

Memorandum of Understanding
for
Maryland WIC Employee Participation in the
Virginia Department of Health/Maryland WIC Dietetic Internship

This agreement serves to outline the minimum terms and conditions required of the intern, the local agency coordinator, and program administrators as it relates to supporting an employee in the VA/MD WIC Dietetic Internship (“the Program”). A completed agreement is a required component in the application packet. All parties involved should seek guidance on any item they find unclear or unsuitable before signing.

I, _____ (“intern”), am applying to participate in the Virginia/Maryland WIC Dietetic Internship (“Program”). By initialing next to each item, I am acknowledging my understanding of the terms of participation and commitments upon completion.

I, _____ (“Local Agency Coordinator”), am aware of the intern’s application to the Program and by initialing next to each item I am acknowledging the various commitments required by the Program if the intern is accepted.

The applicant currently holds the position of _____ in the _____ (“Local Agency”).

Terms of Participation

Employment Requirement

- a. By date of application, the Local Agency will have employed the intern for a minimum of one year (52 weeks).
- b. The intern will maintain employment with the Local Agency while enrolled in the Program.
- c. The intern will continue to work for the Local Agency for two years (104 weeks) after obtaining the Registered Dietitian credential.

Program Start and End Dates

The program begins on the first day of orientation; orientation is held in September and attendance to all five days is mandatory. Orientation dates are posted at least 3 months before the application deadline.

Per the Program website, the orientation dates for the class the intern is applying to are: _____

The last day of the program occurs in the first two weeks of August, 45 calendar weeks after the first day of the program.

Scope of Program Administrators in Relation to Local Agencies

Program administrators hold no bearing on the continued employment or scope of responsibilities awarded to interns before, during, or after enrollment in the Program.

Program administrators will:

- a. Advise the intern on professional development
- b. Inform, on request, Local Agency Coordinators of an intern's progress limited to minimum information needed (good standing, terminated, extension granted)
- c. Provide guidance, as requested, to Local Agency Coordinators on how to support an intern
- d. Seek feedback from interns and Local Agency staff as to the internship experience, both during and after program enrollment

Program administrators will not:

- a. Mediate disputes of use of accrued paid leave and educational leave
- b. Hear complaints related to specific performance of duties of employment
- c. Hear complaints of personnel or managerial issues within the Local Agency
- d. Act as a reference or provide written reference or recommendation if the intern is seeking a promotion or position change within the Maryland WIC program

It is the Program's belief that the program curriculum prepares interns to be capable of leadership roles within the public health sector. The Program routinely encourages interns to seek greater responsibilities and opportunities for professional development both during and after enrollment in the Program. Local Agency Coordinators are encouraged to award additional responsibilities to successful interns based on new or advanced skills gained or developed during enrollment in the Program and to seek guidance from program administrators for engaging interns post-credentialing in leadership and professional development opportunities.

Program Activities: Supervised Practice, Classes, Webinars, Meetings, and Homework

The Program has organized associated learning activities (assignments, projects, classes, and webinars) and supervised practice experiences in order for interns to be able to obtain the breadth and depth of knowledge required for an entry-level dietitian as outlined by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). These supervised practice experiences and associated learning activities are broken into three primary rotations.

560 hours supervised practice in Public Health (“Public Health Rotation”)

240 hours supervised practice in Foodservice Systems Management (“Foodservice Rotation”)

400 hours supervised practice in Clinical Nutrition (“Clinical Rotation”)

The Program makes every effort to schedule group classes and meeting within normal business hours however, as is consistent with the academic nature of the program, the intern will encounter preparation and follow up work that requires time and attention outside of normal business hours.

The intern agrees to attend all required class days, which will include but is not limited to:

- Full day in-person meetings every other month with the location rotating between Virginia and Maryland
- Virtual meetings and classes (“Webinars”), 3 hours in duration, twice monthly
- A minimum of two full day joint program classes, dates to be determined during the program

Samples of rotation curriculums and program schedules are available prior to application on written request to a program administrator.

Preceptors

The intern’s Local Agency Coordinator will identify an appropriate individual to act as the primary preceptor to the intern during the 28-week Public Health Rotation. This individual must meet Program requirements and should expect to be in regular contact with Program administrators. If the Local Agency Coordinator or Supervisor is unwilling or unable to appoint a primary preceptor to the intern then a State Nutritionist will act as the intern’s primary preceptor.

The intern will have two additional primary preceptors during the Foodservice and Clinical supervised practice rotations; each will be responsible for hours, assignments, and evaluations during their respective rotations.

Progress Evaluations

The intern will be updated regularly on their progress towards demonstrating entry-level practice standards. This is to include but is not limited to written and oral progress reports, evaluations, and performance reviews. These reviews and reports will remain within the Program and will not be part of the intern’s personnel file within the Local Agency.

The Clinical and Foodservice preceptors will also evaluate the intern’s performance and progress. These evaluations will only be shared with the WIC preceptor on a need-to-know basis.

Credentialing Deadlines

- a. First attempt of dietetics registration exam within 6 months of obtaining a verification statement
- b. Credentialing as a Registered Dietitian within one year (52 weeks) of obtaining a verification statement

Estimated Financial Obligation

In order to complete the Program the intern may elect to use educational leave. The use of educational leave and the subsequent acceptance of unearned income render the intern financially obligated to the Local Agency. The extent of financial obligation is not to exceed the sum of unearned income accepted during enrollment in the Program.

The financial obligation will be released when the intern obtains the Registered Dietitian credential and subsequently works for the Local Agency for two years (104 weeks).

The Program will make every effort but cannot guarantee that an intern will complete the program according to the prescribed schedule. Additional unearned income could be accrued in the event that an intern requires a program extension.

Interns and Local Agency Coordinators should be aware of the estimated amount of unearned income the intern plans to accept during enrollment in the Program. The program recommends calculating this amount based on the three primary rotations as outlined below.

The sum of the estimated unearned income is \$_____. (to be calculated after completing below portions)

Public Health Rotation

The intern will accept part-time educational leave for a period of 28 weeks, which may not be contiguous, during which time the intern will devote 20 business hours per week to the WIC clinic and a minimum of 20 business hours to the Program.

The time spent in the clinic and with the Program will be prearranged with preceptors, a clinic supervisor, and program administrators to suit the clinic, the intern's, and the Program's needs.

The intern will receive full salary and benefits during this time; half of the salary payment will be considered unearned income.

The estimated amount of unearned income during this period is \$_____.

Foodservice Rotation

The intern will accept full-time educational leave for a period of 6 weeks, which should be contiguous, in order to complete the Foodservice Rotation as outlined by the Program.

The dates of this period of absence from the WIC clinic will be prearranged by the intern with the clinic administrator with enough notice as to not negatively affect WIC clinic operations.

The intern will receive full salary and benefits during this time; all of the salary payment will be considered unearned income.

The estimated amount of unearned income during this period is \$_____.

Clinical Rotation

The intern will accept full-time educational leave for a period of 10 weeks, which should be contiguous, in order to complete the Clinical Rotation as outlined by the Program.

The dates of this period of absence from the WIC clinic will be prearranged by the intern with the clinic administrator with enough notice as to not negatively affect WIC clinic operations.

The intern will receive full salary and benefits during this time; all of the salary payment will be considered unearned income.

The estimated amount of unearned income during this period is \$_____.

Release from Financial Obligation

The intern is considered to be released of their financial obligation to the Local Agency after two years (104 weeks) of employment as a credentialed provider.

In the event an intern has obtained a verification statement but fails to obtain credentials within one year (52 weeks) of verification, the Local Agency may require repayment of unearned income at a reasonable rate under the condition of continued employment. In the event the intern does successfully credential, the repayment plan should stop and the prorated two-year (104 week) required work period shall begin.

In the event the intern meets the credentialing deadline but resigns from employment before completing 2 years of employment as a credentialed provider the intern remains responsible for a prorated portion of the financial obligation. The Local Agency should request repayment of the prorated unearned income before the final workday.

Intern Termination

The Program makes every effort to ensure the success of each intern. In the event that an intern is terminated from the Program, the intern shall communicate this change to their Local Agency Coordinator within 5 business days of initial notice.

The Local Agency Coordinator will be responsible for determining a repayment plan. The Program will not mediate or act on collecting funds directly from the intern on behalf of the Local Agency, however the Program supports the following repayment options in such an event:

- a. In the event the intern remains employed by the Local Agency after termination from the Program, the Local Agency Coordinator should determine a reasonable rate at which the employee may repay the Local Agency for the accepted unearned income.
- b. In the event employment is terminated or the intern resigns from employment, the Local Agency Coordinator should require prorated payment of unearned income accepted by the employee in full at the time of resignation or termination.

Voluntary Intern Withdrawal

Voluntary withdrawal from the program is handled on an individual basis and may require a joint meeting between the intern, the Program, and the Local Agency Coordinator in order to determine the appropriate procedure going forward.

By signing below you are acknowledging your awareness and understanding of the terms of participation in the VA/MD WIC Dietetic Internship program.

Applicant Date

Local Agency Coordinator Date

Maryland WIC Director Date