



Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

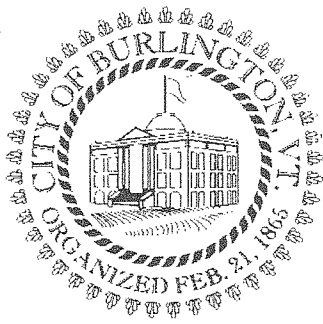
MEMORANDUM

To: City Councilors
From: Mayor Miro Weinberger
Date: October 29, 2013
Re: City Hall Internship Program

As part of Burlington's efforts to increase youth engagement and participation in City government, my Administration began the City Hall Internship Program in the spring of 2013. Based on the success of the spring pilot, we have continued with our internship program, having had a productive group of summer interns and now benefitting from an equally dedicated group of fall interns. Public Engagement Specialist Kesha Ram continues to effectively manage the intern program.

To give you a better sense of the program's success, the City Hall Internship Program Report is attached for your consideration.

Thank you.



October 29, 2013

2013 CITY HALL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM REPORT

As part of Mayor Miro Weinberger's efforts to increase youth engagement and participation in City government, his Administration began the City Hall Internship Program in the spring of 2013 with a pilot program of five interns. The program complemented work already underway with the Youth Advisory Council, a group composed primarily of high school students with an interest in City government, and a new initiative to connect with area college and university students through the College Leadership Council.

The program was a resounding success. We received continuous positive feedback from both the interns and the community partners with whom they worked. With over 40 applications for 10 spots this past summer, and a number of City projects that could benefit from additional support, we expanded the City Hall Internship Program to support 15 interns serving in a variety of City departments.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM MODEL

The pilot internship program assigned four interns to the Community and Economic Development Office's (CEDO) Community Development Program and one intern to CEDO's Burlington Lead Program. Interns worked on a range of projects in communications, diversity and equity, sustainability, accessibility, neighborhood services, and more, and received a short handbook designed to help guide their conduct and professionalism.

Building on the success of the pilot, the expanded summer program had a significantly different feel because of an increased number of participants, the involvement of additional City Departments (including the Assessor's Office, Planning and Zoning, the Mayor's Office, and new CEDO divisions), and the inclusion of high school students. Our expectation moving forward is that the summer program will be the largest cohort, with spring and fall sessions including about five participants each.

As with the spring pilot, the summer program was a resounding success for both the interns participating and the City projects that benefited from their work. Five high school interns participated during the summer, and each partnered with a college-age intern to provide additional guidance and support to complete tasks and attend meetings. The City

also worked with Human Resources and the City Attorney's Office to ensure minors, as a vulnerable population, were partnered only with college interns that had received clearance through background checks. For all interns, the City provided a \$250 stipend upon the successful completion of the internship, allowing students to have some compensation for valuable summer work. Program managers also tried to be flexible with intern schedules to enable participants to hold other jobs. Of the fifteen interns participating, four were men and 11 were women. Three interns identified as people of color, one of whom had arrived recently to the United States. There were five high school students, eight college students, and two college graduates.

We have continued the Program this fall, with a smaller number of participants reflecting the challenging schedules of high school students and an expected decline in the number of applicants (12 applicants for 5 positions). We continue to have a strong and diverse applicant pool.

INTERNSHIP PROJECTS

City Hall interns were able to participate in a mix of day-to-day office work, ongoing tasks and support, and long-term project work. This helped them learn a range of City employee work and be continual assets to their supervisors. Their research and projects were invaluable both as a learning experience for them and in helping to build the capacity of City government to meet the needs of Burlington residents and businesses. Here is a sample of the projects they worked on:

- Identifying challenges and opportunities in the City of Burlington for food trucks
- Planning the summer POPup Moran event
- Compiling a Burlington Business Directory for CEDO
- Researching the appropriate tax structure for properties with photovoltaic panels
- Rewriting Youth on Boards materials in more youth-friendly language
- Exploring municipal roles in childhood anti-poverty models
- Researching best practices for refugee resettlement
- Documenting the need for multicultural space in Burlington
- Helping with the Burlington Diversity & Equity Strategic Plan
- Helping NPAs use social media as an outreach tool
- Conducting door-to-door neighborhood safety surveys
- Creating a checklist for making events and meetings accessible for people with disabilities
- Exploring value and efficacy of participating in Resilient Communities for America
- Researching "Adopt-a-Drain" programs in other municipalities nationwide

CITY HALL INTERNSHIP FEEDBACK

We asked each intern to reflect on their experience and provide advice for future City Hall interns. Their words speak for the program better than any City official could:

City Hall | 149 Church Street | Burlington, VT 05401
802.865.7272 | www.burlingtonvt.gov

“Interning at City Hall has been one of the best experiences of my life. This internship has really helped to develop my strengths and improve my weaknesses. Thanks to this internship, I have realized that I actually really enjoy doing research. I got a chance to meet many different people in the community and most importantly I have a better sense of the issues the people of Burlington are faced with. With that being said there is not much I would have changed about the internship.”

“My projects were challenging. I was always kept busy, and the four projects I was given ensured that I was always doing something different, new, and interesting each day. I would not have changed anything. It was a great experience. [To future interns,] enjoy the experience—you will learn so much, and be able to experience an effective and positive city government administration in action working on an impressive agenda.”

“It was a great experience for me because since I started working at City Hall, my life has been changed by the ideas of people and the suffer[ing] of different people from different countries. I highly encourage all the young people to involve in this program if they are willing to change their community and help each other. And make a good connection with different great people and gain knowledge from them as well as share your own ideas. It’s a better way of changing the community and whole world.”

“I have learned a lot from my time in the Assessor’s office, both hard skills and understanding some of the nuances going into being a public servant. Just by virtue of being the office, I learned language of government, of property; I learned how to interact with the public, particularly how to comport yourself in the face of impropriety. All the people that work here in the Burlington Assessor’s office have an incredible amount of class and expertise, and it was an honor and joy to work under them.”

“During this internship I got to work in the Mayor’s office, help out at events, and revise documents for the new Web pages for the City’s website. I’m glad to have had the opportunity to experience what a normal day is like in City Hall.”

“It was tremendously challenging and hefty work, but it was meaningful and substantive, and it was really rewarding to feel that I was contributing to research that may eventually become policy and affect the daily lives of City residents.”

“I really enjoyed hearing about what other interns were doing and what brought them to City Hall. My favorite part about the internship program, however, was the way in which it paired high school students with college or post-graduate interns. I was constantly impressed by the level of professionalism I saw from high school interns. Last year, through Teach for America, I taught 9th graders who read, on average, at a 3rd grade reading level. My interactions with the high school interns this summer have caused me to recognize what my goal should be for my students. I want my students to be well-informed citizens who articulately advocate for themselves, regardless of their age, and I am happy for the reminder that this is possible.”

