



2018 - Developing a Community Learning Agreement – *a Guidance Sheet for SHECP Interns*

Each Intern considers what they want to get out of the summer service experience when identifying Student Learning Objectives for the Community Learning Agreement (CLA). Please maximize the educational component and personal development of the internship by carefully preparing your CLA.

Types of Goals

Think about how working in a specific field or at a particular agency can enhance your experience:

- Intellectual understanding and knowledge of non-profit or government work in general, and poverty issues in particular.
- General skill acquisition that will be of practical value in your professional path.
- Personal growth and development.

Some examples of learning objectives that enhance Intellectual Understanding and Knowledge:

Learn who is eligible for public assistance under the laws of the state and what types of assistance are available.
Learn about the typical case load (volume and type of legal cases) for public defenders in the criminal court system.
Identify the goals of my agency and learn the impact this organization has in the community.
Gain insight into the social and systemic factors that contribute to homelessness.

Some examples of learning objectives that enhance General Skill Acquisition:

Be able to identify state and local sources of grant funding for food access programs.
Gain experience in public speaking through delivering health education programs to agency clients.
Learn techniques for group facilitation by shadowing a behavioral therapist and leading a support group.
Improve my writing skills by developing press releases and public service announcements for radio to raise awareness of my agencies service.
Learn to complete application forms for affordable health insurance, subsidized housing, or business loans.

Some examples of learning objectives that enhance Personal Growth and Development:

Gain confidence in my interactions with children, especially around boundary-setting.
Learn more about the skills and training required to become a social worker by talking with different staff at the agency, and consider if this is the right career path for me.
Explore the opportunity to live in an urban environment on a limited budget.
Network with like-minded students and learn about different strategies for activism on various campuses.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Using the SMART acronym can help ensure that interns and supervisor share the same understanding of goals for the summer program. Smart goals are: **S**pecific **M**asurable **A**chievable **R**elevant **T**ime-bound.

As you create work and learning goals, answer the following questions to practice a SMART approach:

- What is specific about the goal?
- Is the goal measurable? (How will you know the goal has been achieved?)
- Is the goal achievable?
- Is the goal relevant to performance expectations or professional development?
- Is the goal time-bound? (How often will this task be done? Or, by when will this goal be accomplished?)

Here is a sample goal: *Keep the agency's web page calendar of events up-to-date.*

Does this meet the SMART criteria? What does "up-to-date" mean? How can the intern and supervisor be sure that they are working to the same standard? How can each of them know that the goal has been met?

The following is a revised goal that meets the SMART criteria: *Every Friday, solicit updates and new material from our department's managers for the web page; publish this new material no later than the following Tuesday. Each time new material is published, review our department's web page for material that is out-of-date, and delete or archive.*

The revised goal is:

SPECIFIC - At a specific time solicit updates from a specific group of people, and at a specific time revise the web page.

MEASURABLE - Were updates solicited on schedule? Was the web page updated on schedule? These are both yes or no questions.

ACHIEVABLE - This requires some conversation—are the updates too frequent? What should the intern do if managers fail to respond? What other time-sensitive work is the intern responsible for? With conversation, it should be possible to set an agreed upon strategy for updating the department's web page.

RELEVANT - The goal needs to tie into the intern's key responsibilities and be relevant to the mission of the department. Is the Calendar of Events something used by clients of the agency? Does this help the community access important services?

TIME-BOUND - This sample goal does not end with a particular action or event but carries forward until the employee's next review, or until it is changed for other reasons. Some goals might be time-bound by setting a deadline for the project or task to be completed. For example, "By June 30, include photos of the new program graduates along with their testimonials on our web page."

Dynamic Goals

The Community Learning Agreement is meant to be a flexible tool to help guide your summer work. But, keep in mind that circumstances may change. Employees and interns are constantly responding to various demands on their time, energy, and abilities, and may have to react to unexpected situations.

Be prepared for some things to change over the course of the summer. Use the CLA as a way to communicate with your supervisor and to remind yourself of what you hope to gain in the internship. Ask questions. Clarify what you think you know and seek confirmation. Consult others. Take notes. Solicit feedback. Periodically review your CLA to see if you are on track and check off what you have accomplished.

Consider a mid-term meeting with your supervisor to review the CLA document. Are you working toward your goals, or have you gotten side-tracked? Do you need to change your goals or change your focus?