

## **Kossuth County Career Intern Program**

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### **What is the concept and approach that you propose to implement?**

Kossuth County Economic Development Corporation has initiated an Intern Program in Kossuth County. A Career/Intern Committee has been formed and different activities are planned for Interns to participate in during the summer months We are constantly reviewing and implementing new concepts to our program.

### **How will your project improve the vitality of your community?**

After each activity, a press release is created for local media so the citizens of Kossuth County stay informed and the events are explained in detail and the response has been overwhelming. Business leaders and CEO's encourage our programs and are involved with the special events. The Interns complete a survey at the end of the summer reviewing their Internship and what we can improve upon or what they liked the most about our program. They developed an Intern newsletter that we distribute locally and statewide.

### **Do you have specific objectives for your project?**

Our overall program was developed initially in response to a need for future workforce. However, we are now trying to encourage young adults to choose Kossuth County and to bring new businesses, new ideas, and new challenges. We are also using the quality of life and cost of living factors as marketing concepts to encourage the interns to look to our area.

### **Do you have specific outcomes that you are hoping to achieve or measurable indicators that you will be using to evaluate the success of your project?**

Our first special event held for the Interns is an "Intern Breakfast." At the breakfast, we have 5 CEOs speak at the Intern level about their companies, their experiences and future opportunities in the area. The interns really like this... they eat with the CEO's , Presidents, and Plant Mangers. This is an impressive communication and networking opportunity for these young people. It also provides an opportunity for Interns to meet with other interns.

We also have an Intern packet that has been created to provide a resource guide for the new interns about specific community data and information such as telephone, internet, utilities, churches, restaurants, community colleges, etc.

The Interns complete and return the follow-up survey to our office at the end of the summer. This helps us to identify college majors of the Interns, the businesses they are employed with, and their interests such as whether they had a positive experience.

The Interns also form an Intern Advisory Committee and suggestions are made to our Career Intern Committee on how to encourage more Kossuth County businesses to utilize the Intern Program. The Intern Advisory Committee also produces an Intern Newsletter with the help of comments from the Interns.

It all starts by marketing Kossuth County at ISU College Career Day. We distribute a chart that lists all the local businesses with Internships and fulltime positions available. Prior to this event, our Local Committee contacts area businesses to see which ones have internships and full time positions available—and to identify the key contact name for the business.

At the Career Day we collect resumes and email addresses. Our committee will scan the resumes, insert their e-mail addresses into our database and start e-mailing information throughout the year. We burn the resumes on a CD and distribute the CD to the local business contacts for review at their convenience.

We are redesigning the KCEDC web site. We will post the availability of Intern/fulltime positions along with the Intern newsletters. We want this to be a real tool for the KCEDC.

**What were the important factors considered in determining the approach to be used?**

A Career/Intern Committee was formed to help encourage young adults to come to Kossuth County and choose their internships here. Important factors were considered such as, “Why Business should invest in Interns? and “What do Interns bring to businesses in Kossuth County?” the Committee created a Power Point presentation which has been presented ant several functions.

**Are there unique community characteristics, unique features, or key factors regarding the approach planned that led you to conclude the approach selected is most appropriate for your community?**

In developing the Kossuth Intern Program we educated and informed young adults about the “Acres of Opportunity we have in Kossuth County. Resource guides were created that contain information on local businesses, churches, points of interest, and recreational opportunities. We are uniquely located within driving distances from Mason City, Fort Dodge, Des Moines, and Minneapolis, which are all within 150 miles.

**What led you to believe that this concept is needed and or doable in your community?**

In rural Iowa, the need for future workforce and entrepreneurship is critical. We need to take steps to identify and encourage future business leaders and workers to consider rural Iowa. Our county has businesses that have allowed staff to provide input and to volunteer their time to develop this Intern program.

**Where did you get the idea for your project and have you visited or found information about other communities in Iowa or other states that have used similar concepts? If so, please list them.**

This concept was emerged and developed the need of local businesses for workers and future business leaders. The Economic Development Executive Director previously was a teacher for 23 years. Identification of youth leakage was something that was continually being identified as a local economic development priority. The current program was developed one step at a time over time. One committee held a visioning session to identify goals that could be accomplished locally. The first event to be planned was an Intern Breakfast. This event was modeled after another event that we have conducted locally but was reformatted to addressing the interests of colleges students. A second step was to add a resource guide created for students and provided to them for their use while in Kossuth County. Finally the electronic newsletter is being planned to help keep people in touch during and after their internships and to help share the experiences and successes.

**Are there specific steps and procedures that you have planned for implementation?**

The Career/Intern Committee meets monthly and continues to share ideas for improving the program. After reviewing last year’s comments, we are taking the initial steps for expanded plans during the summer of 2003 with the help of this grant. In addition to the Intern Breakfast, we are considering a Intern Golf Outing, Intern Volleyball/BBQ/Fun Night and other ways to familiarize the Interns with the local recreational opportunities and resources in the area.

In the past we have participated with a booth at the ISU Career Days which has been our primary tool for contacting potential Interns and making them aware of what Kossuth County has to offer. We would like to branch out with a presence at College Career Days at all three Iowa universities.

**Who will be involved in making the decisions and implementing the steps?**

The Career/Intern Committee initiates the concepts and makes recommendations for approval to the Kossuth County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors. A new Intern Advisory Committee made up of Interns is created each year allowing students to offer suggestions and give feed back to the Career/Intern Committee. This also allows the students time together every month so they are always updated with events and attractions.

**How many existing and potential entrepreneurial enterprises or service providers do you anticipate being involved?**

During the month of April we plan to send a letter to approximately 100 businesses in Kossuth County asking them for information on the Interns they have employed for this summer. Then we will be able to create a mailing list for our Intern Breakfast that will be held in June. Last year a total of 51 Interns were invited to the Breakfast.

**Source, Type (\$ or In-Kind), and Amount of Local Matching Resources.**

Including CVC funds, we have developed a project budget totaling \$38,887.53. Of this total \$15,000 is estimated to be in-kind contributions provided by local volunteers. Therefore, CVC dollars will be matched \$3 to \$1.

**Please provide a brief budget description regarding how you plan to spend CVC funds.**

**Expenses**

ISU College Career Day	1,401.95
Intern Breakfast	591.82
Intern CEO Golf Outing	456.30
Intern Volleyball BBQ	252.00
Intern Newsletter	1,165.46
Display Board Development	3,055.00
Web Site Development	7,140.00
Coordination & Supplies	9,825.00
In-Kind	15,000.00
<b>Total Project</b>	<b>38,887.53</b>

**Revenue**

CVC	10,000.00
In-Kind	15,000.00
Other Contributions	13,887.53