

Dakota Seeds Fund Program Guidelines

To help encourage the creation of internships, the State of South Dakota and SD EPSCoR is making funding available to assist with the wages of these interns. The Dakota Seeds program is not intended to be an ongoing source of funding for internships.

Dakota Seeds will provide funding that will cover up to one-half of an intern's wages with a maximum amount of \$2000 for high school or post-secondary internships. Internships are short-term positions, typically lasting less than one year. The grant is paid on a reimbursement basis. Students completing internships may work full-time while on break from classes or part-time while in class. Additional funds may be available for students seeking their masters or PhD degrees.

Program Requirements

Companies must meet the following requirements in order to qualify for the program:

- Companies must be for-profit businesses unless they are involved in scientific research or STEM education.
- The internship must provide a meaningful work experience for the student that will help them further their career pathway.
- Positions must have a link to science, technology (computer science), engineering, mathematics, accounting or manufacturing.
- The internships cannot be filled by family members of the business ownership group.
- Students must be paid a minimum wage of \$10.00 per hour.

Students must meet one of the following requirements in order to be placed in internships offered by companies.

- High school students must be working in positions that will allow them to fulfill their high school's capstone requirement or help them pursue their chosen career pathways. Documentation must be submitted with the application.
- High school seniors, having graduated in May, may fill summer positions that help advance their career pathways. For example, they may fill a welding position for the summer and be enrolled at a post-secondary institution in the welding program for the fall. Documentation must be submitted with the application.
- Post-secondary students must be currently enrolled or have graduated in the semester immediately preceding the start of the internship. The work of the internship must relate to the student's area of study and the student must meet one of the following:
 - Attending a South Dakota institution of higher learning; or
 - If attending an out-of-state institution, have graduated from a South Dakota high school.

Application Process & Deadlines

1. Company completes the program application. Application must be submitted by the deadlines established below. Applicants should not expect a response until after the deadline has passed.
 - a. For internship commencing in the spring semester, with a start date of January 1 through April 30, the deadline is November 15
 - b. For internships commencing in the summer, with a start date of May 1 through August 31, the deadline is March 31
 - c. For internships commencing in the fall semester, with a start date of September 1 through December 31, the deadline is July 15
2. Application will be reviewed to insure that it meets program requirements.
3. If approved, a letter of agreement will be issued.

Criteria to Review Applications

In the event that the demand for program funding by eligible applications exceeds the amount of funding available for the year, the following criteria will be used to prioritize applications.

- Prior use of the program by the applicant company. First time applicants will receive priority over companies that have used the program extensively.
- The work experiences the internship will provide as detailed in the job description.
- The hourly wage to be paid to the intern.
- Past success at employing interns permanently upon graduation.

Graduate Internships

Students seeking their masters or PhD degrees at a South Dakota institution are eligible for additional funding. Graduate student interns may be eligible for two consecutive units of time (for example, a summer and a semester, or two semesters). For each unit, a company may be reimbursed up to one-half the wages paid to the student not to exceed \$2000. The maximum amount that may be provided to a company for an individual graduate student is \$4000.

Documentation and reimbursement

Companies will be reimbursed upon completion of the internship.

The following information will need to be submitted by the company at the start of the internship to document that the position has been filled.

- The name of the student
- The name of the educational institute that they are currently attending (also include the student's high school if attending out-of-state)
- The major they are pursuing at that educational institute (post-secondary students)
- The expected date the student will graduate (post-secondary students)
- Demographic information on the student including gender, race, ethnicity and disability.

Within 30 days of the completion of the internship, the company will submit the following to receive the reimbursement.

- Documentation of the wages paid the student in the form of a payroll ledger. The documentation will include the hourly wage paid, total wages earned, and the dates the wages were paid.

The company will also need to respond to a follow-up report upon the student's graduation regarding their current employment status with the company.

Additional Information

- A cap of five students may be imposed annually, depending on the demand for funding.
- An individual student is only eligible to be reimbursed once at a company. If a company decides to bring a student back for a second internship, that student would not be eligible for additional funding.
- In the event that the position is not filled by a student with a major related to the position description, that position may not be eligible for reimbursement. For example, a network administrators position filled by a business major