

MCL Internships Survey - October 2011 Synthesis

- 1. How would you define an internship? For example, how do you think it differs from a volunteer opportunity?**
 - According to respondents, key components of an internship include:
 - A focus on career exploration + skill development for the intern;
 - Responsibility of the host organization to provide training, mentorship, and evaluation, often in partnership with and/or according to the guidelines of an academic institution;
 - Generally of a pre-determined length and structure (often project-based);
 - Interns generally expected to take on skilled roles and projects, with more responsibility and more complex tasks than might be expected of a volunteer.

- 2. Does or has your branch and/or program engaged interns?**
 - 95% of respondents do or have engaged interns.

- 3. If not, why not?**
 - One respondent mentioned that, lacking a formal process for recruitment, it has been difficult to find interns with the appropriate skill set

- 4. If YES, does your branch and/or program actively recruit new interns?**
 - 50% don't actively seek new interns but do *regularly* accept them
 - 39% don't actively seek new interns but do *occasionally* accept them
 - 11% actively recruit and/or seek new interns

- 5. Who is responsible for this intern recruitment process?**
 - Four responded that interns have been referred to them by Volunteer Services
 - Two responded that they have been approached by prospective interns themselves
 - Two responded that interns have been referred to them or recruited by a manager in their department.
 - One responded that interns have been referred to them by Branch Administration
 - One responded that interns have been referred to them by Learning Systems.
 - Three respondents named an individual person (unclear where this person works within the MCL system)
 - Two respondents said they weren't sure.

- 6. How does your branch and/or program determine roles, tasks, and projects for interns? Please select all that apply.**
 - 76% of respondents create roles and tasks for interns on an ad hoc basis
 - 47% of respondents indicated that interns propose and develop their own roles or projects
 - 24% of respondents have pre-developed roles, tasks, and/or position descriptions for interns
 - 24% of respondents cited other methods for determining roles, tasks, and projects (Note: the suggestions offered here all fell into one of the previously listed categories)

7. Who is responsible for this process?

- Six respondents cited a manager or position within their department, including coordinator of Summer Reading, Neighborhood Libraries Director, School Corps librarians, Administrator, youth services staff, and reference staff
- Four respondents cited themselves as the person responsible for this process
- Three respondents stated that it varied based on such factors as the type of project and who was available to supervise the intern
- Two respondents cited a role such as “practicum supervisor” or “site supervisor”
- One respondent didn’t know

8. What is your branch and/or program’s selection, vetting, and placement process for new interns? Please select all that apply.

- 44% stated that interns are accepted on a rolling or as needed basis, while only 6% indicated that interns are accepted on a specific schedule (for example, each September)
- 22% have a formal application process for new interns; 39% conduct interviews to determine the fit of potential interns; and 17% require references or letters of recommendation from new interns
- Several respondents offered explanatory comments:
 - Three respondents stated that the vetting process happens elsewhere, that they simply accept the interns that have been referred to them
 - Three respondents mentioned that they didn’t know what the process was.

9. Who is responsible for this process?

- Three mentioned a manager or specific position in their department such as youth librarian, School Corps lead workers, Administrator, Lead Cataloger, and reference staff
- Three mentioned Volunteer Services
- One mentioned that it depended on who would be managing the intern
- One each mentioned Youth Services, Human Resources, and Programming
- Two mentioned a specific person as the person responsible for this process (position unclear)
 - Four mentioned themselves
- One didn’t know

10. What is your training and orientation process for new interns?

- 67% offer informal orientation and/or training for new interns
 - “It’s done on an individual basis”
 - “Very dependent on the intern and his or her specific project and goals”
- 6% do not offer any kind of orientation or training for new interns
- No respondents reported having a formal orientation and/or training for new interns

11. Who is responsible for this process?

- Six mentioned a manager or specific position in their department, e.g. School Corps librarians, Adult Literacy Coordinator, Administrator and reference staff, etc.
- Three said the person who will be managing the intern

- Three mentioned a specific person in their department (position unclear)
 - Two named themselves
- One each mentioned a practicum supervisor and site supervisor

12. What is your supervision process for new interns?

- 71% of respondents reported that interns are managed by the most relevant person in their department or program
- 12% reported that all interns are managed by one person on their staff
- 6% responded that there is no pre-determined supervision structure for their interns
- One respondent mentioned that multiple staff are responsible for this

13. Please explain.

- Here are some of the explanations offered by respondents:
 - “Almost all of our interns have been interested in Youth Services. I usually hear from them and work with their faculty supervisor to make sure they get what they need and it is a little help to me.”
 - “Interns who have come to admin are given a schedule of people to visit according to their interests and studies. Sometimes that includes Books 2 U visits.”
 - “I usually supervise interns, but if there is a project that is closer to the work of one of the other professional staff in our department, that person will supervise. For example, the adult literacy coordinator.”
 - “My interns (only 2) have been short-term. This makes it easy to lay out the whole project and give them a timeline for check-in at the beginning. I go observe them, or in one case, meet with them once a week. I have found that it is much easier to check in frequently and make small adjustments than to come in later down the line and have to have a more major revision.”
 - “The interns are supervised by the person who is working with them on a specific task.”
 - “Most of our interns are training to be Youth Librarians so they work closely with our Youth Librarian.”
 - “one reference staff person is assigned as the site supervisor and they are assisted by other staff when needed. We try to match the supervisor according to the intern’s goals and schedule”

14. What is your evaluation process for interns and/or the internship program?

Please select all that apply.

- 65% evaluate interns and/or internship roles and projects on an ad hoc basis
- 41% conduct exit interviews of departing interns
- 6% conduct a formal evaluation at least once per year
- 41% cited other evaluation processes, including completing and submitting whatever evaluation paperwork is required by the student’s university
 - One respondent wrote, “Interns usually not here long enough for evaluation.”

15. Who is responsible for this process?

- Six respondents cited the person responsible for supervising the intern, including the practicum supervisor

- Four respondents cited other staff such as the Adult literacy coordinator, School Corps staff, Administrator, and reference staff

16. What types of internships do you currently offer and/or accept? Please select all that apply.

- 74% have offered longer-term internships (one to four months), with 21% offering short-term internships (less than one month)
- 79% have offered unpaid internships; No respondents have offered paid internships
- No respondents have offered online internships
- 42% of respondents have offered direct service internships, with only 5% offering capacity building internships
- Specific types of internships offered in the comments section included:
 - “Technical skills: PHP, Drupal, HTML, CSS”
 - “program development, marketing”
 - “If it were easier to do, we would probably really welcome grant writing or fundraising internships. But we are hampered by the library’s structure here.”
 - “Designed personally on an as needed basis”

17. Have you found that any particular kinds of internship tasks or roles are more popular than others? Do you struggle to fill any?

- While many respondents said it varied based on the intern need and availability, popular roles have included youth services, references, and outreach projects.

18. Who do you currently engage as interns? Please select all that apply.

- 100% have or do engage graduate students (MLS candidates)
- 29% have or do engage undergraduate students
- 6% have or do engage graduate students (other degree programs)
- No respondents have engaged high school students
- 18% indicated that they engage other kinds of interns, including:
 - “we have had interns from the PCC library tech program as well as MLS students and School Library Certification students”
 - “Those considering library school”

19. What do you think are the most successful elements of the current MCL internship program?

- Five respondents mentioned the quality of the hands-on experience interns get with MCL, including mentorship, job-shadowing, and exposure to many different kinds of roles and projects in a large, successful public library system
 - “This is a big library system and interns get to see things here that a smaller system would not have. We have unique programs and more outreach than anybody in the area.”
- Two respondents cited the strong reputation of MCL
- Three respondents cited the flexibility and efficiency of intern engagement efforts at MCL
 - “Flexibility: able to design a practicum that serves the needs of both the student and the branch. Not a lot of paperwork required by MCL. Staff are very welcoming and supportive.”

- Two respondents stated that they didn't realize that there **was** an MCL internship program
- One respondent cited the impact interns have for MCL: "Interns complete projects that makes our own work more efficient. I love the teaching element as teaching is a passion. Even the check ins have helped us learn about weaknesses in our own programs as well as strengths."

20. What do you think are the most challenging elements?

- Six respondents cited not having a formal infrastructure to support intern engagement, including a lack of pre-defined roles/tasks and formal orientation
 - "I don't think of it as a fully-fledged program. It's a little seat-of-the-pants, at this point, and would benefit from a more formal structure."
 - "lack of structure, a degree of anarchy. As witnessed by this survey, even a lack of definition concerning what an internship is. It would be best if all new interns were introduced to personnel rules, intellectual freedom etc before beginning their actual intern activities."
 - "I think the biggest challenge is providing interns with a solid, consistent orientation to the library because there is no organized, system-wide orientation ... it is all done on an individual basis at each location."
 - An additional two respondents stated that they didn't know there **was** an MCL intern program
- Four respondents cited not having enough time to appropriately manage and engage interns
 - "making time to supervise, creating tasks on an as needed basis, coming up with a major project to fulfill their goals that has lasting benefit to the branch or library"
- Four respondents mentioned the challenges of finding and engaging the right interns for the role/task
 - "We haven't heard of any interns looking for technical positions."
 - "Varies by student. Some are less confident and goal oriented, which require more work on the supervisor's part."
 - "Making sure the intern is a good worker and will finish what they commit to"
 - "sometimes people have hard time getting through the process to find the right program"
- Two additional challenges mentioned included:
 - "Also physical space and computer for them to use are a problem since we already share these resources between staff members."
 - "We would like more interns that suggest specific, new, unique projects."

21. How would you describe MCL's current internship program to a member of the public or a potential intern?

- Two respondents cited MCL's welcoming and supportive learning culture for interns
 - "MCL is very supportive of and welcoming to interns. We believe we have a responsibility to help develop future librarians. Internships/practicums are designed to meet the interests and needs of the student as well as benefit the library. It's a negotiation between the supervisor and the student, with primary responsibility for the design in the hands of the student."
- Three respondents cited the real world experience interns would gain at MCL

- “A realistic experience in a public library setting, with insights and help from experienced staff
- “I would tell them that at its heart, the internship is a educational experience which gives the intern an opportunity to work in a real public library -- many have not had that experience -- and to actually use some of the skills and knowledge that he or she has acquired in formal training. It also provides an opportunity to learn about the many aspects of the modern public library directly from its practitioners.”
- “Having an internship experience at Multnomah County Library will position any potential librarian well in their job search.”
- Eight respondents stated that they don’t know enough about the overall program (or whether one exists system-wide) to answer this question appropriately
 - “I would describe what it is like to be an intern with me. If they had other interests I would refer them to someone who would be more likely to fulfill their needs”
 - “I would suggest that they contact Volunteer Services to see if there are internship positions available.”
 - “Unknown -- I am not clear on what the process is / is supposed to be.”
 - “This would be hard as I only know my own. If I were to explain it to the public, it would only be based on my program, and I would say, ‘Our internships have strengthened our programs, have provided valuable expertise that both saves the taxpayer funds as well as gives the intern real-world supervised experience. A win-win.’”
 - “I would pass them on to someone who coordinates system-wide.”

22. What types of internships do you think could be successfully completed or filled by interns at MCL? Please select all that apply.

- 95% selected longer-term internships (one to four months), while 53% selected short-term internships (less than one month)
- 79% selected direct service internships and 26% selected capacity building internships
- 5% selected online internships

23. Keeping in mind that internships are typically a maximum of 100-150 hours over a 3-4 month time period, what specific projects, tasks, or roles would you ideally like to offer for future interns?

- Five respondents suggested assistance with existing library programs and services like storytime/storytelling and outreach projects
 - “Storytime training; early literacy training; projects with teen councils; collection development tasks; program development.”
 - “presenting programs, curriculum development, writing booktalks, working to organize book tubs”
- Two respondents suggested engaging interns as trainers
- Two respondents suggested technical or web-based tasks or projects
 - “Help to develop new apps online or mobile; usability/user experience; testing websites; design”
 - “Database development, data entry”
- Two respondents suggested data gathering or research projects

- "I'm not sure right now. But what comes to mind: research projects to determine expanding or changing the model of a program, creating a chronological presentation for each of our programs so future plans can have an overview of our history as an adult literacy program."
- Seven respondents suggested that interns could be engaged in a wide variety of tasks or offered broad suggestions for engaging interns
 - "What it's like to work in a branch library. I have felt since I became a librarian that a part of my professional duty is to foster and mentor new people in the profession. I firmly believe that by tailoring the internship to their needs works best. I do expect them to be contributors to the ongoing branch work as well as looking for opportunities to supply what they need."
 - "A chance at direct public interaction (programs, shadowing), meeting/committee attendance with a staff member, their own project(s) in the home location"
 - "There are lots of possibilities. We can use teachers, trainers, program developers. We can also use staff who simply shadow and work alongside our staff."
 - "I would like to see us do internships for teens and young adults as a way to build work skill and introduce librarianship as a career option. I would like to give them an overview of behind the scenes work as give them specific programs to run or plan."
 - "We would like more interns that suggest specific, new, unique projects. Preparing new programming or outreach for example."
 - "The real challenge has been to define a long term project that has lasting benefits to the branch, and is meaningful for the intern. We can usually fill about a third of the intern's hours with general exposure to the library's work (shadowing, daily tasks, meetings)"

24. Who would you ideally seek for potential internships? Please select all that apply.

- 95% selected graduate students (MLS candidates)
- 53% selected undergraduate students
- 26% selected graduate students (other degree programs)
- 21% selected high school students
- 11% suggested other kinds of students
 - "Computer science, etc."
 - "Possibly education students, media specialists."

25. If you were designing an internship program for MCL from scratch, how would you design the processes for internship engagement – from role development and recruitment to supervision and evaluation?

- Two respondents suggested that interns be introduced and/or integrated throughout MCL
 - "No idea really. I think that an internship should be a fluid thing. I would like to see opportunities for them to visit other branches, tour Central, visit tech services, etc."
 - "I also think it would be great to have several locations set up for routine sessions for interns to attend or shadow at; e.g. Central reference locations, Children's Library, branches, Technical Services, etc."

- Two respondents cited the importance of having a centralized program, preferably with the participation and buy-in of staff throughout the organization
 - “I would outline a process that all managers who might potentially hire interns would know and understand. I would support said managers by vetting intern applicants and being familiar with each manager's program so that I could help make appropriate matches.”
 - “Involve branch staff and request specific input on pie-in-the-sky projects that could be matched to interns.”
- Two respondents offered suggestions related to finding good interns
 - “I would start by opening up opportunities outside of library school, especially design and technical schools.”
 - “Recruit from local high schools and library schools and have some sort of “model” to use as at least a jumping off point, so we don't have to reinvent the wheel for each new intern.”
 - “I would figure out what people (demographically speaking) the library needed and then design a program that would attract that group.”
- One respondent offered suggestions for orientation and training options
 - “I would like to see a general orientation session (possibly including a welcome talk by the library director) and presentations on such topics as intellectual freedom, outreach services, marketing, etc.
- One respondent offered specific process suggestions
 - “Identify a contact person at MCL. Develop relationships with graduate programs. Identify the process by which students would be referred to MCL. Identify the types of roles MCL has to offer. Make this information available online and in person. Have the student contact the MCL contact for an informational interview to determine the best location for placement. Refer to that location. Location supervisor works with the student to develop a learning contract/plan as required by the school that reflects his/her interests. The plan should include goals, activities, and evaluation.”
- Five respondents said they weren't sure or that this question was too big to respond to in a survey
 - “Wow! You are, in some ways, describing my job which is to develop programs from scratch. Usually, as a grant coordinator, I allowed that a perfect timeline for what you're asking would be 3-5 years, though I often had to complete it in 6 months. I would sit down with anyone and talk about the rubric I usually use when developing any new program. But this question feels to big to answer here.”

26. Who would be responsible for each step in this process?

- Most respondents said that multiple people would be responsible for different tasks:
 - Three respondents suggested that immediate supervisors of the interns should play a significant role in the process
 - Two respondents suggested that Human Resources manage applications, intake, and placement
 - Two respondents suggested that Volunteer Services should play a major role
 - Two respondents suggested that MCL should have an internships coordinator

- “I would love to see a coordinator for the program who would serve as resource for the site supervisors. I think the site supervisors could be responsible for recruitment, supervision and evaluation.”
 - One person suggested that a school practicum coordinator play a role
 - One respondent mentioned that Learning Systems should play a role
 - One respondent mentioned that the Administrator and reference staff should provide input
 - One respondent suggested that position development take place in diverse library departments like Adult Services, Youth Services, Technical Services, etc.
 - Four respondents offered general suggestions for staff management
 - “It would depend on the goal of the intern and which staff member would best fit the mentor mold. It could be different each time.”
 - “I don't think you have to have a huge team for this, but I'd begin with a small group of folks to multiply your ideas. That group might include the folks who, eventually, would be affected - vlt services, program managers, branch staff etc. The responsibility for each step would move around, I think. So for recruitment and training, it might involve one person and a supervisor. For ongoing contact, it might be a person where the intern is placed etc”
 - “Again this would depend on if this was just in the branch or if someone were setting it up system-wide and farming the person out to increase different branches.”
 - “Not someone who works in a branch 40 hours a week providing direct service to the public”

27. What type(s) of training should MCL interns ideally receive in order to gain relevant skills and be most effective in a library setting?

- Topics suggested included (with number of respondents who suggested it in parentheses):
 - Basic orientation to MCL mission, structure, culture, etc. (5)
 - Site-specific orientation
 - Customized instruction as needed on specific tasks/projects (5)
 - “Shadow reference desk and outreach visits; lead a song or rhyme during storytime (future youth librarians); create a booklist.”
 - Customer Service Basics (2)
 - Intellectual Freedom (2)
 - Safety (1)
 - How to Work with Adults (1)
 - How to Work with Youth (1)
 - Knowledge about Sensitive Populations (both adult and children/teens) (1)
- Three respondents suggested that this depends on the individual intern
 - “Depends on what their background is. If they have no library experience but are looking to learn, they would need the basics...”
 - “Again this would depend on the persons experience and education level and goals...are they a library student (then time on the desk, planning or managing an applicable program, ebooks, technology) and if a teenager maybe more basic work skills and an overview of potential positions.”
- Two respondents offered general feedback on training for interns

- "It's sooo time consuming to attend or to send other staff to attend another training. I would like some written guidelines and suggestions for intern projects instead. Please!"

28. Who would be responsible for providing this training?

- Three respondents suggested the intern's immediate supervisor
- Two respondents suggested Learning Systems
- One suggested that general orientations could be delivered by an Internship Coordinator
- One suggested that trainings could be offered on a regular basis
 - "Ideally they could attend regularly scheduled trainings as well as some that are online so it corresponds to when they have their internship."
- Two suggested that who, how, and where would vary depending on a number of factors
 - "Whatever makes most sense: teenager or youth services-related= youth librarian. Library student=branch manager, someone at admin."
- Two respondents offered other or broader suggestions
 - "The same people who are responsible for staff training."
 - "Not someone who works in a branch 40 hours a week providing direct service to the public"

29. How would you describe the top benefits that an individual would receive from serving in an internship at MCL?

- Ten respondents cited practical hands-on experience in a real world library setting
- Six respondents cited professional skill development in a supportive environment
- Four respondents cited the positive environment and reputation of MCL
- Three respondents cited the opportunity for interns to confirm that they were on the right career path
- Three respondents cited gaining networking, job contacts, and references
- One respondent mentioned academic credit

30. How would you describe the top benefits for MCL of engaging interns? In other words, why should we invest time and resources into offering internships?

- Seven respondents cited the ability to get more work done
 - "We will have the free use of the talents of very motivated students. My experiences have been positive, if time-consuming, and I think that staff should be open to the use of interns. They can develop and implement programs and projects that we simply don't have time or resources to get going."
- Four respondents cited the importance of training and investing in the next generation of library leadership
 - "It supports librarianship as a whole by exposing future librarians at other systems to how we do things - cross-pollination of ideas."
 - Four respondents specifically mentioned the opportunity to identify potential future employees
- Four respondents cited the opportunity to have access to new perspectives and skill sets
- One respondent cited the library's mission of reaching out to the community
- Five respondents offered general and/or mixed comments

- “The internship should have a product desired by MCL, usable, sustainable.”
- “Oh my gosh, where to begin? I still have contact with both interns. They are bright, funny, extremely talented. One thing I've learning - interning is a mix of creating a healthy learning environment for the supervisor and letting the intern experience challenges without stepping in. The measurable benefit for me is that, now, we have a well-researched program that would have taken me twice the time to accomplish as the meeting times I had with my intern. This tapping of talent is a huge benefit to the library. That being said, I think you do have to be careful in selecting an intern who is going to be doing something independently and representing the library. Both my interns were professional in their interviews and not afraid to offer ideas. Also, I listen for a deep level of commitment. This way, any challenges we face have not been behavioral.”
- “I'm not sure. It takes a tremendous amount of effort and time to host someone. I think it can be useful to the library in terms of extra help if it's a good match. It's a great way to promote work in libraries, especially to young students who may not know the jobs even exist.”
- “It totally depends on the intern, and the serendipitous convergence of the right person and the right task (that has lasting benefit to MCL.)”
- “For one thing, we do get some work out of them; typically, they produce 50 or more original cataloging records that are submitted to OCLC and become part of our catalog. But frankly, it is more work training them to do the work than it would be for us to do it ourselves. For the library, I see the main benefit as providing an opportunity for MCL and its staff to be actively engaged in the education and training of the next generation of library and information professionals.”

31. Are there any existing internship programs or models at other libraries or organizations that you admire?

- Three respondents offered specific suggestions
 - “Yes! I don't have enough room here, but ask me about NYPL sometime.”
 - “I honestly don't know. My ideas come in great part from mentoring teachers before my job at MCL. My most recent job before MCL was at an independent school in Tualatin, Arbor School. They have the best internship program I've ever seen. Interns are called "apprentices" They do an excellent job of choosing, training and educating future teachers.”
 - “Yes, but I don't remember where it is ... there are a couple of excellent chapters in the book "Public library internships: advice from the field" from those institutions.”

32. Do you currently work with interns or participate in some part of the MCL internship recruitment/management process?

- 78% said yes and 22% said no

33. If yes, what is your role? Please select all that apply.

- 75% are responsible for the training and/or orientation of one or more interns
- 62% are responsible for managing/supervising one or more interns
- 50% are responsible for recruiting and/or creating roles for one or more interns

- 19% provide some support to interns but are not the primary person responsible for recruiting, training, and/or supervising them
- 19% manage staff members who provide support to interns, but do not provide support to interns themselves
- 12% occasionally work or partner with interns but are not the primary person responsible for recruiting, training, and/or supervising them
- 6% don't work with interns in any capacity but do have some indirect contact with them

34. What is your title or primary area of responsibility at MCL? For example, Administrator, Librarian, Library Assistant, etc.

- Four respondents are Youth Librarians (including one Branch Youth Librarian)
- Four respondents have the word "Manager" in their title, including Program Manager and Web Services Manager
- Three respondents have the word "Administrator" in their title, including Library Administrator
- Three respondents work in Library Outreach Services
- Two respondents have the title of Librarian, including a Catalog Librarian
- One each cited the title of Coordinator of Summer Reading, Adult Literacy Coordinator, and School Corps Lead Worker

35. Anything else we should know or questions we should ask?

- One respondent offered a comment
 - "I think your questions are excellent."

36. If you would like to continue to participate in the development process for this program, please provide your name and email address here. Our Project Consultant, Erin Barnhart, will be in touch with future opportunities to provide feedback as we proceed with the development and design process. Please note again that this information will be separated from your survey responses in order to maintain confidentiality.

- Eight respondents shared their name and email address to provide further feedback