

How to pay students

Although we know that compensation is the number one most recommended best practice for career pathway programs, it can be difficult to find funding to pay students. Here's an overview of the different payment models typically used to pay students: [Different student payment models](#)

If you don't already have money built into your budget, here are a few ways to find funding to pay your student interns:

1. **Ask the student if their educational institution offers scholarships or other funding to pay for internships.** Some academic institutions provide funding to support experiential learning. You can also specifically choose to recruit students from institutions that offer to fund students with unpaid internships. State-based examples are listed below.

State	Universities
Maine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bates College • Bowdoin College • University of Maine • University of Southern Maine
Vermont	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middlebury College • University of Vermont
New Hampshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartmouth College • University of New Hampshire
Massachusetts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amherst College • Boston College • Boston University • Bridgewater State University • BU School of Public Health • Clark University • Emmanuel College • Hamilton College • Hampshire College • Smith College • Suffolk University • Tufts University • Wellesley College • UMass Amherst • Westfield State University • Wheaton College

Connecticut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Connecticut College ● Southern Connecticut State University ● University of Connecticut ● Yale University
Rhode Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brown University School of Public Health ● Bryant University ● Providence College ● Rhode Island School of Design ● University of Rhode Island

2. **Write student funding into your grant proposals or annual budgets from the beginning.** Here is a boilerplate paragraph for writing a student intern into a grant proposal:

- We are requesting a \$2,500 stipend to support a student intern working approximately 10-15 hours per week over the course of [one semester/the summer]. The intern will provide essential support to the project by assisting with tasks that are critical to successful project implementation, including [data collection, community outreach, literature reviews, and program evaluation activities].

Compensating the intern ensures equitable access to professional development opportunities, especially for students from underrepresented backgrounds who may be unable to afford unpaid work. Evidence shows that paid internships increase the likelihood of students entering and remaining in the public health workforce, thereby strengthening the pipeline of trained, experienced professionals ready to address future public health challenges (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2023). Investing in paid student internships aligns with long-term workforce development goals and promotes sustainability in public health practice.

3. **Consider offering other types of compensation.** If funding a student is not possible, consider offering these other forms of compensation:

- **Academic credit.** Many students, especially public health students, must complete an internship or practicum to finish their degree. Some students receive academic credit for completing a practical experience, while others do not. Working with a student to complete their degree requirements is one way to make sure they benefit from working with you.
- **Professional development opportunities.** Most students want professional development opportunities as part of their internship. Providing robust opportunities to meet other professionals and network with them or offering paid training and certifications are very valuable benefits to students.
- **Transportation reimbursement.** If you are not able to provide a stipend, consider covering transportation costs.
- **Future employment pipeline.** If possible, offer a guaranteed interview, hiring preference, or pathway into full-time employment as a benefit.
- **Ask the student** if there's another benefit that would help them defray the living costs associated with taking an unpaid position, or that would make taking the internship worth it.