

Student Interns Support Local Governments, Nonprofits Across North Carolina: *NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps Contributes to Recovery, Increases Student Support*

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Across North Carolina, college students are helping out local governments and nonprofits thanks to a program started by Governor Roy Cooper's administration to provide extra support as the state works to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The [NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps](#) is in its second year of helping place college and university students into internships with local governments and nonprofits across the state. Launched in 2020 to address the impact of COVID-19, Response Corps interns continue to provide critical support to organizations that are leading the way in pandemic recovery.

"North Carolinians rely on local government and nonprofits to meet a wide range of community challenges and needs," said Governor Cooper. "Through the NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps, young people lend their support while gaining valuable experience and taking their first steps into public service careers."

In 2021, the program placed more than 55 students at 31 different organizations across 28 counties. With a mix of virtual, hybrid, and in-person internships, students are applying their learning in areas ranging from vaccine distribution to nonprofit fundraising to town management.

Due to the pandemic, many local government and nonprofit organizations had to take on added responsibilities and provide additional services often with fewer staff and volunteers available to help. Interns are helping to fill the gap by providing a much-needed extra set of hands while gaining important work experience.

"The NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps internship program has been a wonderful experience for our health department and we have been able to positively impact the lives of both of our student interns (from Western Carolina University and Meredith College)," said Ann Pike with the Jones County Health Department. "Due to COVID-19, we were down to five full-time staff. The interns have been instrumental in helping get things caught up. They have fit in well with our staff and have learned a lot through this experience."

The John M. Belk Endowment and the A.J. Fletcher Foundation provided funds to ensure that all interns receive some compensation for their work.

“Through my internship with the Jones County Health Department I’ve learned that there is always something to do, and help is always needed,” said Molly Rouse, a student at Western Carolina University. “COVID-19 really impacted Jones County and our community and it has been rewarding to play a part in the work being done to get back to a sense of normalcy.”

The NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps was launched in 2020 by the NC Office of Strategic Partnerships and Lead for North Carolina/UNC School of Government, in collaboration with many partners, and has placed nearly 180 students in internships since it began.

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