

## Cross-Department Externship Program

### **What is the externship program?**

Missouri's Cross-Departmental Externship program is a professional development opportunity for selected emerging leaders to learn cross-agency leadership skills, build networking opportunities, and improve the services we provide to our fellow Missourians. It involves:

- A collaborative experience of approximately eight weeks
- Between two Departments serving a common constituent need
- Job shadowing and collaboration to identify a solution to the constituent need
- Issuing a final after action report to summarize the experience

### **Why participate?**

Externships are very effective in developing leadership skills. They are also a great opportunity to improve the services we provide to our fellow Missourians, either by using collaborations to make a bigger impact, identifying and sharing best practices across Departments, or improving efficiencies through cooperative efforts. Externships benefit the Extern, the Externs' Home Department, and the Host Department:

Home Department	Host Department	Extern
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved morale</li><li>• Improved leadership capacity</li><li>• More resilient teams</li><li>• Higher productivity</li><li>• Increased retention</li><li>• Flexible workplace</li><li>• Better use of resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New perspectives</li><li>• New skills from a high performing employee</li><li>• Increased efficiency</li><li>• Succession planning</li><li>• Better customer service</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New leadership skills</li><li>• Grow their network</li><li>• Unique opportunities and recognition</li><li>• Better understanding of strengths and leadership styles</li><li>• Better positioned for future advancement</li><li>• Better awareness of the State of Missouri outside the Home Department</li></ul>

## Examples of successful collaborations

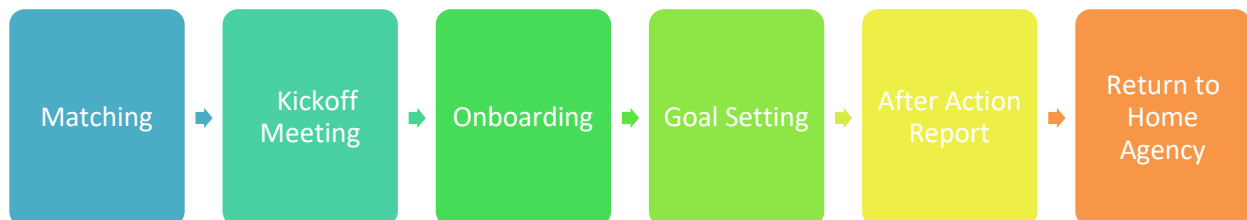
Externships build on the successes we see in other areas. For example, the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and the Missouri Treasurer have collaborated to ensure recent unemployment claimants are notified of potential lost or unclaimed property to which they may be entitled. The Departments of Corrections and Natural Resources have collaborated to test wastewater to detect Covid-19. Other Covid-19 fusion cells are building on the “Team of Teams” organizational model to improve communication and collaboration across all sixteen Departments.

[Story of Department of Natural Resources and Department of Mental Health Externship Pilot Project]

[Can also provide other examples of successful externships – recognizing the Departments’ successes, the Extern’s accomplishments, and even include an anecdote from a constituent who benefited from the program].

[Link to externship after-action reports here or in sidebar]

## How to participate



### 1. Identify a program that could benefit from an externship.

- Is there a program that already relies on coordination with another Department?
- Does your Department need access to someone with a specialty that another Department already has?
- Identify Programs that rely on coordination with other Departments.

### 2. Identify a qualified emerging leader.

- High-performing employee

- Some supervision or leadership experience
- Experience or expertise in the need to be addressed

### **3. Host a kickoff meeting between the two Departments and the Extern.**

- Involve the following key stakeholders in the kickoff meeting:
  - Human Resources
  - Operational Excellence Team
  - Department leadership
  - Other key personnel from the teams that will be working with the extern
  - The extern
  - The extern's current supervisor
- Decide the details of the externship:
  - Beginning and end dates
  - Support team
  - Project focus
  - Supervision and job shadowing
  - Time commitment

## Email Templates for Regular Communication about Externship:

### Script for next Department meeting agenda item:

We now have the opportunity to participate in cross-departmental externships. What this means is that if we identify a program that would work better if we collaborated with another Department, we can send one of our emerging leaders to the other Department or we can host another Department's emerging leader for about eight weeks. At the end of the program, we'll have a set of written recommendations to improve our collaboration on the program.

In your next meeting with your employees, I encourage you to brainstorm to identify a few programs that might benefit and ideas that might work, and think of employees that might be a good match. If you strike upon a good idea, go ahead and reach out to the other Department and see if they are interested. If so, come back to [me, Deputy Director, other Department leader] and see if we have the ability to use this opportunity.

### Quarterly Email to Deputy Directors:

Please remember to identify projects that could benefit from collaboration with an extern from another Department. This is an excellent opportunity to bring in expertise that your Department would like to have, to share an expertise that your Department has, or simply look at an old problem with fresh eyes.

When thinking about what opportunities you might have, please be mindful of constituents who might be interacting with multiple Departments to address a single concern or need.

For example, [insert a recent success story here, identifying the Extern who collaborated on the solution and the impact of the solution on both Departments. If possible, share the positive story of a constituent who benefited from the collaboration].

More information about Missouri's cross-department externship program and how to participate can be found at {link}.

### Regular Email to HR Personnel

Opportunities are open for Missouri's employees to participate in an externship with an outside Department, where they will work on a collaborative solution to improve services provided by both Departments.

More information about Missouri's externship program and how to participate can be found at {link}.

A recent success story involved [identify two departments, identifying the Extern who collaborated on the solution and the impact of the solution on both Departments. If possible, share the positive story of a constituent who benefited from the collaboration].

# Externship Project After-Action Report

Home:	Host:
Extern:	
Start Date:	End Date:
Support Team Members:	

## **Questions for Host Department:**

What was the project focus for this externship?

What were the final recommendations from the extern following the project?

What changes would you recommend to improve the experience?

Based on this experience, would you look to host an extern again if a project presented itself?  
Why or why not?

**Questions for Home Department:**

What worked well throughout the externship?

What did not work well throughout the externship?

Would you allow staff to participate in the program in the future? Why or why not?

**Questions for Extern**

What new skills or perspectives will you bring back to your current position?

What worked well throughout the externship?

What did not work well throughout the externship?

What changes would you recommend to improve the experience?

**Cross-Departmental Externship Planning Guide**

<b>Home Department</b>	
<b>Contact People</b>	
<b>Host Department</b>	
<b>Contact People</b>	
<b>Extern</b>	
<b>Scope of Project</b>	
<b>Length of Externship &amp; % Time</b>	-
<b>Start Date – End Date</b>	-
<b>AAR Due Date</b>	

### Missouri Externship Program FAQs

1. Will there be a State website for extern applicants and departments to use? **There will be a website developed to provide resources to guide all stakeholders through the externship process from start to finish and will include information about having the conversations with your staff about externships to start the process of developing ideas.**
2. How are Externs selected and who is responsible for that process? **This should be a collaboration between the Home and Host Department to find an emerging leaders with the skills needed to succeed in the project that is being considered for an externship.**
3. Which department is responsible for salary/benefits? **If externship is limited to 8 weeks or less, the Home department continues to fund the Extern's position as normal.**
4. How would the Extern's regular duties be covered during the externship experience? **Home Department would identify other members of their team that could cover job duties (similar to how it is done when an employee is on medical leave, leave of absence, maternity/paternity leave, etc.) and this can help build the Home department team and prepare for succession planning.**
5. Does it have to be for 8 weeks or can it be a shorter time frame? **The length of an externship is decided by the Home and Host Department collaborating to meet a need or solve a problem. Therefore, it can be shorter than 8 weeks and less than 80% of the extern's time.**
6. What happens if there are performance or attendance problems with the Extern? **The identified contact person from Home and Host Departments should maintain open communication with one another as well as HR representatives to share concerns and possible solutions to the problems.**
7. If there are problems with the Extern or externship, can it end early? **Yes. If problems arise, contact people and HR representatives from Home and Host Departments should discuss concerns and end date for the externship.**
8. What type of projects should be considered for an externship? **Our team would suggest that the best chances for success lie in developing externships involving two departments which already have some level of coordination to provide a service. This will shorten the learning curve for the extern and also allow for a larger impact to the exchange of ideas and perspectives between the departments throughout the externship.**
9. Can this Externship Program be done within departments or only cross-departmentally? **While it is being proposed as a cross-departmental externship, it could be applied within a department as well.**
10. How often can departments and externs participate in the program? **We would recommend that an extern participate in only one project a year to ensure that their focus remains on their current position. We would also recommend that departments participate as both a host and a home agency for an externship no more than once a year.**



## **Resources and Additional Information**

Miller Craig, L., & Nierenberg, J., "Interagency Rotation Programs: Professional Development for Future Enterprise Leaders." *Tackling Wicked Government Problems: A Practical Guide for Developing Enterprise Leaders*, E-book, (Nickerson, J. & Sanders, R., eds.), The Brookings Institution, 2013.

Campion, L., "Study Clarifies Job-Rotation Benefits" *Personnel Journal* Vol. 75 No. 11, pp. 31-38 (Nov. 1996), available at <https://www.workforce.com/news/study-clarifies-job-rotation-benefits> (last accessed Jan. 29, 2021).

Mazarr, M., "Developing Senior Leaders for the Reserve Components," *RAND Corporation*, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE194.html>, 2017 (last accessed Jan. 4, 2021).

U.S. G.A.O., "INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION: State and Army Personnel Rotation Programs Can Build on Positive Results with Additional Preparation and Evaluation," <https://www.gao.gov/assets/590/589170.pdf> (Mar. 2012).

U.S. G.A.O., "NATIONAL SECURITY PERSONNEL: Committed Leadership is Needed for Implementation of Interagency Rotation Program," <https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/673694.pdf> (Nov. 2015).

U.S. G.A.O., "NATIONAL SECURITY: An Overview of Professional Development Activities Intended to Improve Interagency Collaboration," <https://www.gao.gov/assets/320/312337.pdf> (Nov. 2010).

U.S. G.A.O., "NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION: A Workforce Strategy and Evaluation of Results Could Improve Use of Rotating Scientists, Engineers, and Educators," <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/694272.pdf> (Sep.2018).

U.S. G.A.O., "HOMELESS VETERANS: Opportunities Exist to Strengthen Interagency Collaboration and Performance Measurement Procedures," <https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/706957.pdf> (May 2020).

President's Management Council Interagency Rotation Program, <https://kansascity.feb.gov/presidents-management-council-interagency-rotation-program/> (last accessed Jan. 29, 2021).