation enough time should be set aside for a comprehensive orientation, preferably by the Executive Director, as this is an opportune time to create a positive relationship.

Ideally, the intern should have time with all foundation staff members. For the period of the internship, the intern is a member of the foundation staff and should be treated as such. This means the intern can peruse files, ask questions, sit in on staff conferences, etc. The more interchange with the intern the better.

Having an intern is a commitment. The foundation needs to spend the necessary time so that the intern experience is valuable for both the intern and the foundation. This takes effort. The internship will not be valuable if the intern is just 'set free'.

In terms of evaluation work, the intern brings to the table a new set of antennae. The intern will see things differently than the foundation staff and the orientation of the intern should nurture this new point of view versus "doing things our way".

Because interns are new to the field with an unfettered way of observing things, they can offer a new dimension to self-evaluation of the foundation. People will be prone to be more frank with the intern in their comments about the foundation. For example, one intern wrote that grantee applicants regarded foundation staff to be encouraging and supportive but the foundation Board as rigid and refusing to approve grants. These were opposing messages. Interns thus give an opportunity for self-evaluation which is something every foundation can use.

The minimum time for an internship is 1/2 day a week for six weeks. There is no maximum time. Internships are often identified using the donor's name e.g. Tom Ford Fellows or Muriel Hiline Summer Fellow For Evaluation.

## CONTACT INFORMATION REGARDING FOUNDATION INTERNS

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Things to request:

Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties - Muriel Hine Line Summer Fellow For Evaluation

Final report - summer intern.

Report to the Board by summer intern.

Haas Center for Public Service - Tom Ford Fellowships and Sand Hill Fellowships

Background Readings in Philanthropy (for interns), 500 pages

Intern agreement and assumption of risk and release form.

Learning plan for interns and establishing the mentor relationship for foundation personnel.

Final reports - summer interns, 2000.

## ***Building Community Foundations***

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### **Philanthropic Ventures Foundation's Grantmaking Consulting Program**

PVF offers on-site consulting to community foundations throughout the United States, working with staff, board members, and the community to improve grantmaking and operations. The services offered include:

- **Program Audit and Evaluation** – 3-day site visits involve meeting with foundation board, grants committee, board chair, foundation staff, and executive director. Review and analysis of foundation operations, including filing system, grant making procedures and public relations. Also included are meetings with donors and other funders, interviews with local media, and meetings with local non-profit organizations.
- **Board Retreats** – Facilitating Board retreats, for ½-day to 2-days. Focus is on where the foundation is and where it wants to go. Facilitator draws out strengths and weaknesses and guides foundations through strategic planning process.
- **Program Officer Training** – 2-full days of training with 500-page reference manual created by PVF, for foundation personnel, executive director and board members. The training involves presentations, problem solving, and creative thinking. Participants are given actual proposals and are asked to evaluate proposals and make grant making decisions.

Here is a sampling of the evaluations PVF has received from Program participants:

- ✍ “The training was clear, concise and covered all important aspects of grantmaking.” – Community Foundation Serving Northern Colorado
- ✍ “This was very challenging and got me to think outside of the box.” - Community Foundation of Tompkins County, NY
- ✍ “What I have learned I can immediately apply to what I do. This is what makes this training very valuable.” – Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, NY
- ✍ “Bill is inspiring!!” - Aspen Valley Community Foundation, CO

For more information, contact PVF President Bill Somerville at 510/645-1890. Information is also available on PVF's website at [www.venturesfoundation.org](http://www.venturesfoundation.org)