

# Summer 2025 Internship Guide



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# Introduction

Whether you plan to participate in the OIA Internship Program or develop your own internship opportunity at your agency, this guide will provide helpful information to get you started. If you have any questions about internships, please don't hesitate to reach out to Brian Lawrence, the Director of HR Solutions, at 614-552-3048 or via email at [brian@ohioinsuranceagents.com](mailto:brian@ohioinsuranceagents.com).

## **OIA Internship Program Overview**

With support from the Board, OIA is launching a new internship program starting in Summer 2025. Longtime members may recall the previous program under the PIA. That program lasted ten weeks, with participants spending five weeks in an agency and five weeks at a carrier. Based on feedback from our members, we have redesigned the program to focus exclusively on internships that explore careers within independent agencies.

## **Mission Statement**

The purpose of the internship program is to expose students to careers in independent insurance agencies. While the primary target for the program is business, marketing, and entrepreneurial majors in their junior or senior years of college, it will also include community college students interested in exploring careers in independent agencies.

Our goal is to increase awareness of the insurance industry and the independent agency system among college students, fostering interest in the industry as a career option for young professionals.

## **Call-to-Action**

Year after year, our members identify attracting and retaining new talent as one of their top challenges and pain points. The reality is that most high school and college students today are unaware of the benefits and financial stability a career in insurance can offer. Surveys show that most students don't even consider a career in insurance, let alone one within an insurance agency. Through internships, we have the opportunity to collectively elevate the profile of our industry.



# 2024

## SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM REVIEW

This past summer, OIA facilitated seven interns for six member agencies. The participating agencies ranged from small to large offices. From this year's group, three received full-time job offers and two will be returning for Summer 2025. Thank you to our participating interns!



**Brian Lawrence**

Director of HR Solutions

### FROM THE DESK OF HR SOLUTIONS

OIA has found tremendous benefit in connecting interns with local agencies. With support from the OIA Board, the program continues to provide students awareness on our industry and available opportunities. We'd like to recognize and thank the following agencies for participating in the 2024 program:

- Knight Insurance Group
- UIS Insurance & Investments
- Smith-Feike-Milton Insurance
- Kasmer Insurance Agency
- Phelan Insurance Agency
- Wichert Insurance

# Benefits of Internships

Internships aren't just about giving students a glimpse into potential careers—they're a two-way street. Hosting interns offers agencies a wealth of benefits while providing valuable opportunities to nurture and develop young talent.



2024 interns had the opportunity to visit company partner, Central Insurance, in Dublin, OH.

## Benefits for Agencies

Hiring an intern offers numerous advantages for your agency, beginning with the opportunity to attract and nurture the best and brightest young professionals. Interns can increase capacity and provide temporary support to your staff, helping complete special projects that might otherwise remain unfinished. Financially, internships can be a cost-effective alternative to more expensive recruitment methods, such as using staffing agencies or hiring employees who may not be a long-term fit. Interns also bring fresh ideas and energy to your workplace, fostering creativity and innovation.

Participating in an internship program can elevate your agency's profile within the community and enhance its reputation, making it more attractive to future talent. Additionally, internships allow you to experiment with new roles or functions without requiring a long-term commitment, while providing an opportunity to evaluate whether a student's skills and cultural fit align with your agency's needs.

## Providing Opportunities for Students

Internships provide students with practical knowledge and valuable insights into a potential career path within your agency. They offer students the chance to evaluate whether they see themselves as a good fit with your agency's culture while applying their classroom learning to real-world work situations.

# Intern Program Structure

Internships can be structured in a variety of different ways to meet the needs of the agency and the student. Internships for students from traditional four-year colleges and universities typically occur during the summer. You can also structure part-time internships for students where they are working part time at the agency and taking classes. Students at community colleges may have more flexibility to structure internships around their classes.

## **Paid Internships**

The best practice today is to offer a paid internship. Due to the rising costs of education, it is very difficult to find a student with the ability to work an unpaid internship unless it is for school credit. A paid internship must comply with Fair Labor Standards and minimum wage.

## **Unpaid Internships for School Credit**

Some colleges and universities may offer students course credit for completing an internship. These internships need to be carefully coordinated with the student and academic department. Typically, the student will be required to register for a specific course and complete academic requirements that may include reports and presentations.

## **Length of Internships**

The ideal length for an internship is approximately ten weeks or the length of an academic quarter. Depending on the success of the internship, agencies can choose to extend internships into part time work opportunities.



Judi French, Director of the Ohio Department of Insurance, speaking with OIA interns this past year.



# 2025 Internship Program

## **Program Commitments for Agencies:**

- Participate in the interview and selection of the intern for your agency.
- Maintain a budget to pay interns \$17-18/hr. (student will be placed on agency payroll). At ten weeks at \$18/hr, that equals \$7,200 before payroll taxes.
- Budget for intern to travel and spend one night in Columbus to participate in a learning and social event
- Provide day to day oversight & management of the intern
- Provide equipment needed for intern to perform work (computer, systems access, desk etc.)
- Provide meaningful learning opportunities during the internship that provide a realistic and positive overview of careers within the independent agencies
  - Opportunities should include marketing efforts, non-licensed customer service work, exposure to personal/commercial lines, interactions and observations with carriers and clients
- Assign an internship host or mentor who will ensure a great experience for the intern
- If mutually beneficial, consider offering the intern a part-time work extension, additional internship next summer, or a full-time job offer.

## **OIA's Responsibilities:**

- Provide overall organization and direction of the program
- Help agencies find interns by marketing internship opportunities and participating in college career fairs
- Coordinate internship interviews and program offers
- Be a resource to agencies for questions, concerns, and general support during the internship
- Act as a resource to interns to provide mentorship and general support during the program
- Host educational and social activities to connect interns
- Provide a \$500 Foundation Scholarship for students upon successful completion of the program

## Intern Obligations:

- Have a sincere interest and openness to exploring a career in an independent agency setting
- Attend all intern program events (orientation, education, social event, debrief)
- Complete a final presentation on their internship experience

**Please Note:** OIA will make a strong effort to match agencies with students local to their agency to avoid the additional expense of housing. Agency interest will aid our team in selecting college career fairs to attend and general areas to target for intern recruitment.

# Summer Internship Timeline

The program will last about 10 weeks. The official first and last day a student will work with their agency may vary slightly based on their schedule. This summer, we had several students continue their internship into the fall, or even take on a part-time or full-time job with their agency.





# Compensation

## **Question: How much should interns be paid?**

Compensation is always a complex question that balances what an agency can afford, what is competitive for the local market, and what will persuade a student to accept the opportunity.

According to The Ohio State University's career placement website, the average hourly wage for intern positions in 2024 is about \$24/hour. This reflects an increase from two years ago, when the Gamma Iota Sigma Insurance Fraternity reported that 85% of internships paid \$17-\$18/hour or more, with 42% paying \$20/hour or more. Keep in mind that the majority of these positions are with large insurance carriers and typically involve roles such as actuary or underwriter.

OIA set the pay rate for the 2025 internship program at \$17-18/hr. We set this rate to balance being competitive enough to attract students with agency budgets and current staff.



## **Intern Compensation Guidelines**

Generally, paid interns with set hours should be treated the same as regular employees in terms of payroll. They should receive a W-2. They should be classified as hourly, non-exempt employees and eligible for overtime if they work more than 40 hours in a week. The payroll company should deduct state and federal taxes from their paycheck, just as they would for regular employees. Interns should also be paid on the regular payroll cycle, as defined by your company's policy.

The only difference on paper between paid interns and employees is that an intern's offer letter should state the short-term nature of their role, in addition to any notes about benefits. Typically, an intern would not be eligible for benefits. However, if an intern works more than 30 hours per week for more than 90 days, you may be required to offer them health insurance according to company policy.

# Recruiting Interns

HOW CAN AGENCIES FIND TALENT?

We encourage agencies to take advantage of the summer internship program OIA provides. Once agencies commit to the program, our team will sign up for career fairs and represent hiring agencies on their behalf.

Agencies can also **contact local college or university career planning departments**, or even attend a career fair themselves.

Some campus organizations also allow groups to speak at their chapter meetings. Reach out to faculty and **volunteer to be a guest speaker** at an insurance or business class.

Take advantage of new hiring tools! **Create a Handshake account** at [www.joinhandshake.com](http://www.joinhandshake.com). Handshake is the system almost all colleges and universities ask companies to use to post internships and full-time job opportunities.



The following schools even host a Risk Management & Insurance program:



# Internship Testimonials

INTERNS + HOST AGENCIES



**Stephanie Boris, Intern**  
SFM Insurance, Smith-Feike-Milton  
Insurance Agency

The internship program at OIA is a pathway to a very rewarding and successful career. It was through this program and the office of Work-Based Learning at Sinclair, that I was able to secure a job after graduation with an independent agency that offers plenty of variety, excitement, and personal growth every day!

The OIA internship also provides real-life experience and knowledge that will benefit your family and friends for the rest of their lives.



**Holly Carpenter, Owner/Principal**  
Kasmer Insurance Agency

In my opinion, an intern program needs to be looked at as an investment in not only our individual agency, but in the longevity of the independent agency system itself. Having Phillip [our intern] join our office allows us to review some of our processes. As we were training him, we were reminded of some processes and procedures that needed to be refreshed and streamlined. Phillip is also of the age where technology is second nature. He was a welcomed addition and had quick and easy answers on tasks that may have taken us more time. An intern can certainly add diversity and a fresh perspective to your office.

The independent insurance agency is built on personal relationship with the customers and friends who we advise. I believe we owe something to this industry that has provided well for us. It is critical we invest in training the future workers that we would want to employ...

The program was very well run by the OIA and had content that gave balance and structure to the students. There is an outlay of time and effort on the agency at first, but it is a great planning tool on both sides, especially when the student and agency can count on a future work opportunity during school breaks. There is an excitement that comes from nurturing a young person who is looking at a career. It reminds us of how fortunate we are and adds a freshness to the office!



**Evan Rosplohowski, Intern**  
Knight Insurance Group

This summer, I had the opportunity to work at such a great company, Knight Insurance Group. I had the opportunity to cold call clients to try to sell them cyber insurance, which gave me great, real sales experience. I also received helpful feedback from my mentors. Knight Insurance Group set my expectations high for future work environments.



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