

Appendix 2: Case Studies

1649 Accountant Intern Program

Jurisdiction

City/County of San Francisco

Area(s) of Focus

Internship Program, Mentoring, Training

Description of Program

Started in 1997, the 1649 Accountant Intern Program was conceived because management wanted to raise and standardize accountancy across the 66 city/county departments. The program hires interns at approximately \$50,000/year (current) into full-time positions which are exempt from civil service. Term of the internship is eighteen months, with two nine-month rotations in different departments. This program is extremely competitive. The most recent pool of interns saw 300 applicants for 7 intern positions. However, the program boasts a 97 percent success rate.

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Overall responsibility for the 1649 Accountant Intern Program resides with the Office of the Controller, by delegation from the Department of Human Resources. The International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, Local 21, AFL-CIO, the bargaining unit representing the classifications in the Accounting Series, endorses this program.

The program requires applicants to have a bachelor's degree with at least 12 units of accounting. Applicants must undergo both a written examination and an oral/performance interview. During the 18-month internship, interns are assigned a mentor and supervisor during each rotation to guide and train them. There may be multiple supervisors during a rotation and/or supervisors may change, depending on the training topic. In some cases, the mentor and supervisor can be the same person. Mentors and supervisors work closely together to provide interns with comprehensive, quality training.

In addition to the standard work they complete in their rotation, interns attend various training workshops to build their technical competencies and develop an understanding of the city's purchasing and accounting procedures. In addition to specific accounting

systems training, the interns are also familiarized with various city and county processes, policies, and procedures, with emphasis on their relationship to accounting.

Throughout the course of their internship, the interns are evaluated against a competency skills checklist. These skills include the hard skills associated with standard accounting procedures (encumbrances, accounts payable, revenue, payroll, budget, etc.) and operation of the accounting system (FAMIS). Additional skills evaluated include communication and knowledge of procedures.

Interns receive official notification of successful completion of the program from the Controller's Office HR Unit. At the conclusion of the program, successful interns compete to be promoted to permanent status in Class 1652 Sr. Accountant (civil service), the beginning of the Accounting series. Successful interns are placed in permanent positions. Since 1997, approximately 300 to 400 interns have completed this program.

Lessons Learned

- A contributing factor to the success is that the Department of Human Resources and Local 21 (the union representing accountants) agreed to allow the city/county to keep the interns as exempt employees until completion of the program. This allows the Controller's Office the ability to control and standardize their training and experience, at least until they get to their respective departments.
- Departments that evaluate interns cannot "pass" an intern unless they are willing to hire that person into their department.
- Partner with local colleges in order to get knowledge of the program out there. Staff running the program would like to start advertising at the HS level.

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Interview with Participant in Program

GFOA staff had the opportunity to interview a former intern in the program. This former Intern was in the first intern training class in 1997 and is now a mentor in the program. This person identified the following overall benefits of the program:

- Educates the intern on how the city/county works, not just the accounting department;
- Familiarizes the intern with FAMIS and how to navigate accounting functionality in the system;
- Assignment of a formal mentor;
- Development of accounting skills, which allows for easier transition between departments; and
- Development of soft skills (i.e., leadership, through training).

The program allows interns to establish an informal network of peers that survive the internship program. The former intern said the following of the intern program: "It gave me an opportunity to create a good reputation for myself." This reputation was established in at least two departments due to the formal relationship established in the program, but also in a number of other departments due to the informal relationships established in the program itself.

Interconnect

Jurisdiction

Government of Saskatchewan (Canada)

Area(s) of Focus

Mentoring, Training

Description of Program

Interconnect was started two years ago out of the New Professionals Network, which was created in 2003 to support employees with five years or less of experience in executive government. The program focuses on providing this support through discussion forums, learning events, and networking opportunities. The New Professionals Network at its peak had accrued only 100 members and had difficulty in achieving some results. To build upon this program, a proposal was developed creating Interconnect, a formal division of the Saskatchewan Government. It created a coordinator position to be funded by each ministry in the government. It also established both an Advisory Committee and an Executive Sponsor Group. The proposal was approved and implemented in 2007.

Interconnect allows new public-service employees to:

- Make connections with other new employees;
- Enjoy opportunities for professional growth;
- Talk with senior officials; and
- Share questions in a constructive environment.

As of September 2009, the program boasts a membership of 700 employees. While it is a "new employee" network, the membership is from all age brackets. Membership breakdown is listed below:

Age Categories	Percentage of Total Membership
20-24	10.46%
25-29	26.42%
30-34	16.98%
35-39	12.35%
40-44	14.41%
45-49	10.81%
50-54	5.15%
55-59	2.74%
60-64	0.69%