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**BACKCOVER** Timeline & Checklist
People with gifts and abilities live everywhere, and you find them in all age groups. Scores of people are doing wonderful things—we read about them in local newspapers, hear about them in the coffee shops and at our churches.

But what if people capable of making a difference in our communities never hear an invitation, such as, “We would like you to live here in the future” or “What do you need to build a fulfilling life here in our town or region?” If we don’t connect with human talent, it will slip away…that has been a reality in the Great Plains region for decades. To reverse this debilitating trend, we’ll need a new strategy: to intentionally invite people to come back and imagine innovative ways for them to build viable careers in our communities. We will also need to identify and develop the talents of our people right here at home, not just far away at a university or in an urban job market.

Since 2007, Ogallala Commons has been growing a successful Community Internship Program that allows partners to find and nurture local talent. Through more than 200 Community Internships, local talent has accomplished outcomes and projects that have given a great deal back to our region. In the pages of this Partner Guidebook, you can find examples of all sorts of internships in our region. Also, we invite you to explore other tools your community, organization, institution or business can utilize through a partnership with Ogallala Commons in 2014.
From a small project started in 2000, Ogallala Commons has grown into a vibrant 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. Our mission is like that of the High Plains-Ogallala Aquifer (see map)—to be a generator of life, helping to sustain the commonwealth of human and natural communities in the vast Great Plains region. While the Plains region is divided into 10 states, we are united by our common responsibility to preserve water, natural resources, and vibrant communities for future generations.

Ogallala Commons mission is shaped by a 9-member Board of Directors, stewarded with the expertise of an Advisory Council and implemented by a small staff—leaders who believe in the vision of Ogallala Commons and build it into an operational community network.

**WHAT DOES OC DO?**
Ogallala Commons works to reinvigorate the commonwealth that forms the basis of our life. Simply put Ogallala Commons helps communities “to do together what no one community can do alone.”

Our mission is carried out through a 4-part approach: 1) weaving a collaborative network of diverse partners, 2) building an education outreach with conferences and workshops, 3) fostering a sense of place to instill meaning and inspire stewardship for our landscapes and hometowns, and 4) rebuilding commonwealth communities to sustain people and the land.

**VISIT OC’S WEBSITE:**
http://www.ogallalacommons.org

**FOLLOW OC’S BLOGS:**

**The Place**
OC Monthly Newsletter Blog
http://ogallalacommonsnewsletter.blogspot.com

**Community Intern Blogs**
Posts by Interns
http://ogallalaintern.blogspot.com

**CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:**

*Like OC on Facebook*
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ogallala-Commons/244304435620817

*Follow OC on Twitter*
https://twitter.com/ogallalacommons

*Like Local Llano on Facebook*
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Local-Llano/133528583393261

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Youth Engagement Day provides an opportunity for students in grades 7 – 12 to explore and connect to their “E-Dream” ...to see the potential of entrepreneurship, the impact of businesses in the local community, and the passion of successful hometown leaders. The event is a morning- to lunch program held at a regional site where youth from several schools can hear the message that their communities and region want them to come back home, when they choose and when they are ready. Other activities showcase careers and opportunities that create viable pathways to “come home.”

Youth Entrepreneur Fair is a morning-to-afternoon event in which youth entrepreneurs submit a business plan for a “conceptual” or a “ready-to-go” enterprise (two different categories). Individual or entrepreneur teams are awarded cash prizes by a group of judges, based on these categories: Business Plan, Elevator Pitch & Interview with Judges, Booth Presentation at the Fair, Strategy to Finance the Business Idea, Network of Resources to Support the Business. Our Youth Entrepreneur Fairs have been held for 7 consecutive years in the Texas panhandle, as well as in Rawlins County, Kansas and Baca County, Colorado.

Playa Festivals make the High Plains water cycle come alive for students, with demonstrations and field trips that show playa basins, local watersheds carved by draws and creeks, and the Ogallala Aquifer in real-life situations, not just in books. We may not have mountains or many rivers, but the High Plains region has more playas than anywhere in the world! Playas are temporary wetlands that provide essential ecological services, and when filled with water after heavy rains, playas become supercharged oases of life! Through hands-on activities and outdoor learning, OC puts together a team that educates students of all ages, their teachers, and communities.

Playa Field Days are conducted quarterly for landowners, agency personnel, youth, and anyone interested. These morning-to-lunch educational events are geared toward conservation of playa basins and their adjoining watershed, and include topics such as planned grazing management, identifying playa plants, understanding the role of playa critters like amphibians, waterfowl, shore birds, and macroinvertebrates, in addition to learning about conservation practices and cost-share programs that help to restore playa wetlands.

Our Rebuilding Local Food Systems Program works in a variety of forms. Over the past 7 years, OC has hosted conferences on the topic, created Community Internships based on local food production, and provided education workshops and tools for gardeners. In 2012, we created Local Llano as a blog about all things local food in the Llano Estacado foodshed. It features nearly 60 stories about local food producers, gardening, recipes, restaurants, Community-Supported Agriculture, Farmer’s Markets and more. Thanks to support from Farm Aid, we are compiling a book based on the Local Llano Blog.
A decade ago, Ogallala Commons committed itself to building a collaborative network. Since then, partnerships have become the lifeblood of our mission outreach. Regardless of the size of the partner or the extent of their relationship with OC, the goal is always the same: to build together what cannot be achieved alone. Here are a few examples that illustrate our growing network of partners:

**Swisher County, Texas**

County Judge Harold Keeter took the lead by meeting with OC staff in 2007. A few months later, OC conducted a Community Leadership Training Course for county residents, followed by a Community Forum, then finally, a Youth Engagement Day—all in the same year (2008), and paid for with county funds.

The county's AgriLife Extension agent, Calley Runnels, provided the leadership for three strategic actions: she linked 4-H kids and parents into youth engagement, informed administration and teachers in the local schools about the programs, and introduced the Leadership Advisory Board (LAB) members to OC, making sure that at each quarterly meeting, more and more groups became educated and involved.

As participation in OC’s vision of commonwealth grew, so did new opportunities in Swisher County. By 2009, county partners invested in their first Community Intern, Delissa Villa (an alumnus of that Community Leadership class in 2008). In the following year, there were 2 more community internships, then 3 in 2011, 4 in 2012, and 5 this past summer.

**Atwood, Kansas**

Leaders from Atwood attended a Leadership Summit that OC conducted in Burlington, Colorado in 2004. These folks soon grabbed hold of the tools of Home Town Competitiveness, (HTC) a program featured at the Summit. Within a year, Atwood was investing heavily in all four HTC pillars: youth engagement, leadership development, entrepreneurship, and philanthropy. In 2005, OC assisted in the implementation by conducting a Youth Engagement Day in Atwood, followed by our first Youth Entrepreneur Fair in 2006.

Atwood partnered to create its first Community Internship in 2008, and has now established a total of seven. Also in 2008, some producers in the Atwood region got behind the ideas of local food, and worked with OC and Rocky Mountain Farmers Union to launch the High Plains Food Cooperative.

**Campo, Colorado**

With 200 residents and a school enrollment of less than 70, Campo has worked with OC to conduct an oral history project, a water education festival, 2 Youth Engagement Days, and 4 Youth Entrepreneur Fairs for Baca County since 2009. Even as a sparsely populated ranching and dryland farming country, young people desire to come back to Southeastern Colorado, for a variety of compelling reasons. As a tool for building reliable rural futures, Campo has created 7 Community Internships in the past 5 years.

**Holy Family Church (Nazareth, Texas)**

As the key social organization in the village, Holly Family Catholic worked collaboratively with civic organizations in Nazareth, TX, creating 15 Community Internships since 2008 and investing more than $25,000. In addition, Nazareth partners have hosted 2 Youth Entrepreneur Fairs and a Youth Engagement Day.

**Arnold EDC (Arnold, Nebraska)**

Great partnerships achieve multiple outcomes. Arnold Economic Development Corp. has spearheaded the development of 4 Community Internships since 2010 that have enhanced community celebrations, built up the website information for the village, and created a digitally-searchable database for historic Arnold Cemetery.

**First Nations Development Institute (Longmont, Colorado)**

Not limited to communities—OC also seeks out institutions and agencies that create social impact in the Great Plains region. First Nations Development Institute is a policy, research, grant making, and lending institution, working to mobilize the capacity of Native Americans for controlling their own economic assets. This past summer, FNDI partnered with OC to create 3 Community Internships to help Native communities in New Mexico to strengthen their local food systems, improve health and nutrition, and build food security.
## OC Community Internship Partners

### STRONG PARTNERS
*(create internships annually)*
- Rawlins County, KS
- Swisher County, TX
- Holy Family Church, Nazareth, TX
- Knights of Columbus Council Nazareth, TX
- Wallace County, KS
- Arnold EDC--Arnold, NE
- Village of Campo, CO
- Wichita County EDC --Leoti, KS
- Rocky Mountain Farmers Union-Coop Development Center (Denver, CO)
- High Plains Food Coop (Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska)
- Sharyland Utilities, LP Amarillo, TX
- Texas Farmers Union Waco, TX
- Wilson ISD (Independent School District --Wilson, TX
- Prairie Workshop, LLC Lubbock, TX
- Dixon Water Foundation

### INTERMEDIATE PARTNERS
*(have created 2-3 internships)*
- City of Tulia, TX
- Quay County Museum Tucumcarl, NM
- Hart, TX
- Sandhills RC&D (Resource Conservation & Development) Council--Mullen, Nebraska
- High Plains Food Bank, Amarillo, TX
- Hemphill County Underground Water District, Canadian, TX
- Panhandle Groundwater District--White Deer, TX
- Greeley County Community Development--Tribune, KS
- Baca County EDC Springfield, CO
- Bird City Century II Foundation--Bird City, KS
- Pullen Produce, Lubbock, TX
- Wes-Tex RC&D, Morton, TX
- Mariposa Ecovillage Amarillo, TX
- Harding County EDC Mosquero, NM
- Fort Larned National Park Larned, KS
- City of Dimmitt, TX
- Knox County Vision Partners Knox City, TX
- National Farmers Union
- Wesley Community Center Amarillo, TX

### BEGINNING PARTNERS
*(first internships in 2013)*
- First Nations Development Institute, Longmont, CO
- Taos County EDC (NM)
- Notah Begay Foundation, Bernalillo, NM
- Gonzales WIC--Gonzales, TX
- South Plains Food Bank, Lubbock, TX
- Covenant Hospital Plainview, TX
- Hereford Regional Medical Center--Hereford, TX
- Pawnee Valley Community Hospital--Larned, KS
- North Colorado Medical Center--Greeley, CO
- Southeast Colorado Hospital--Springfield, CO
- Chapman Harvey Architects Lubbock, TX
- I-20 Nature Preserve Midland, TX
- Northwest Kansas Community Health Partners
- Teller County Farmers Market--Woodland Park, CO
- Central Colorado Foodshed Alliance--Salida, CO
- Heartland Mill Marlenthal, KS
- Paidom Meats-- Nazareth, TX
- Texas Plains Trails Region
In general, an internship provides work experience—a chance to build skills and understanding needed for a world of full-time work and career placement. An internship is like a job, but it is work training instead of job employment. In an internship, a supervisor guides the intern in developing skills, and creates a safe space to see how things really work in career fields or job site. An intern works to learn, to explore if a potential career fits or not, and to adjust their practices according to requirements of the workplace.

What is distinct about a Community Internship? First of all, our internships contribute something significant to a town, neighborhood, or institution. The centerpiece of our program is that interns work on projects that respond to community needs or build up assets. In this way, our internships inspire youth and adults to reconnect with communities, to give something back, and to explore careers that could lead a person “back home” to live, work, play, and raise their families.

Equally important, our interns and supervisors work as part of a larger cohort: several dozen youth and adult interns get to know and interact with each other over a summer or semester—collaborating on projects, sharing friendship, and becoming a group of peers who network to build future possibilities.

Thirdly, interns in our program learn about commonwealth: a set of assets that every community already has. OC views commonwealth as the basis for building new careers and enterprises. Since 2007, more than 200 OC Community Internships have enhanced key assets in places that welcome new energy and vision.

Our internships range from 200 to 240 hours over 8-10 weeks, but can be as long as 6 months. Interns receive an hourly stipend for their internship: high school students receive $8 per hour, those in college earn $9 per hour, and graduate or adult interns are compensated at $10 per hour. OC also offers Community Apprenticeships in situations where the candidate and the partner are ready and willing to create a pathway to a full-time job position.
Regardless of our plans, we never know for certain where life will lead us. But after working with more than 200 Community Internships since 2007, OC can report that at least 20 interns have either found a home, are building a home, or are homeward-bound. Here we profile a few of them:

When **Justin Trammell** (2012, 2013) had started a Master’s degree program in wildlife management, headed toward a career far from his home region. After completing two Community Internships close to home, Justin is now choosing to become a producer and direct marketer of local food products, while also developing his own land stewardship education outreach. Instead of leaving the small farm that he grew up on, Justin is working with his dad, apprenticing with a successful direct marketing entrepreneur, and producing eggs, chicken, and vegetables for sale—with plans to live on the farm for years to come.

After completing her bachelor’s degree and a year in the AmeriCorp program, **Lauren Long** (2013) was seeking a pathway into rural community development. Last summer, in addition to carrying out some projects for the city of Valentine (NE), she conducted a Community Internship with Sandhills RC&D, a 6-county region in western Nebraska. Lauren’s internship project entailed building curriculum for an 8-session Leadership Training Program. By the end of summer, Lauren landed a job as Director of Pawnee County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation. While her goal is to live in rural Nebraska, the internship and employment steps she took in 2013 are opening doors and laying the groundwork.

**Scott Cessarich** (2013) is using internships to join his two passions: agriculture and film, and he would like his work experiences to reconnect him to his Northern New Mexico homeland. As a student at New Mexico State University, Scott discovered a unique opportunity at Taos County Economic Development Corporation, and found a summer Community Internship there over the summer. Now, with some experience in nonprofit management, Scott has another possibility for a future career in Nuevo Mexico.

Rural living can seem too far from a bustling metro area—but when **Erin Parfet** recently needed a new job, she started looking for opportunities in western Kansas. Her interests and abilities meshed with something she found in Wichita County—an organic grains company, Heartland Mill, was looking for a skilled employee. Creative partners helped Erin secure housing and a 6-week Community Internship so that she could move to Leoti, Kansas and gain the experience that was required. Upon successful completion of the internship, Erin will have a full-time position as Food Safety and Operations Procedures Manager at Heartland Mill.

**Alba Soltero** thought she wanted to be a nurse, but soon learned that she couldn’t stand the sight of blood. She did find out that she was good with numbers, as she settled into an accounting major in college. After applying to OC’s program, she was able to get an internship learning the ins and outs of hospital administration, especially as it relates to accounting. When Alba enters the job market in May 2014, she is interested in working as a CPA. But thanks to her Community Internship, she will also have hospital administration in her toolbox.
## HEALTHCARE

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angie Cox</td>
<td>Adult College Student</td>
<td>Tulia, Texas</td>
<td>After a 18-year career as a teacher, Angie returned to college seeking a nursing degree. She interned at Covenant Hospital in Plainview, TX, and experienced the broad scope of options open to a nurse in a regional rural hospital. Angie hopes to begin full-time employment at Covenant when she graduates in May, 2014.</td>
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## WATER CONSERVATION

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<tr>
<td>Julianne Essmiller</td>
<td>College Student</td>
<td>Hutchison, Kansas</td>
<td>Julianne used her passion for research and skills as an educator to design a water conservation education program for Leoti, KS. In a second internship, Julianne built case management skills at Pawnee Valley Community Hospital in Larned, KS.</td>
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## COMMUNITY GARDENS

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<tr>
<td>Beto Rincon</td>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>Sequin, Texas</td>
<td>Beto’s internship was at the LULAC Community Garden in his hometown. He was responsible for planning and conducting educational events, food production, and developing food security among underserved populations.</td>
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## WILDLIFE & NATURE

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<tr>
<td>Jessica Kissner</td>
<td>Adult Intern</td>
<td>Lubbock, Texas</td>
<td>After graduating with a Master of Science degree, Jessica deepened her skills in wildlife conservation and education at the I-20 Wildlife Preserve, where she helped conduct programs and gathered scientific data to help direct future projects.</td>
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## COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

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<tr>
<td>Cassie Carman</td>
<td>Adult Intern</td>
<td>Sharon Springs, KS</td>
<td>During her internship, Cassie helped to document county cemeteries, organized a 5K run to benefit the county fair and helped with fund-raising tasks for the Wallace County Foundation.</td>
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## RENEWABLE ENERGY

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<tr>
<td>Josh Paulson</td>
<td>Adult Intern</td>
<td>Amarillo, Texas</td>
<td>Josh interned at Mariposa Eco-Village, constructing environmentally-sustainable structures. In addition to being a musician, he hopes to have proficiency in Natural Building techniques as part of his future career path.</td>
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## AGRICULTURE

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Trammel</td>
<td>Adult Intern</td>
<td>Canyon, Texas</td>
<td>For his second OC Internship, Justin collected and analyzed 200 water samples for the Hemphill County Underground Water Conservation District in Canadian, TX.</td>
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A Sampling from 2013

HISTORY

Christina Stephens
Adult Intern
Nazareth, Texas

Christina used her skills as a historic preservation professional to help the community of Nazareth, TX, to build a historical exhibit highlighting organizations and societies since 1902. As a follow-up, Stephens is currently working on a second internship to publish a 3-part history book for Nazareth.

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

Lonnie Lujan
High School Student
Taos, New Mexico

Lonnie spent her community internship with the Taos Food Center in Taos, New Mexico. She helped to maintain the center’s gardens and assisted with food education events.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Paul Pickering
Graduate Student
Canadian, Texas

Currently enrolled in a graduate program in creative writing, Paul helped the Hemphill County Water District to draft their Annual Report, worked with the local newspaper, and taught a poetry writing course for Canadian Arts Alliance.

EXPLORING COMMUNITY

Adriena Lopez
High School Student
Tulia, Texas

In addition to a busy summer with the Upward Bound program, Adriena managed to complete a 100-hour internship, assisting the Tulia Chamber of Commerce, Swisher County Picnic celebration, and working at Swisher Memorial Hospital, as she prepares for her future goal for being a doctor.

EDUCATION

Nikki Tulley
Adult Intern
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Nikki spent her first community internship working with the Notah Begay Foundation, on programs to increase physical activity opportunities and combat childhood obesity. In her second internship, she honed skills connected with operating a commercial kitchen at Taos Food Center.

REGIONAL TOURISM

Chelsea Wink
Graduate Student
Lubbock, Texas

Chelsea used skills gained in her pursuit of a Master’s degree in History to promote tourism marketing and social media outreach for a 52-county area, working with the director of the Texas Plains Trail Region.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Dayna Larreau
College Student
Arnold, Nebraska

Dayna’s past two summers were spent interning in her hometown, documenting the community’s cemetery and creating a website that provides important information for people doing genealogical research, in addition to carrying out projects for community improvement.

FARMER’S MARKET

Ali Loker
Adult Intern
Divide, Colorado

During her internship with the Teller County Farmer’s Market, in Woodland Park, CO, Ali worked to increase attendance at the market, creating a monthly e-newsletter and expanding the use of the SNAP/EBT program.
OC focuses on commonwealth because it is the foundation for building new careers and enterprises. Commonwealth consists of local & regional assets that can be enhanced, preserved, and invested in to generate more resources over a long-term horizon. No matter how financially poor or rich a town may be, there are 12 key assets (see graphic) already present in any community.

**EXAMPLES OF COMMONWEALTH:**

- Gifts of the natural world and human society that have monetary and non-monetary value in supporting life and well-being for both human and natural communities.
- Wealth we inherit or create together… which we desire to pass on, as undiminished and regenerative as possible, to our children and future generations.
- A sector of the economy that compliments but is also distinct from the market and government sectors.
- Communal assets that increase or decrease depending on management.

**12 KEY ASSETS DEFINED**

**Education:** the local resources for learning

**Health:** the resources for physical, mental, and spiritual wellness and well-being that exist in the community or region.

**Leisure & Recreation:** the social opportunities, abilities, and infrastructure for resting, retreating, re-creating, and savoring life in the community or region.

**Spirituality:** the web of relationships, connections and practices that knit together persons, community, the environment, and the cosmos.

**History:** a local and regional knowledge of particular experiences lived over generations, as well as a capacity to transfer and preserve these experiences through stories and memories.

“It is stories — narratives formal or informal, elaborate and detailed or offhand and telegraphic — of what happened to people in a place, of what they have done with the things that they found there…” (Kent, C. Ryden)

**Sense of Place:** “...that complex of meaning that gives a landscape significance in the eyes of the people who inhabit it, marking it off from the surrounding terra incognita…”


**Arts & Culture:** the shapes, colors, and contours of our locality and region, as well as our way of viewing the place, plus our habits, our attitudes, our celebrations, our songs, and our dances.

**Water Cycle:** the combined healthy functioning of water to in all its hydrologic stages…especially the capacity to continually regenerate an abundant community of life in the locality and region.

**Wildlife & the Natural World:** the diversity of flora, fauna, geology, and physical geography that constitute the ecological web of a locality and region.

**Soil & Mineral Cycle:** the healthy functioning of processes: birth, death, and decay, that build local soils, and allow for continual renewal of the life in the region.

**Foodshed:** the ecology and cultures that grow, process, market, and distribute food and food products from the local community and region.

**Renewable Energy:** the regional availability as well as local harnessing of energy infinitely sourced from sunlight and the solar cycle, instead of finite fossil fuels.
BUILDING A RICH EXPERIENCE: 10 KEY SKILLS

An internship is a perfect for expanding your horizons, skills, and knowledge. OC suggests 10 key skills that an intern can develop (or at least get some initial exposure) during any type of community internship.

Supporting Local Food Production
As rural towns and urban neighborhoods struggle with epidemic rates of obesity and related diseases, communities across our nation are re-learning the value and necessity of eating fresh nutritious food. Interns can be involved in local food production through community gardens, school gardens, farmers markets, working with farmers selling through cooperatives, etc.

Stewarding Natural Resources
As air pollution, water depletion, loss of open space and farmland, global climate change, and declining wildlife populations become more widespread, our diminishing ecological wealth is leaving everyone in a much poorer condition. Communities today need more conservationists. Interns could consider signing up with the local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service program, Earth Team Volunteers, or by participating in other types of environmental education and recycling programs.

Revitalizing the Community
Everyone desires to live in a community with good jobs, excellent schools, healthy families and neighborhoods. Fulfilling these hopes requires that we learn about local assets and needs, as well as participate in strategic actions like creating new businesses, conducting festivals, and carrying out projects that benefit all residents. Offer your ideas, creativity, and hard work to re-energize your neighborhood and town.

Being a Community Volunteer
So much that makes a community a great place to live is not carried out by paid employees, yet most non-profits and civic groups struggle with finding volunteers. Many people feel overworked, disconnected, or not interested in offering their spare time to benefit others. As the need for vital services increases, interns can ask themselves: what can I volunteer to do to help my community? What could I give back to rebuild the commonwealth?

Learning and Sharing Stories
Each person is a web of stories, and so are the people and places we care about. Peoples’ stories are a cornerstone of communities. Consider the powerful impact that you can make (and receive) by digitally recording the life stories of a few people living in your town. While preserving the stories of others, interns learn more about their own unique story.

Finding Your Voice
No matter what job a person holds in the future, he or she will be required to verbally communicate their ideas and perspective to small or large groups of people. Few people feel comfortable doing public speaking, but the good news is that it is a skill that can be learned...mostly through practice. Seek out civic clubs or business groups to make a presentation about your internship. You can help to spread the word and build support for future internships.

Discovering Your Place
There are interesting places, events, people, and activities that are waiting to be explored. Through a Community Internship, you can re-discover a town or neighborhood...or see some things for the first time. Developing your sense of place is essential to feeling at home.

How to Find Funding
In every region, financial assets are available to help meet community needs—yet few people know how to find resources to fund a worthy idea. Gaining some basic knowledge about how to apply for charitable grants or loans is highly valuable for an intern. Whether your work is in the private or public sectors, any knowledge you possess about grant funding will allow you to be an effective community leader.

Community Leadership
In any rural or urban community, one indicator of a high quality of life is the number of people involved in leadership roles. Our internships place you in the heart of leadership: building self-knowledge, learning how to gather information, and involvement in community action.

Career Path Development
Whether you are studying in a degree program, or you already have a degree or a job— the future may be pointing towards a different career that you haven’t yet considered. New careers often require a change of directions— like becoming an entrepreneur and starting a business, or finding some creative way to come back and live in a community that you love. Your internship is a time to gather information and explore possible careers. Few people have only one career in their adult lives, so learn what steps are needed to make a future career happen.
1. INVESTMENT PARTNERS

An internship investment fee is required to cover some of OC’s program costs and to pay an intern stipend. Each type of Community Internship may need more than one funding partner to contribute the investment fee. In addition to what the community or institution invests, the CHS Foundation contributes a percentage of match so that staff and operational costs of Community Internship are fully covered.

HOW DO YOU RAISE THE INVESTMENT FEE?

At times, one business or organization can contribute the entire fee required to fund an internship and the projects for an intern to work. This is an ideal situation, because the funder has both the money and the project work to support an internship. In most cases, it takes 2 to 4 partners to create an internship…with each partner contributing $600-$1,200, and also projects. Multiple investment partners are essential if a community, organization, or business wants to have 2 or more interns during the summer or a semester.

Examples of potential intern investment partners include: civic organizations (Lions, Rotary, etc.), schools, local charitable foundations, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Corporations, nonprofit organizations, county or city governments, banks, Rural Electric or Rural Telephone cooperatives, farmer or producer co-ops, hospitals, local businesses, churches, etc.

2. PROJECTS

Community Interns are not simply inexpensive labor to run errands or do odds-and-ends. Partners need to have identified projects that warrant the skills of an Intern and that fit with the time frame of the Internship.

3. SUPERVISOR(S)

All OC Community internships will require a committed supervisor or supervisors from the community or institution. The time commitment needed for an intern supervisor is about one hour per week, but sometimes more. Duties include:

1. Participate in the intern interviewing and selection process
2. Build an internship summary
3. Draft a work plan
4. Provide a suitable place for the intern to work and a safe working environment
5. Review weekly timesheets
6. Offer one-on-one guidance and mentoring throughout the internship
7. Help to set up a harvesting ceremony near the end of the internship
8. Complete a Supervisor Evaluation of the intern
9. Fill out any forms for students receiving college credit for their internship work

4. INTERNS

High School youth, college students, and adults who are disciplined, motivated, and able to be self-starters make excellent Community Interns. If a youth or adult is just looking for a summer or semester job, this is not sufficient for a quality internship. Interns need opportunities to work on projects that add value to their local communities and institutions, while achieving skill development, paid work experience, and hometown career exploration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community/Partners Investment</th>
<th>Maximum Intern Stipend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Intern</td>
<td>$1,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>($1,700 (210 hours @ approx. $8 per hour))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Intern</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>($2,100 (230 hours @ approx. $9 per hour))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult or Graduate School Intern</td>
<td>$2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>($2,400 (240 hours @ approx. $10 per hour))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECRUITING A COMMUNITY INTERN: 7 BASIC STEPS

1. Draft an internship summary...start with a page consisting of 7-10 bullet points regarding projects and activities that you think an intern could do in the work setting you have in mind.

2. Share your description with others who might be willing to partner on the internship, either: by offering project work for the intern, or supervision, or funding to cover the internship investment. Customize your internship description to fit the partners’ input and contributions.

3. Convert your description into an Internship Summary, merging your bullet points into 4-5 major objectives with approximate hours assigned to each objective (the total number of hours would be the amount assigned to the internship level: 210, 230, or 240). Also, add an introductory paragraph that summarizes the internship and the main learning opportunities available to a Community Intern (take a look at the template on page 14 to guide you).

4. Advertise for a Community Intern—distribute the internship summary to high schools, to college departments that fit with your internship summary, as well as create a brief press release to publish in local newspapers and church bulletins. Make sure to list a contact person to whom prospective internship candidates can respond. At the same time, reflect on all the people you and others know, and personally visit any who you think could make a good intern (candidates are more likely to respond to personal invitations).

5. Interview the candidates that meet the expectations of the internship. Select a site on or near the place or places where you want the intern to work, so that a brief tour can be given to the candidates. When you invite candidates to interview, require that they bring a resume, and at least two references. Checking their references is important to do, but not until you are serious about choosing a candidate as an intern. If any of your partners will be directly involved in the internship, they should participate in the interviews.

In the interview itself, have some questions prepared beforehand. Start the interview by introducing everyone and helping the candidate(s) to feel at ease. Here are some general questions that you can choose from (or make up your own):

- Tell us a recent episode or a brief story that illustrates who you are?
- What motivates you?
- What are you passionate about?
- What are some big decisions that you have already made in your life?
- What do you perceive as your personal strengths and your weaknesses?
- Who are five people that you admire most (contemporary or historical)?
- Do you prefer working alone or as a team?
- Where have you worked before?
- What are some activities that you have been involved in?
- What is your availability during the summer for this internship?
- What are five words that other people have used to describe you?
- Do you consider yourself as “coachable”...willing to learn and receive constructive criticism?

6. Select an internship candidate, by looking for passion and enthusiasm, and a personality that will blend with the supervisor(s).

Additional traits to look for:
- Is the candidate friendly and customer-oriented?
- Does the candidate have confidence?
- Does the candidate like to learn, and are they comfortable with failure and learning through constructive criticism?
- Can the candidate demonstrate an ability to work responsibly and effectively?

As you move toward a decision, now is the time to check on your candidate’s references—to get a fuller picture of who the person is. Take all your findings back to the internship partners, and share with them what you have learned through the interviews—then you should be ready to choose your intern. As a courtesy, be sure to respond to everyone you have interviewed within a reasonable amount of time, to let them know what you have decided. Also, if possible, choose an alternate—in case the candidate you first select has to decline or withdraw for some reason.

7. Inform the intern you have chosen for the position, and ask if the person will accept the internship. Then make sure that the candidate has filled out and submitted an official application to Ogallala Commons. Once the application has been completed, the partners will be ready to move to drafting a Work Plan to guide the new Community Intern to a successful experience!
This internship requires a college student with interest in public relations, media production, marketing, and excellent computer and interpersonal communication skills. The internship will focus on developing a one day monthly adult leadership development training in the very rural six counties served by the Sandhills Resource Conservation & Development Council.

The intern will design the program flyer; develop and schedule press releases; develop the 8-month schedule including meeting dates, locations, venues and workshop agenda; work with adjoining county leadership groups to develop speaker lists and make speaker contacts; and assist in recruiting the first leadership development class. The internship will begin in May 2013 and continue through the start of the Leadership Training (Sept. 2013). The maximum internship hours will not exceed 230 total hours, and the stipend payment will be $2,100. Preference will be given to a student intern from the six county Sandhills RC&D area.

**Main Objectives and Outcomes:**

1) Create adult leadership development training flyer including logo and design. *Approx. 20 hours*

2) Meet with Leadership Lincoln County and Leadership Keith County directors to get information on class speakers, topics, agendas, fee schedules, and a budget for this leadership series. *Approx. 40 hours*

3) Develop monthly class schedule including topics, speaker lists, agenda, locations, etc. *Approx. 50 hours*

4) Line up locations to conduct the workshops and meal options with associated costs. *Approx. 50 hours*

5) Contact speakers to confirm dates, topics and any associated costs (travel, speaker fees, etc). *Approx. 40 hours*

6) Write a series of press releases for area newspapers promoting the leadership series. *Approx. 10 hours*

7) Work with Twila Phillips in writing program summaries for use in grant applications to help fund the leadership series. *Approx. 20 hours*

As a participant of Ogallala Commons Community Internship Program, the intern must also meet the following requirements (non-stipend time):

- With supervisor, craft a **Work Plan**
- Attend an **Orientation** in Channing, Texas (June 3-5, 2014)
- Create and publish 5 **Internet blog postings** with 10 photos during internship period
- Conduct an “**Explore Your Community**” exercise
- Do 10 hours of **Community Service** during internship period
- Prepare **Internship Portfolio** (via PowerPoint) and present it during August **Harvesting Ceremony**
- Prepare an **Evaluation** of the internship, as well as receive an evaluation from supervisor

**Internship Supervisor**

Twila Phillips, Executive Secretary, Sandhills RC&D Council

To apply for this internship online, visit: [http://ogallalacommons.org/programs/community-internships/](http://ogallalacommons.org/programs/community-internships/) or contact, Ogallala Commons Director, Darryl Birkenfeld, 806-945-2255, darrylb@amaonline.com.
Below is a Work Plan drafted for Lauren Long, based on the Internship Summary on Page 14. We offer this example as a template for drawing up your own plan, with 4-6 activities per week that the intern can do to accomplish the main objectives during an 8-10 week time frame. Remember, the Work Plan is not set in stone…it will need to be altered and revised as the internship moves along, according to circumstances and situations.

**2013 Community Intern Work Plan for Lauren Long**

**June 17 – July 1 (30 hours)**
- Attend Orientation teleconference to go over program details (contractor time).
- Develop logo and design template for Adult Leadership Training flyer.
- Research similar leadership training series such as Leadership Lincoln County (North Platte), the adult leadership class for Keith County (Ogalalla) and possibly the new leadership class for Custer County (Broken Bow). Twila will provide initial contact information for each of those counties.
- Make contact with other counties to begin gathering information on class speakers, topics, agendas, and fee schedules
- Begin budget development
- Begin thinking about a community service project
- Write and publish Blog 1 on OC Community Intern Blog by June 1st (contractor time)

**July 1 – July 15 (30 hours)**
- Develop press releases to begin in mid to late July. Possibly set up a Facebook page or website to publicize the training series.
- Begin to develop a monthly class schedule including topics, speaker lists, agendas, and locations.
- Begin making contacts for meeting locations – courthouses, schools, restaurants, etc. to conduct the workshops and line up meal options with associated costs.
- Complete flyer and send to Twila so copies can be made for distribution
- Make initial contacts with Darryl Birkenfeld and Sue Pearman (Central Sandhills Extension Agent) concerning the Youth Engagement Day in conjunction with the youth Sandhills Leadership class in mid to late October.

**July 15 – July 29 (30 hours)**
- Continue blog schedule as outlined in guidebook (contractor time)
- Continue developing class schedules and setting up meeting locations
- Begin to contact speakers to confirm dates, topics, and any associated costs (travel, speaker fees, etc.)
- Continue working with Darryl Birkenfeld and Sue Pearman (Central Sandhills Extension Agent) to coordinate Youth Engagement Day in conjunction with a youth Sandhills Leadership Class meeting

**July 29 – August 12 (30 hours)**
- Begin to recruit possible candidates for the leadership training using lists provided by various individuals
- Continue developing class schedules and setting up meeting locations
- Continue to contact speakers to confirm dates, topics, and any associated costs (travel, speaker fees, etc.)
- Continue working with Darryl Birkenfeld and Sue Pearman (Central Sandhills Extension agent) to coordinate Youth Engagement Day in conjunction with a youth Sandhills Leadership Class meeting
- Develop press releases/facebook/website posts to publicize class

**August 12 – August 26 (30 hours)**
- Finalize meeting details including agendas, locations, meals, and speakers
- Finalize plans for Youth Engagement Day with assistance from Darryl and Sue – help set up business tours and speakers as necessary

**August 26 – Sept. 9 (30 hours)**
- Write program summaries for use in grant applications to help fund future classes
- Complete blog requirements
- Complete final plans for the Youth Engagement day

**Sept. 9 – Sept. 23 (30 hours)**
- Complete any last minutes plans and plan Harvesting Ceremony in conjunction with Twila Phillips
- Attend first Adult Leadership training if possible and also first youth Sandhills Leadership class if possible
The Art of Supervising

We may assume that if interns are selected, they should know how to do their work. While it is appropriate for supervisors to expect a certain level of responsibility, it is important to remember that the interns are gaining work experience—i.e. learning how to work. No matter the intern, appropriate supervision is essential to their success.

First of all, to supervise a Community Intern requires that the supervisor establish a positive, professional, and trusting relationship with the intern. Such a relationship is not achieved immediately, but built step-by-step, starting with the initial meeting/interview with the intern. What catches your attention from the stories the intern tells? What do you see in the intern’s character or actions that you can affirm?

Training is another essential step. For supervisors with demanding schedules, OC offers several options to obtain the information and training. Attending a Community Partners Meeting in the fall or spring is very helpful. A preferred option would be to attend the OC Intern Orientation on June 4, 2013 (at Talon Point Retreat near Channing, TX) for excellent training and networking with other supervisors. All, supervisors will receive an OC Internship Supervisor Guidebook.

Crafting a Work Plan for the intern is another opportunity to become better acquainted with the intern, and to find out more about their work style, their abilities, and their limitations. As the internship unfolds, supervisors should ask for a weekly meeting with the intern to assess how the Work Plan is being carried out and what alterations need to be made.

Monitoring the work of the intern and communicating about what you observe is especially important in the first weeks of the internship, because at the 60-hour mark (somewhere at the end of the second week or in the third week), the supervisor will need to assess if the intern has successfully completed the Probationary Period, or due to serious issues, that the internship should be terminated.

Supervising is more about mentoring than monitoring. Not every task that the intern does will turn out well. Constructive criticism and coaching need to be given, and “teachable moments” should not be missed. In addition, supervisors can serve as connectors, introducing interns to civic leaders, business owners, volunteers, and employees—all sorts of people who could widen the intern’s knowledge and vision. More than information, interns need to know something about the history, the people, and the contexts that shape their community and region.

Adequate supervision is what enables an intern to succeed. Interns need a supervisor’s help to meet their main objectives, to truly develop their professional skills, and to check off the requirements in their contract as “completed”. Supervisors should help interns to schedule their Harvest Ceremonies and to tell the stories of their internship to the community or organization partners who invested in them.

For supervisors, the requirement to give an evaluation to an intern is not something to be taken lightly, or left to the last minute. Please take some written notes throughout the internship—in the end, you will be glad that you did, and so will the intern.
Achieving measurable outcomes is important, and so are the things you learn and take with you from your internship. In addition to paid intern hours, OC requires that all interns complete 8 products that deepen and document their internship. As a result, interns will finish with quality professional tools and references that can be used in future job and scholarship applications, or in additional internships, apprenticeships, or fellowships.

Attend an Orientation
The vision and the outcomes intended for Community Internships are outlined in this Guidebook, but they are conveyed more vividly and in greater detail through an orientation. It is also a time for learning more about Ogallala Commons, networking with other interns, understanding the mechanics of the internship, and picking up new ideas through excellent presentations.

Execute a Work Plan
Supervisors must develop a Work Plan and meet with the intern for tweaking and joint approval. Weekly meetings will be needed to monitor the Plan. These meetings help to build a working relationship, a key component for making adjustments, solving problems, and seeking more information. Right from the start, OC Community Interns must be willing to practice three important skills: planning, communication, and execution.

Publish 5 Internet Blogs with at least 10 photos
Each internship is a story that only the intern can tell, so we require all interns to communicate what they do using approximately 2,000 total words and about a dozen photos. This requirement also produces the documentation that interns can easily fashion into a final Portfolio.

Conduct an “Explore Your Community” Exercise
One of the five blogs requires that interns walk around and see what their community or neighborhood looks like on the ground.

Complete 10 hours of Community Service
Having been nourished in some many ways, it is important that interns give back a portion of what they have received, by engaging in some form of volunteer outreach.

Conduct a Harvesting Ceremony
Near the end of the internship, interns will make a public presentation to a community group, as a type of feedback loop where internship partners get to hear how things turned out, from the intern’s perspective. Supervisors will need to help interns find a suitable time and audience for the Harvesting Ceremony.

Evaluations
OC provides interns a form to evaluate your internship experience and our program. Additionally, supervisors will also be given a form to evaluate interns. Both forms will assist OC staff in composing letters of recommendations that intern alumni often request.

Submit an Internship Portfolio
Using a template that OC will provide, each intern will create a brief summary of the high points and outcomes of their internship. This will be done in a power point format with less than 12 slides, and then converted into a PDF document.
How Does OC Help Partners and Interns?

**Intern Scouting, Recruitment, and Placement**

Throughout the year, youth or adults inquire with Ogallala Commons about internship possibilities and make applications. In addition, at multiple events and presentations, OC Staff are constantly on the lookout for prospective intern candidates. OC helps both seekers and applicants to meet community leaders or make contact with institution and resource partners who can create Community Internships. If a community or institution cannot find an intern with specific skills, OC can often recommend an applicant with skills that can meet their needs.

**Intern Application Form**

OC offers an online application form, and processes and files all Community Internship applications, so that photos, contact information, and important data are obtained and are accessible.

**Intern and Supervisor Orientation**

Ogallala Commons conducts a 3-day Intern Orientation each year in June, including one day for supervisors. This Orientation covers all basic responsibilities that interns and supervisors need to fulfill, while offering valuable professional skills-building presentations on Personality Assessment, Understanding Community, Building Your Platform, and How to Network. As an alternative, OC offers mini-orientations by phone or in person.

**Intern Contract**

OC provides an Intern Contract that the intern, supervisor, and OC Staff sign to insure clear understanding, agreements, and procedures for their Community Internship.

**Community Intern Blog**

(www.ogallalaintern.blogspot.com)
OC maintains and monitors a Community Intern Blog as a place for interns to publish written accounts and post photos about their internship work. The blog allows supervisors and interested people to read about what interns are doing, to see how they are growing and progressing on projects, and to write comments that can help interns to learn.

**Internship Coordination**

During the course of an internship, OC staff will provide check-ins with interns, assess intern probationary periods along with supervisors, offer troubleshooting help to supervisors and interns, and provide intervention when required.

**Stipend Payment**

Each intern receives periodic stipend payments. OC is responsible for receiving time sheets from interns, paying their stipends according to internship hours logged, as well as final completion of basic products outlined in the Intern Contract. OC also receives an IRS Form W-9 from all Community Interns and issues an IRS Form 1099 for all stipends paid.

**Evaluations**

OC insures that all Community Interns complete a self-evaluation of their performance when they complete their internship, and receive an evaluation from their Intern Supervisor.

**Future Learning Opportunities**

OC shares information about education and professional development opportunities, like Summer Retreats or Tours, or the College Conference on Cooperatives. OC is also in the process of developing an Intern Profile page on our website to assist our Intern alumni in job searching and resume building. In addition, OC recommends and invites Community Interns for a second or third internship within our program. Finally, all OC Interns receive The Place, OC's monthly electronic newsletter, to keep them updated on events and opportunities.
Ogallala Commons is proud of what we and our numerous partners have built through the Community Internship Program. But without the CHS Foundation as our major funding partner, more than 200 OC Community Internships would never have happened. Since 2007, the CHS Foundation grant funding has enabled Ogallala Commons to conduct Intern & Supervisor Orientations, Summer Tours and Gatherings, and provide adequate staffing for an ever-expanding program. You may have heard of the CHS Foundation or CHS INC, so here is some pertinent information that will help interns, supervisors, and community partners to be more aware of our vital partner.

ABOUT CHS INC

CHS Inc. (www.chsinc.com) is a diversified energy, grains and foods company committed to providing the essential resources that enrich lives around the world. A Fortune 100 company, CHS is owned by farmers, ranchers and cooperatives, along with thousands of preferred stock-holders across the United States. CHS supplies energy, crop nutrients, grain, livestock feed, food and food ingredients, along with business solutions including insurance, financial and risk management services. The company operates petroleum refineries/pipelines and manufactures, markets and distributes Cenex® brand refined fuels, lubricants, propane and renewable energy products. CHS is listed on the NASDAQ at CHSCP.

ABOUT THE CHS FOUNDATION

The CHS Foundation (www.chsfoundation.org) is the major giving entity of CHS Inc. (www.chsinc.com), a diversified energy, grains and foods Fortune 100 company committed to providing the essential resources that enrich lives. As a part of the CHS stewardship focus, the CHS Foundation is committed to investing in the future of rural America, agriculture and cooperative business through education and leadership development.

CHS FOUNDATION UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

The CHS Foundation is also a major contributor to scholarships for agricultural education in colleges and universities across the Midwest and Plains states. Here are the types of educational funding that the CHS Foundation offers for students in ag studies and ag-related careers:

SCHOLARSHIPS

High School students: 50 $1,000 scholarships are available for seniors pursuing an agricultural-related major at any two-year or four-year college. Two-year college students: 25 $1,000 scholarships are available for first-year students studying an agricultural-related major at any two-year college. University students: 125 scholarships are available to students working towards an agricultural-related major at 26 universities across the nation.

COLLEGE CLUB MINI-GRANTS

Grants up to $1,000 are available to agricultural-related college clubs to support academic, professional and leadership development of its members. Visit chsfoundation.org for application and eligibility information.

William Nelson, VP Corporate Citizenship and President, CHS Foundation, (left) shakes hands with 2013 Community Intern Beto Rinco, (right) at the 2013 Intern Orientation. Photo courtesy of Alphonso Rincon
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Timeline and Checklist for OC Community Internships

Nov. - Dec. 2013

- Make contact with Ogallala Commons staff to become a Community Partner.
- Begin listing needs or project ideas in your community or institution that interns could address.
- Begin searching for partners to fund or add project work to the Community Internship.
- Work with partners to draft an Internship Summary.
- Begin recruiting! Send the internship description to Ogallala Commons, high school counselors, college and university departments and/or professors and local newspapers.


- Continue recruiting internship candidates—try to think of candidates who might be home for the holidays—ones that you or others could personally invite to apply online at OC’s website.
- Secure Internship Investment partners, if necessary.

March 2014

- Interview candidates, and select an internship application.
- Call to check references of promising candidates.
- Select and notify the intern candidate(s) that fit best with your internship position.
- Verify that your selected candidate(s) have completed an online application with Ogallala Commons.

April 2014

- Submit Investment Fee to Ogallala Commons. Fee is Due, Tuesday, April 10, 2014.
- Begin drafting Work Plan for Internship (See sample on page 15).

May 2014

- Submit draft Work Plan(s) to Ogallala Commons. Due, Friday, May 23, 2014

June 2014

- Attend OC Intern & Supervisor Orientation with your intern on June 3-5, 2014 at Talon Point, near Channing, TX.
- Sign internship contract.

July & August 2014

- Orient your intern to your community and local organizations. Introduce intern to the people they will be working with as well as internship investment partners.
- Review Work Plan with your intern on a weekly basis.
- Set work hours and weekly check-in dates with intern.
- Review performances of the intern and confirm ability to meet expectations.

- Complete Probationary Period online at OC website.
- Receive and approve timesheets by intern(s) with online form submitted to Ogallala Commons.
- Log into OC Community Intern Blog and leave bi-weekly comments for your intern.

- Assist intern in scheduling and completing a Harvesting Ceremony.
- Assist intern in completing full requirements of Community Internship (blogs, community service, time logs, portfolio, etc).
- Complete online supervisor evaluation of intern, and confirm that intern has completed their online performance review.