



## 2010 Municipal Intern Program

The Local Government Academy Municipal Intern Program was established in 1995. The purpose of the program is to provide a service to municipal government by placing graduate and undergraduate students in a full time summer internship focused on a particular municipal issue. The internship provides students valuable, real-world public sector experience. Internship projects could concentrate on financial management, geographic information systems, capital improvements, comprehensive planning, personnel administration, zoning ordinance update, computer systems analysis, or other regional issues. Placement sites for the internships are located within Southwestern Pennsylvania municipalities, municipal authorities, and Councils of Governments. This year, nine (9) municipalities and one (1) Council of Government were selected to receive an intern. Students from eight (8) college institutions benefited from practical, significant experience in local government. They received opportunities to test their skills and complete quality projects. The students gained experience in interpersonal communication, group dynamics, and organizational politics and were able to network with local government practitioners and other interns.

### **Julie Bastianini**

University of Pittsburgh

### **Tarentum Borough, Allegheny County**



Julie Bastianini, a graduate student from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs concentrated on a *Zoning Ordinance Review* for Tarentum Borough. As a zoning intern, it was Julie's responsibility to help the Borough in the development of a new zoning ordinance to govern the building and renovation of buildings and properties. The new zoning ordinance and map was needed in order to enhance the Borough's business and residential core while promoting environmentally sound practices.

The Zoning Ordinance Review will certainly make an impact on the Borough. Julie's supervisor, William Rossey, Borough Manager, stated "the Zoning Ordinance Review/Rewrite will provide the community with much needed restrictions on conversion of single family housing into multi-family housing. It will also bring [the] current ordinance up to 2010 Municipalities Planning Code standards."

Julie reported that the internship provided her with unique opportunities to work with a variety of positions dealing with local government. She made presentations to the Borough Council at public meetings, interacted extensively with professional consulting firms and borough committees, and worked closely with the Borough Solicitor, code enforcement officer and other staff members. "I worked independently, but the borough manager was always available to answer my questions, review my writing or provide information as to important people for me to contact." The internship proved beneficial to Julie as she stated, I now understand how to address the specific needs of a community through zoning."

## Andrew Daugherty

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

### Allegheny Township, Westmoreland County



Andrew Daugherty, a graduate student from Indiana University of Pennsylvania interned with Allegheny Township. He focused on *Public Outreach & Communication / Website Enhancement*. Andrew's responsibilities included creating a newsletter template and writing articles for the newly created Township Newsletter. After completion of the newsletter, Andrew was responsible for enhancing and launching the Township's website. This project was fitting for Andrew, whose ambitions are geared toward Journalism, with a focus on politics and public affairs. Andrew was allowed to express himself creatively within his articles and web design at Allegheny Township; no proscriptive methods for completing tasks on the job. He was to be creative.

The project has made an impact on the Township by making the Township more accessible for its residents, bridging the gap between residents and the local administration. The project also made an impact on Andrew. He stated, "I've learned a great deal about the daily functions of a government office, as well as the overarching functions, such as Comprehensive Plan execution and budgeting. I've also learned a few new software tools in the process."

## Sarah Fink

Carnegie Mellon University

### Avalon Borough / Kilbuck Township, Allegheny County



Sarah Fink, a graduate student from Carnegie Mellon University, H. John Heinz College worked on the *Reorganization of Tax Office/Records and Preparation of a New Comprehensive Plan* at Avalon Borough and Kilbuck Township. Sarah's responsibilities were to gather past history maps, current housing and economic development demographics, and benchmark plans. She was also responsible for assisting in outreach to neighboring communities.

Sarah's various duties proved beneficial to both the Borough and the Township by providing clarity and information for the residents via the website and providing a 'roadmap' for the Township via the new comprehensive plan. Sarah's supervisor, Harry Dilmore, Manager of both the Borough and the Township, stated that "the 'new dream' of Kilbuck Township will begin to evolve" as a result of Sarah's work.

Sarah's has certainly evolved within her position as an intern. "I've developed my communication skills, as well as learned the ins and outs of city management... I enjoyed the project and [I] might pursue a career [specifically] in community planning."

**Brandon Mendoza**  
University of Pittsburgh

**City of Aliquippa, Beaver County**



Brandon Mendoza, a graduate student from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs concentrated on a *Property Maintenance Inspection / Code Enforcement* for the City of Aliquippa. Brandon was challenged to come up with an innovative way to process code enforcement complaints and report them to the code enforcement officer and city manager. Brandon decided to utilize his computer knowledge and create a system that could last years after his internship.

Brandon completed a fully searchable database that compiled all complaints and the progress made on complaints. Brandon also sought to find a way where complaints could be streamlined to the office of the code enforcement officer. Using his knowledge of technology, Brandon created a website fully integrated with

social media tools, such as YouTube, Facebook, and SeeClickfix.com.

Brandon's worked proved to be important tools for the community and daily municipal operations. Keeping records of complaints, through the database, was essential to the litigation process. The website allows citizens to make complaints, which would go directly to the code enforcement officer via email. The social media tools allow the city and departments to update residents with a click of the mouse, as well as make the City more accessible to residents. Brandon now believes that he would like to pursue a career in city management. Brandon stated that the internship provided "flexibility and allowed [him] to be creative."

**Barbara Nwaakobia**  
Carnegie Mellon University

**Neville Township, Allegheny County**



Barbara Nwaakobia, a graduate student from Carnegie Mellon University, H. John Heinz College focused on the *Public Works Department Financial Work Analysis Plan* for Neville Township. Barbara's responsibilities were to create a comprehensive future plan for the public works department, which included a long term budget that would help the Township allocate their resources more efficiently and help set aside capital for unforeseen emergencies.

Barbara had to go back to the previous years' budgets, and see how well the Township was doing with the available budget, thereby involving comparison of the past budgets and past expenses with the current. She also calculated the percent of the budget spent on expenses for each year and each department.

David Kerr, Township Administrator, commented on impact the project will have on the Township. He stated, "This project will provide us a guideline to forecast the future of our growth. The Plan will show any short-comings of the past and provide information for capital outlay for future projects."

Barbara has also learned a great deal in her internship. She felt it was "challenging enough to push [her] to learn more about public administration and asset management." She received a better understanding of infrastructure and how to run a township.

## **Kyle Ross**

California University of Pennsylvania /  
West Chester University of Pennsylvania

### **Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments, Allegheny County**



Kyle Ross, a graduate student from California University of Pennsylvania and West Chester University of Pennsylvania concentrated on Vacant Property Assessments for the Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments (TCVCOG). Kyle was to identify vacant and blighted properties in the participating municipalities, research and enter the data for each property in a spreadsheet model that can be easily shared and updated within the TCVCOG, and provide a summary of the project and recommendations for the future.

The information provided by the project is believed to be the first step in identifying and providing remediation that can get property back onto the tax role. The project's will prove beneficial to the community and COG operations by identifying parcels in need of remediation and to make vacant property appealing for possible

future redevelopment.

Kyle stated, "I am grateful to have been able to the spend time gaining a perspective of the public side of land development, commercial properties, and planning. The information provided by meeting with the various stakeholders in the project was truly enriching."

## **Gregor Saulsbery**

Robert Morris University

### **Dormont Borough, Allegheny County**



Gregor Saulsbery, an undergraduate at Robert Morris University, worked on the *Implementing Early Intervention Program (EIP) via Research* for Dormont Borough. Gregor was responsible for performing budgetary research, in an effort to control Borough costs. He was also responsible for reviewing current contracts and investigating potential new contracts for services such as phones and Reverse 911.

Gregor's research has certainly made an impact on the Borough. Gregor's work assisted in the construction of the Borough's 2011 budget. Gregor also helped negotiate the contract for a Reverse 911 system, which allowed the Borough to easily notify residents of emergency situations.

Gregor feels the internship had made an impact in his work experience and believes he could see himself working in local government. "I have begun to learn the inner workings of local government. I have obtained vast knowledge and will be able to put them to use later in life... I like what I have done and [I] could see myself doing this."

**Rebecca Van Regenmorter**  
University of Pittsburgh

**Brentwood Borough, Allegheny County**



Rebecca Van Regenmorter, a graduate student from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs worked on the creation of a *Comprehensive Employee Personnel Manual* for Brentwood Borough. The manual encompasses all of the Borough's personnel related policies such as benefits, leaves of absence, safety procedures, job descriptions, and many other elements.

The formalized manual was beneficial to the municipal operations of the Borough. Rebecca's supervisor, George Zboyovsky, Borough Manager, stated, "In this litigious society, it is important that policies are written down and in compliance with current laws. For years, the Borough of Brentwood was without any type of comprehensive manual outlining and describing various personnel related items. The adoption of a Borough-wide Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual will help prevent any misunderstandings or disputes that may arise over how a particular item is addressed." With the manual, the Borough and its employees can be protected as they better understand their benefits and responsibilities. Mr. Zboyovsky was also very impressed with the quality of work Rebecca produced, as well as her "professionalism and positive attitude."

Rebecca stated, "The project allowed me to see the policies that are necessary in order for a Borough to function efficiently... Overall, the internship was a great experience and exposed me to not only personnel policies, but also to the general functioning of a local government office, which allowed me to gain a clearer picture of what a career in local government would look like... I am considering a career in local government."

**Sarah Wheeler**  
Waynesburg University

**City of Washington, Washington County**



Sarah Wheeler, an undergraduate from Waynesburg University focused on *Residential Rental Registration* for the City of Washington. Sarah's supervisor, Lynn Galluze, Computer Systems Coordinator stated, "The purpose of the project was to monitor landlords and tenants to assure both are adhering to standards required to keep the city's neighborhoods a safe and comfortable place to live." The project was to implement the new Rental Registration Ordinance passed by Council in late December 2010. The ordinance requires all rental units within the City of Washington to register with City Hall and pay an annual fee. Registering rentals includes filling out owner, tenant, and lease information on the city's application and paying a \$12 annual per unit fee.

One of the benefits of the project was that the ordinance was able to differentiate between vacant homes and rental units, which assisted in dealing with dilapidated structures and helped emergency services determine occupancy in case of an emergency. The ordinance also helped the city keep track of its transient population.

Sarah enjoyed the experience of working with the public on an issue that is not necessarily appreciated. She reported, "Ultimately, it's improving my communication skills and helping me [with] my processing abilities." Ms. Galluze spoke on her approval of Sarah's work ethic stating, "Sarah has brought a lot of practical input to this project, even in infancy... This project would not have been the success it is without Sarah's direct help, determination, and dedication."

**Bryan Woll**  
Georgetown University

**City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County**



Bryan Woll, an undergraduate student from Georgetown University continued his work from the previous summer on implementing a *Responsible Hospitality Zone Plan* for the City of Pittsburgh. Bryan had the responsibility of moving the Responsible Hospitality Proposal, which he wrote the previous summer, from policy research to community action.

In June, Bryan, along with others from Councilman Bruce Kraus' office, organized a day-long Responsible Hospitality Forum with the president of Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI) and four individuals that have successfully brought responsible hospitality practices to their cities. In preparation, Bryan worked alongside the Councilman Kraus' staff to reach out to potential attendees, specifically targeted to South Side community leaders and business owners. In addition, Bryan also coordinated the efforts to obtain media and press reports on the forum. The event was extremely successful, with over 90 attendees, a majority of who represented the South Side, as well as numerous city officials to attend, as well as representatives of state legislators, the Liquor Control Board, and Liquor Control Enforcement. Following Bryan's research and recommendations, a task force had been formed to bring responsible hospitality practices to Pittsburgh throughout the year.

Bryan felt his experience this summer was beneficial. He stated, "I think that the most significant thing that I learned this year was the importance of building relationships with different stakeholders in order to make progress on particular policy and/or project. Last year's project was predominately researched-based, and while I worked with community and business leaders, it was more for background information to give context to my proposal. However, this summer I found out how crucial collaborative, working relationships are, especially in public service. I feel that I accomplished a significant amount this summer in terms of implementing the responsible hospitality project, and all of that progress was a result of getting community members, business owners, and city officials to buy into this approach."

**If you have any questions about the LGA Municipal Intern Program visit our website or contact:**

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