

NC College Students Help Local Governments, Nonprofits with COVID-19 Response: *Cooper Administration Creates NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps initiative to Provide Virtual Public Service Internships*

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An effort by Governor Roy Cooper's administration is matching North Carolina college students in need of work experience with local governments and nonprofits seeking additional help to support COVID-19 response efforts.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused many North Carolina students to lose summer jobs and internships lined up months ago. At the same time, many local governments and nonprofits find themselves in need of additional help as they grapple with the pandemic's impact on their communities.

"COVID-19 is testing local governments and nonprofits as they work to meet the needs of people in their communities. Through these public service internships, students gain valuable on-the-job experience and local governments and nonprofits gain extra help when they need it most," Governor Cooper said.

More than 80 North Carolina college students have been matched to opportunities with local government agencies and nonprofits across the state. Nearly all projects are virtual and include opportunities for interns to assist with grant writing and research, marketing and communications, community engagement and volunteer coordination, data analysis, strategic planning, and more. Interns are working with a variety of organizations, including county economic development departments, local chambers of commerce, non-profit service providers, arts organizations, and others.

The NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps initiative is part of Governor Cooper's [NC Job Ready](#) effort to make sure North Carolinians are prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The program helps strengthen the public service talent pipeline and prepares North Carolina's students for employment.

This initiative is led by the NC Strategic Partnerships team, an effort within the Office of State Budget and Management to build partnerships between government, universities, philanthropy and the private sector. Also involved are the UNC School of Government Lead for NC program, Hometown Strong, the NC Association of County Commissioners, the NC League of Municipalities, the NC Rural Center, and several institutions of higher education.

A list of current internship opportunities is available by visiting the [NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps Database](#). For more information on the NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps initiative, please contact Caroline Tervo at covidinterns@osbm.nc.gov.

Quotes from partners and participants

“It is exciting to partner with the Governor’s Office to pull together this opportunity for students to share their talents with local governments and nonprofits across North Carolina. It is a wonderful idea that happened quickly because many people made it a priority. We hope the students have a great experience and consider pursuing public service as Fellows in Lead for North Carolina and other programs focused on careers in public service,” said Mike Smith, Dean of the UNC School of Government.

Lead for North Carolina organized a two-day virtual training to prepare interns for their placements. More than 300 students registered for the training, with speakers covering topics such as Local Government 101, Nonprofit 101, Grant Writing, Public Policy Communications, and Professional Research.

“Thanks to this great initiative, Elizabeth City State University was able to place 11 students whose internships were unexpectedly cancelled or impacted due to COVID-19 in new internships with various organizations throughout North Carolina. We look forward to cultivating these internship experiences into potential employment opportunities and careers in public service,” said Yolanda Carcana, Interim Director of Career Services, Elizabeth City State University.

“The thought of not having an intern this summer was very concerning as we are a two-person shop with very little funding for external consultants. The COVID-19 pandemic has also placed an additional workload on us to help businesses weather the crisis,” said Martyn Johnson with Beaufort County Economic Development. Our intern is an excellent match for our need to strengthen our social media and website and she has quickly helped to increase our capacity.”

“The pandemic has turned the world on its ear, and one of the areas of life affected was my summer internships,” said Sierra Watson, a Master of Public Administration student at Appalachian State University. “My internship with the Town of North Wilkesboro has provided me an opportunity to have a unique remote experience in a time where adaptability is especially important. I’m helping the town research, promote, and offer grants to local business owners in hopes of keeping our community and our relationships strong during the pandemic.”

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