

# Program Manual

## Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program & Applied Community/Economics Development Fellows Program



### STEVENSON CENTER

FOR COMMUNITY AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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*Note that the content of this manual may also apply to ACED Interns—students accepted to the Peace Corps Master’s International program who:*

- *do not serve with Peace Corps as part of their degree program due to extreme or exceptional circumstances,*
- *do not have the previous experience required for the ACED Fellows Program, but*
- *do meet other requirements allowing them to complete 11-month internships instead of Peace Corps.*

## Foreword

This program manual includes substantive changes from previous editions (e.g., July 1999, December 2000, and March 2002). These changes include both updates regarding staff and procedures as well as a revised placement process. The placement process described here is based on a proposal by the Assistant Director, which was informed by discussions at Spring 2004 meetings of the Applied Community and Economic Development (ACED) Students Association, student suggestions, and the professional judgment of Stevenson Center staff. The ACED Students Association and Director have approved the revised placement process. The Stevenson Center Board as well as the ACED Students Association reviewed previous editions of this program manual.

**NOTE:** The Stevenson Center may amend this manual at any time. If changes are made, the Center will provide Fellows with an updated version and highlight those changes.

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### **In the Spirit of Adlai E. Stevenson II**

Named for the Illinois Governor, Presidential candidate, and United Nations Ambassador, the Stevenson Center strives to embody Adlai E. Stevenson II's spirit of public service.

## Introduction

This manual is written for Peace Corps Fellows and Applied Community/Economic Development Fellows in the Applied Community Development (ACD) or Applied Community and Economic Development (ACED) Sequence. The purpose is to outline the benefits and obligations of this program, to clarify program and academic policies, and to identify the persons responsible for administering these policies.

Begun in 1994, this Fellows Program is one of over forty Peace Corps Fellows/USA Programs in education, public health, nursing, and community development, each providing Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) opportunities for graduate learning in an applied context. In 1998, Illinois State University began recruiting ACED Fellows—persons who have at least one year of full-time experience in community development or social services, as either a paid professional or full-time volunteer. This experience may have been domestic or international.

For over a decade, the Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program at Illinois State University has recruited RPCVs and other applicants with significant community development experience to participate in an interdisciplinary graduate sequence. The sequences of the participating academic departments include an 11-month professional practice internship. The Stevenson Center places Fellows in both urban and rural areas, with most placements to date being in the state of Illinois. Peace Corps Fellows are required by the Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program to be placed in underserved communities in the United States. ACED Fellows may be placed more broadly, although the Stevenson Center may prioritize underserved U.S. communities. Otherwise, the university and program policies for ACED Fellows and Peace Corps Fellows are identical.

The Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development facilitates the Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program, ACED Fellows Program, the Peace Corps Master's International Program (for graduate students preparing for Peace Corps service), and faculty/staff applied research/service projects in community and economic development. The Center works with the departments, other university offices, and off-campus partners to coordinate the Center's processes and activities.

The three participating departments—Economics, Politics and Government, and Sociology and Anthropology—award master's degrees in Applied Economics, Political Science, and Sociology respectively, each with an ACED (or, for Political Science, ACD) Sequence. The Sequence in the respective departments includes completion of a specialized core curriculum designed to prepare students for their professional practice assignments and further service after graduation. The Sequence provides students an opportunity to learn the theoretical underpinnings of the disciplines, while providing an applied setting to explore and test these concepts.

## Governance

The Chairs of the Departments of Economics, Politics and Government, and Sociology and Anthropology govern the Stevenson Center and related programs. The Chairs are advised by the campus Stevenson Center Board made up of themselves, the Graduate Coordinators for each Department, affiliated faculty, the Director and Assistant Director, and student representatives—usually one to three students chosen by their peers. The Stevenson Center Board advises the Chairs on policy, site selection recommendations, and all other matters related to the Fellows Program. Due to state and federal privacy laws, student representatives cannot participate in Board discussions relating to individual Fellows or the placement of individual Fellows. The Board may allow some decisions, for example, those pertaining to individual students, to be handled solely by the Graduate Coordinator and Stevenson Center staff. Also, there is an external Stevenson Center Advisory Board, which focuses on emerging trends in the field, participates in strategic planning, and may be available for mentorship.

Curriculum and other academic matters are primarily guided by the respective Departments. Each Department's Graduate Studies Committee or Department Council makes recommendations that are channeled through the Dean and College Council, then Provost and Academic Senate. Some matters, such as overall Degree Programs and their Sequences, also require involvement of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

**NOTE:** In this Manual, "Degree Program" refers to the *academic* Degree/Sequence as approved by the IBHE; "Program" refers to the overall experience of the Fellows Program.

## **Mission Statement**

The Stevenson Center at Illinois State University promotes community and economic development in the U.S. and abroad. The Center sets the pace for public service and scholarship through a unique combination of coursework, research, professional practice, and collaboration with communities.

## **Goals**

- A Stevenson Center student will acquire theoretical and applied knowledge of community and economic development, as well as the tools for continued research and practical application leading to positive and lasting change.
- The Stevenson Center fosters mutually beneficial relationships with various local, national, and international entities to further their community and economic development efforts.
- The Stevenson Center continuously seeks, assesses, and embraces opportunities to serve students, communities, faculty, and Illinois State University.
- The Stevenson Center, with the support of Illinois State University, actively seeks and commits personnel and resources for the implementation of its programs.

## Learning Goals for the Applied Community/Economic Development Sequence

The Departments of Economics, Politics and Government, and Sociology and Anthropology adopt the following as the learning goals for students in their respective Master's Degree Programs with an interdisciplinary Applied Community and Economic Development (ACED) Sequence or Applied Community Development (ACD) Sequence. These goals support the mission of the Stevenson Center and promote the competencies required of community and economic development practitioners in both U.S. and overseas environments. We embrace these goals in light of values present at Illinois State University and articulated in *Educating Illinois*, the University's comprehensive plan to promote learning. Specifically, these learning goals emphasize the contribution students will make to society upon their graduation.

- I. ACED/ACD Sequence students will understand and will be able to apply the concepts, themes, and theories of process present in the community and economic development literature such that they are aware of both:
  - a. Forces affecting communities, including:
    1. The dimensions of power in communities and what role community and economic development professionals can have within those power dynamics.
    2. The relationships among public policy, economic context, and the needs and resources for community and economic development.
    3. Global, national, and local factors that impact communities and their economies.
  - b. The dynamic means by which communities change over time, including:
    1. What actions people can take, through activism and/or changes in public policy, to create desired changes in communities.
    2. The manner in which people can evaluate and communicate the impacts of development efforts in communities.
    3. How people can be mobilized for action within their communities.
    4. Social, cultural, and economic differences among people, organizations, and communities in the development process.
- II. ACED/ACD Sequence students will be equipped with applied skills and appropriate methods that will support their effectiveness in community-based internships, Peace Corps assignments, and careers in community and economic development. Students will be able to:
  - a. Use a variety of quantitative and qualitative research approaches and techniques to support community projects.
  - b. Produce reports, proposals, and presentations to support community projects.
  - c. Use community organizing skills to facilitate planning and implementation of community projects.

## Academic Programs

The requirements for the Program are unique in each Department, and Fellows should consult with their Graduate Coordinators about course selection, thesis preparation or capstone requirements, and registration. Each Department may provide a suggested list of electives for Fellows that reflect not only past Fellows' course choices but also courses that may be useful in an applied setting. Fellows should ultimately make course selections in consultation with their Graduate Coordinator. Academic requirements for Fellows seeking Master's Degrees in Applied

Economics, Political Science, or Sociology, with the ACED or ACD Sequence, are available online, from Graduate Coordinators, and in the Stevenson Center office.

## **Staff Roles**

### ***Director***

The Stevenson Center Director's duties include planning and directing community-economic development research. The Director submits external grant proposals; oversees the Stevenson Center core curriculum and coordination of classes; develops, in consultation with the Board, an annual financial planning document; creates and implements Center policies in consultation with the Board; and serves as chair of the Stevenson Center Board.

### ***Assistant Director***

The Stevenson Center Assistant Director's duties can be divided into six areas: 1) recruitment of students, 2) aid to the affiliated Graduate Coordinators and students with respect to student admission and student progress in meeting program criteria, 3) placement, mentorship, and evaluation of students in off-campus assistantship and internship positions, 4) management of relations between our students and other stakeholders (assistantship sites and internship sites), 5) maintenance of relations with Peace Corps and relevant offices on campus, and 6) grantwriting, fundraising, and aid to the Director in other tasks for Center operations.

### ***Staff Clerk***

The Stevenson Center Staff Clerk performs a variety of support tasks relating to management of student (current, former, and prospective), host organization, and other files; bookkeeping; publications and website maintenance; telephone reception; duplicating and correspondence; and other duties as needed.

## **Admissions**

Department admissions and financial award decisions are made by the Graduate Coordinator and Chair. Fellows Program admissions—including eligibility for a Fellows Program internship or off-campus assistantship—are made jointly by the Department and the Assistant Director. Fellows are required to sign a letter of commitment that outlines the minimum academic requirements and financial awards, secures Fellows' commitment to an 11-month internship, and lists a timeline for on-campus and off-campus experiences that assumes satisfactory academic progress.

## **Graduate Assistantship Assignments**

Assistantship duties, tuition awards, and stipends may vary for Fellows, as they do for all graduate students in these Departments. Assistantships generally require 15 or 20 hours of work per week. The Stevenson Center strongly discourages outside/additional employment, as it is likely to interfere with academic progress and assistantship duties. On-campus Graduate Assistantship assignments and financial awards will be determined by the Department Chairs and Graduate Coordinators, in consultation with the Assistant Director and based on the individual Department's need and Fellows' abilities.

Off-campus assistantships, which may be hosted and/or funded by non-profit agencies, units of government, or other community organizations, will be awarded on a competitive basis. Some may include AmeriCorps service. The Stevenson Center Assistant Director will make an announcement of any available off-campus assistantship opportunities to all eligible Peace Corps Master's International students and Fellows who have not already been

placed on-campus. The Assistant Director will distribute the résumés of any interested and eligible Peace Corps Master's International students or Fellows, including both new and returning students, to off-campus assistantship host agencies. Students not eligible for a departmental assistantship are not eligible for an off-campus assistantship.

The host agency will interview their top choice(s), and if the interviews are satisfactory, will notify the Assistant Director of their preferred student. Final selections of students for these assistantships will be made by the Stevenson Center, in consultation with Department Chairs and Graduate Coordinators as necessary. The Assistant Director will then notify the student of the off-campus assistantship award. Students completing an off-campus assistantship remain Illinois State University graduate assistants. These off-campus assistantships may vary in pay and duties, depending upon the requirements of the funding source and host entity, but they generally carry monthly stipends equal to the on-campus assistantships.

While completing off-campus assistantships AND/OR professional practice, Fellows must adhere to the following requirements:

- a. Student will adhere to all policies, procedures, and standards established by the Host Organization.
- b. Student will be responsible for his/her own transportation to and from Host Organization during placement.
- c. Student is required to have adequate health/accident insurance coverage in force during the entire placement. Student must secure coverage through the University's Group Health Insurance plan or procure private coverage.
- d. Student will be responsible for adhering to established schedules and notifying Host Organization of any absences or necessary schedule changes.
- e. During the placement, the University will pay tuition costs for the student, who will be enrolled as a graduate student at Illinois State University.

## **Transportation**

The Stevenson Center does not provide transportation for Fellows to and from their internship sites, local assistantship placements, or for research or other purposes, unless this funding is specifically budgeted in a grant or award that supports a site placement.

## **Evaluations**

Fellows evaluate each of their core courses and workshops during their on-campus stay and evaluate the Fellows Program's training and support in reports during the off-campus internship. They may also take part in exit interviews prior to leaving campus to begin their professional practice and surveys after completing their professional practice. The Stevenson Center also periodically solicits feedback on student performance from the community partners that host its students. Feedback from students and community partners is welcome at any time.

An external evaluation of the Program has been conducted in the past, funded by an external grant or by Peace Corps. Like all other academic programs, the Fellows Program is subject to periodic program review by the university. All of these methods of evaluation assist the Stevenson Center Board and staff in recommending to the Department Chairpersons changes in curricula, training, Program structure, and field support.

## Internship Placement Process

A critical experience of the Fellows Program is the required 11-month professional practice internship. The internship is critical for the success of the service and applied learning missions of the Stevenson Center. It is so important to the Peace Corps that, without an applied service internship requirement, Peace Corps would not designate this Program a Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program.

The professional practice internship for Fellows is similar to the internship requirements for students in the Politics and Government Department Sequence in Public Service and the Economics Department Sequence in Telecommunications, Electricity, and Natural Gas. But Fellows' internships are different from the regular Department internships in some important ways:

- The Fellows' placements are generally arranged by the Stevenson Center Assistant Director, and they provide Fellows a stipend paid by the host community or organization. Specialized instruction and in-service trainings not offered to other graduate students may also be available.
- These internships are essentially contractual arrangements between the university and host community or organization, involving the Stevenson Center and the Fellow.
- The stipends paid to Fellows for their internships may vary depending on the funding source, but graduate internship advisors report they are generally among the highest offered to Illinois State graduate interns.
- For many communities the cost of the Fellow's stipend and administrative costs are considered a large financial investment. Not surprisingly, the community's expectations have often been very high, but Fellows have in nearly all instances exceeded these expectations.

The purpose of these internships is threefold. The internships further the mission of the Fellows Program to provide economic and community development services to communities, especially those most in need. They also provide Fellows with a professional work experience relevant to their course of study. Lastly, they enhance opportunities for research, including the completion of thesis or capstone requirements and joint faculty research projects.

The placement decision is important to all the stakeholders in this experience, including:

- Communities and agencies, which fund and support Fellows in the field, and who depend on Fellows for technical help;
- Fellows, who are seeking an internship that continues their education and gives them experience that furthers their individual career goals; and
- The faculty and staff of the Departments of Economics, Politics and Government, and Sociology and Anthropology, who contribute to the education of these students and their preparation for internships and careers.

While it is important to the Stevenson Center Board that Fellows' individual career goals are met, the Fellows Program must also meet the needs of the other stakeholders. The Stevenson Center Board must determine the overall direction and appropriateness of placements and must work under the constraints of funding and site availability. *To be clear, the goal of the Fellows Program is to provide an experience that builds skills in community and economic development; specific types of internships in specific locations are **not** guaranteed.*

### **Fellows' Experience of the Process**

The process that the students experience is described below. This process is subject to change. Particularly, the timeline may change due to unforeseeable circumstances. Note that in order to be eligible for an internship, Fellows must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better. They must also be making satisfactory progress in the Degree Program, including having a C or better in all required classes.

### Prior to Fellows Arriving on Campus

- ❖ Prior to admission, Assistant Director (AD) and Fellow briefly discuss placement process during interview, including any reason why Fellow might not accept a placement.
- ❖ Student signs and submits Letter of Commitment, which includes the following text. The student acknowledges understanding:
  - The Fellows Program combines graduate study with applied community/economic development experience. This service-learning commitment is required of each student to help communities and to strengthen the educational experience of Fellows.
  - I will work for 11 months in a community/economic development internship placement. The current monthly stipend for the second-year internships is \$[insert amount]. The Stevenson Center Board, composed of Illinois State University faculty and staff, in consultation with the placement hosts, public- and private-sector community and economic development consultants, and the individual Fellow being placed, will determine the placement site. The final placement decision to match Fellows with their individual sites will be made by the Board. I know that, if my coursework is completed in the usual timeframe, I am scheduled to begin my placement in [insert month year]. It is my responsibility to notify the Assistant Director as soon as possible if I believe that this date should be changed.
  - The Stevenson Center places Fellows in both urban and rural areas, with most placements to date being in the state of Illinois. Peace Corps Fellows are required by the Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program to be placed in underserved communities in the United States. Applied Community and Economic Development Fellows may be placed more broadly, although the Stevenson Center may prioritize underserved U.S. communities. Placement for grant-supported sites may be determined before Fellows reach campus.

### Early First Semester (Fall or Spring)

- ❖ New student orientation—new students receive program manual that includes description of placement process (as well as basic information about completing professional practice requirements).
- ❖ AD **meets with Fellows as a group** to discuss their interests and to answer the following questions: 1) What kinds of issues would students like to address during their placements? 2) What kinds of skills would they like to develop? 3) With what kinds of organizations would they like to work? AD and students brainstorm organizations and communities that would meet these needs. While the search process will focus on the Fellows as a group, the AD of course welcomes one-on-one meetings with Fellows about their interests and ideas.
- ❖ Throughout the process, Fellows, Peace Corps Master's International students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to submit leads and suggestions that could benefit all Fellows. (Fellows may be *required* to submit names and contact information of a specified number of organizations that could be a good fit for themselves and/or their colleagues.)
- ❖ AD solicits applications from organizations/communities based on above discussion and suggestions (creating internal records and drawing on existing relationships).
- ❖ Fellows have their **résumés reviewed at the Career Center and submit revised résumés**. Résumés should contain complete contact information and a description of previous work experience and educational attainment. Résumés should be limited to *one page*; they should be e-mailed to the AD.

### Late First Semester

- ❖ AD continues to solicit applications from organizations/communities.
- ❖ Each Fellow submits a **Statement of Professional Interest** to the AD. This statement, no more than three pages in length, addresses what the Fellow hopes to learn (e.g., skills, information) from the professional practice experience and what kinds of organizations and work environments she/he thinks will be most enriching. The statement also relates the Fellow's future career goals and current studies (and, if applicable past experiences) to the professional practice placement. Basically, what do you hope to achieve in a placement and how does this relate to your career goals? (This document aids the AD in the site development process and the Stevenson Center Board in matching students to host

organizations/communities. It is an internal document not viewed by host organizations.) Please e-mail these statements to the AD.

- ❖ If Fellow is not interested in actual or potential applicant organizations/communities, Fellow needs to tell AD *as soon as possible and by the end of the first semester at the latest*. The Fellow and the AD then need to discuss options and create a plan of action. The Fellow should be prepared to devote the necessary time to actively search for leads, in coordination with the AD. *The more specific a Fellow's substantive interest, the more flexible that Fellow must be geographically. Conversely, the more narrow a Fellow's geographic need, the more flexible that Fellow must be in terms of the substance of the internship.* A Fellow pursuing a particular type of internship in a particular city or town to the exclusion of all other opportunities is **unacceptable**: it is not in the best interest of our community partners, and it does not fit the spirit of public service that guides the Center. Such a search can also seriously detract from a Fellow's experience on campus and/or lead to delays in beginning the internship.

### **Early Second Semester (Fall or Spring)**

- ❖ New student orientation—new students receive program manual that includes description of placement process.
- ❖ AD meets with *both* new and second-semester Fellows **as a group to discuss their interests**. (See Early First Semester above.)
- ❖ Fellows **may revise their résumés and statements of professional interest** (to reflect skills and experiences from the first semester) and submit them to AD.
- ❖ AD continues to solicit applications from organizations/communities.
- ❖ AD shares applications from organizations/communities with the group of students available to begin placements in the coming months. AD will solicit feedback from students about these applications and share that feedback with the applicants. AD shares résumés of students with applicant organizations/communities at this point or sooner. AD may also arrange meetings where there is mutual interest. AD will make every effort to let applicants know **within one month** whether they will or will not be receiving a Fellow. Applicants will **not** be held in limbo indefinitely while a student waits for other applications to come in; therefore, students need to consider each application in hand on its own merits. As stated above, Stevenson Center Board members approve placement decisions.

### **Late Second Semester**

- ❖ AD continues to solicit applications from organizations/communities. **At the very latest**, students need to decide among remaining applicants on the table two months before they will be done with on-campus coursework. This timeframe is generally in the best interest of the students and all other stakeholders.
- ❖ AD provides Fellows with **checklist of items to complete before leaving campus**.

### **Third Semester (Fall or Spring)**

Any Fellows on campus for three Fall/Spring semesters should continue to attend group meetings and be involved in the placement process.

### **Summer Semesters**

On an ongoing basis, but particularly during summer months, Stevenson Center addresses larger issues affecting placement process: marketing, building alumni relations, raising coordination/policy issues with three academic departments, grant writing, and fundraising.

### **Host Organization/Community's Experience of the Process**

The process of contacting, negotiating, and finalizing placement sites usually takes three to six months, but, for some community partners, it has taken over a year. The steps in this process for site recruitment, selection, and placement are described here. The process is different for sites funded by specialized contracts or grants: *placement of students in these positions may be given priority*.

### **Initial Contact**

The applicant community or agency expresses an interest in supporting a Fellow. Applicant sites learn about the Fellows Program through direct mailings and phone calls, the Stevenson Center's website, contact with the Stevenson Center Director or Assistant Director; referral from individuals, including alumni and private- or public-sector officials; conferences where the Stevenson Center is an exhibitor; media announcements; or other means. Fellows who know of a potential applicant site should notify the Stevenson Center Assistant Director: these suggestions are welcome.

### **Site Development**

An application, brochure, and other descriptive materials are sent to the applicant community. Whenever possible, the Stevenson Center Assistant Director travels to the community or organization to meet with partnering organizations and potential supervisors for Fellows. The Assistant Director discusses with these community leaders their community development goals, the potential role of a Fellow in their community, and the community's obligations to financially support and help guide and supervise the Fellow in her or his duties.

### **Community Application Process**

This is the lengthiest and most complicated portion of the placement process, particularly where a community, as opposed to a single organization within a community, is applying. Communities often begin with private meetings between potential partners and funders for the project, discussing not only the goals for a Fellow, but also how this project would fit into their strategic vision and how it would be funded. The cost is high for some communities, often making the Fellow the highest paid public official in the community. While some communities may be eligible for a subsidies through grant funding, it is a struggle for most communities to build these partnerships and to raise the cash needed to pay not only the costs to support a Fellow but also the cash and in-kind office expenses for the Fellow while at their site.

The process often begins with a series of private meetings between officials from units of government, businesspersons, and non-profit agency staff who are interested in the objectives of the Fellows Program and are willing to support it. In many cases, because public funds are to be expended by a unit of government such as a county, village or township, at least two public meetings are required for discussion and funding. This alone can take 2 or 3 months in some communities. Businesses or not-for-profits may also participate financially, and they must meet with their managers or board of directors for approval.

The application requests that communities provide evidence of community support in the form of letters from community organizations. Communities have submitted up to fifteen letters of support, and this process often takes several weeks to complete. When these portions of the application are completed, the community submits the application to the Stevenson Center Assistant Director.

Where possible, the Stevenson Center Assistant Director (with or without prospective Fellows) will visit the site to meet with community leaders who participated in the application process and/or who will be working with the Fellow on projects described in the community application. The site supervisor and/or fiscal agent discuss with the Assistant Director the mutual obligations listed in the agreement between the university and the host organization.

### **Application Review and Board Approval**

Once the applications are received and reviewed by the Assistant Director, copies are given to each Fellow scheduled for placement. Fellows are asked for their comments about each site, as well as their preferences, based on their academic and career goals. The Stevenson Center attempts to make the most appropriate match of community's stated needs with the stated career goals and preferences of the Fellow, noting Fellows' individual strengths as observed in core curriculum classes, workshops, and other interactions with Fellows. The Board considers the likelihood of a successful experience for both the Fellow and the community, the demonstrated skills—both

professional and interpersonal—of the Fellow, and the Fellows' preferences included in their Statement of Professional Interest. If a grant or contract obligates the Program for a certain number of placements per year, those sites may be given preference by the Board. *There is no guarantee that a Fellow will receive his or her first choice, even if it is a site referred by that Fellow.* The final decision for site selection is up to the Stevenson Center Board. The Stevenson Center Assistant Director notifies Fellows and the applicant communities of the final decision. The host organization signs an agreement with the Stevenson Center outlining the broad goals and mutual responsibilities of the cooperative arrangement between the Fellows Program and the organization/community.

### **Contract or Grant Sites**

Contract or grant sites will operate under a different placement process than the one described above. If the Fellows Program is awarded a grant or contract from an external source, the Program will project the number of placements available under this arrangement and possibly *recruit specific candidates for these specific sites.* Basically, in cases where grant or contract agreements require it, students may be matched with sites before their arrival on campus. Fellows who are recruited for these sites may have different work requirements, training, supervision, placement schedule, pay, and site selection process, depending on the requirements of the grant or contract. For instance, Fellows selected for such sites might begin their internship after only one semester on campus and then complete their on-campus studies after their 11-month internship is finished. When known in advance, details of the obligations and benefits of these contract or grant sites will be included in the letter of commitment signed by the Fellow before admission to the Fellows Program.

## ***Professional Practice Experience***

Fellows should generally expect to begin their professional practice internship no more than four weeks after they complete their last on-campus semester. The Fellows' community supervisor and the Fellow must mutually agree upon this date. The internship will extend *11 calendar months* after the start date. The Stevenson Center strongly discourages outside/additional employment, as it is likely to interfere with academic progress and the internship experience. Communities pay the Fellows Program, and the Fellow remains a full-time Illinois State graduate student for the duration of the internship. The Fellow generally receives her/his first paycheck at the end of the first or second month in which the Fellow works two or more weeks at the internship site.

While the Fellows will have significant professional responsibilities during this internship experience, they must also submit reports, work samples, and other documents to the Stevenson Center. These items, along with site supervisor's evaluations, serve as the primary basis of internship grades. This manual includes an explanation of these requirements and guidelines for their completion. These reports and other documents will provide the basis for the record of the internship experience. These reports will not only provide information to the Stevenson Center about your experience, they will also give you the raw material for a résumé and work portfolio to show to prospective employers. Finally, the reports and evaluations will help the Stevenson Center Director and the Stevenson Center Board make future decisions about Program curricula and placements.

***Note that any Fellows in grant-supported placements and/or with AmeriCorps status will have some additional/different tasks to complete, particularly in regards to initial paperwork submitted and the frequency and type of reporting. For those with AmeriCorps status, information about these tasks is included in the AmeriCorps Member orientation session and AmeriCorps Member Letter of Agreement.***

***Also note that if your host organization asks you to sign any document (e.g., confidentiality statements, contracts, liability waivers) about which you have questions or concerns, Illinois State's General Counsel can review the text BEFORE you sign. Contact the Assistant Director for details.***

### ***Pre-Internship Tasks***

It is the **responsibility of the Fellows** to complete a **checklist** available from the Assistant Director before they begin their internships. Examples of the items to complete are given here.

### **Registration for Professional Practice Hours**

The course number and number of credits for the professional practice experience vary by Department and by Fellows' individual plans of study and financial aid status. Please consult the Assistant Director and Graduate Coordinator. General guidelines follow.

A letter grade will be assigned each and every semester of a Fellow's internship provided that the Fellow enrolls in 5-8 hours of ECO 498, POS 498, or SOC 498 in total over the life of their internship. (No more than 20% of a master's degree plan of study may be earned from professional practice hours.) Students must be enrolled in at least one credit hour for each full or portion of semester of internship service, unless special circumstances dictate otherwise. For example, if your 11-month internship begins in January, you may sign up for 2 hours of credit in each of the Spring, Summer, and Fall semesters. You would be graded each semester, based on the criteria listed below.

### **Reply to E-mail Offer**

The Fellow will need to respond by e-mail in a timely fashion to an offer similar to the one received for Graduate Assistantships. (The subject line of the message will be "GA Offer" and include your name.) An additional memorandum of cooperation with the host organization may be signed to outline more specific responsibilities of each of the parties, as well as the work hours expected. *Keep in mind that early on in your internship experience your hours may be slightly higher than required due to additional orientation sessions, social events, night meetings, networking, etc.* While these extra hours are not mandatory, they are an investment in your productivity and create intangible goodwill between you, your supervisor, and community members.

### **Request for Reduction in Student Fees**

Fellows NOT completing theses or taking Independent Study credits may be eligible for a partial refund of the general activity, athletic and/or the health service fees assessed for course credit hours taken for each semester during their internship. Fellows are not eligible for this reduction during semesters in which they have enrolled in an on-campus course. If these fees are reduced, the students are not eligible for the benefits covered by these fees. The fee reduction applications for each semester of the internship must be completed online by posted deadlines.

### **Health Insurance Forms**

You must complete a copy of the Graduate Assistant Health Insurance Certification form and submit it to the Stevenson Center office. You may continue to receive Illinois State University Student Health Insurance during your internship if you request it from the Student Insurance office and pay for it by the posted deadlines, or you may waive the insurance and submit documentation that you are covered under another insurance policy. You are *required* to carry health insurance during your internship.

### ***Internship Tasks***

Each of the following items and forms must be completed and submitted to the Stevenson Center Assistant Director during your internship. Your grade will be based upon the timely and professional completion of these tasks, as well as your supervisor's evaluation of your performance. If possible, the Assistant Director will also visit you at your site to better assess your experience. Any forms below are examples of materials currently in use, but they may change over time. The Assistant Director will provide updates of these materials to Fellows as adjustments are made. ***Also, if you have not already finished your required capstone project or thesis, the Stevenson Center strongly encourages you to maintain regular communication with your project advisor or committee chair with the goal of timely completion.***

## **Workplan**

Within the first month of your internship you should compose a brief workplan (1-3 pages) that is signed by both you and your supervisor. You may use a narrative or table format. The workplan should:

- set reasonable and attainable goals for the term of your internship
- outline briefly the objective and tasks required to complete these goals
- list expected dates of completion for these goals
- indicate resources and/or staff assistance needed to meet these goals

While the goals included in the workplan may change during your internship, it is still important to outline them, not only to give you tangible outcomes to achieve, but also to set expectations for both you and your supervisor. This will help the supervisor know what can be achieved during your time-limited internship and will give you milestones against which you can measure your own success.

## **Business Cards**

If your host organization plans to supply you with business cards, please request that you be identified in some way with the Stevenson Center (e.g., Peace Corps Fellow, ACED Fellow, Community Development Intern—Illinois State University). Such identification can give you the chance to tell others about your graduate program and could lead to placements for future Fellows and/or applications from prospective students. Whether or not you are identified in this manner on your card, please send one of your cards to the Stevenson Center for your file.

## **Bi-Monthly Reports with Work Samples**

Every two months you will be expected to complete a typed bi-monthly report and return it to the Stevenson Center Assistant Director. The format varies by report, as described below, but in each you should include a specific description of your work activities and any relevant feedback about the Fellows Program. You will submit four of these reports AND a final report. For ALL reports, use the format below, *labeled with question numbers and/or subheadings*, so that it is clear that all questions have been addressed.

If applicable, you should submit work samples with each report. You should refer to these work samples in your bi-monthly report, explaining your role in their completion. Your work samples could include copies of reports, newsletters, manuals, grants, questionnaires, brochures, news clippings about your organization or work, printouts of web pages you have helped compose, etc. You should, of course, keep copies of work samples for yourself to include in your work portfolio.

In order to help you in compiling your bi-monthly reports, you may want to complete weekly log reports to help catalog your activities. Fellows often have difficulty keeping track of the myriad of activities in which they are involved. In your weekly log, identify and describe your activities this week and note the percentage of your time spent on each. A brief weekly log report, for your own records, could help you in composing your bi-monthly reports. Likewise, develop a system for tracking your work samples so that they will be easy to pull together every two months.

For each report, include the following information in a cover page:

Name:

Placement Location:

Address:

Phone Work:

Home:

Report Number (1, 2, 3, 4, or FINAL):

Dates of Service Covered in This Report:

From: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (Month/Day/Year)

**Reports 1-4 (ANSWER ALL FOUR QUESTIONS IN EACH OF THE FIRST FOUR REPORTS)**

1. List and explain your major work activities for the past two months. Include specifics about what you did, when, with whom, for how long, etc. Refer to your original workplan: your answer should indicate your progress (in both quantitative and qualitative terms) on those tasks, and it may also include activities not in your original workplan. Attach any relevant work samples.
2. Thinking about your work activities, name and describe what you consider to be up to three major accomplishments for this period. Explain your selection.
3. Describe any aspects of your internship experience during this period that could be improved.
4. REPORT 1: Submit a one-paragraph profile that describes what you are doing in your internship, for use in press releases and/or other marketing materials. Include a sentence or two of biographical information, highlighting your previous education and experiences, and write in the third person. What follows is a sample, and the Assistant Director can provide additional examples as needed:

“Craig Schlatter is completing his professional practice with the Community Development Commission of Mendocino County in Ukiah, California. His major responsibilities include project administration of the County of Mendocino’s Housing and Community Development programs and management of the Public Housing Authority’s \$220,000 Capital Fund program. Craig has a B.S. in Economics, and will soon have an M.S. in Applied Economics, from Illinois State. An Applied Community and Economic Development Fellow, Craig worked on the Stevenson Center’s brownfields rural assistance program while taking classes. Previously, he founded and directed the Academy for Music and the Arts.”

REPORT 2: Thinking about your answer to item number 3 above, what steps could you, your supervisor, and/or the Assistant Director take to make improvements?

REPORT 3: What skills/abilities have you acquired to date? Which skills/abilities might you need to enhance your future performance?

REPORT 4: Submit a brief (2-3 paragraphs) newsletter article about your internship experiences and accomplishments to date, for use in press releases and/or other marketing materials. Please write in the third person for a general audience. Also submit a photo of yourself at work, preferably an action shot, with a complete caption. Like the article, the photo may be used in Stevenson Center marketing materials.

**Final Report**

*Section 1. Internship Accomplishments*

- A. List the items of your workplan, and evaluate your progress and the community/agency’s progress toward achieving the objectives. Please include projects accomplished that don’t appear in the workplan.
- B. What has been your major contribution to the community/agency? How is the community/agency different for you having been there?
- C. Which methods or approaches have been useful to you in achieving these successes?
- D. What were the main problems, “roadblocks,” that you faced? How did you deal with them?
- E. What would you do differently if you had the internship to do over again?
- F. What advice would you give to Fellows just starting their internships? *Please note that this advice will be shared with or distributed to current/future Fellows.*
- G. Please provide names and contact information for key individuals at your site. This will assist Stevenson Center staff in future contacts with your site.

H. Would you recommend that your site be considered to host a student again in the future? Please explain.

### *Section 2. Support during Your Internship*

- A. How did Stevenson Center staff contribute to your fieldwork? Do you have recommendations for future support?
- B. Did other faculty or staff assist you? If so, please describe briefly.
- C. Did you receive adequate support from your community/agency?
- D. What would have improved the support that you received at your site?

### *Section 3. Professional Development*

- A. What are some of the important themes, lessons, policy questions, etc. suggested by your internship experience? What have you learned, about yourself and your host organization/community?
- B. What linkages do you see between your prior academic and professional background, and your internship experience?
- C. What was the most valuable part of your on-campus preparation for the professional practice internship? What was least valuable?
- D. Did you attend a professional conference while in this program? If so, how valuable did you find the conference(s)?
- E. What didn't you get the opportunity to learn that you would like to know?
- F. How have your coursework and the internship experience shaped your future career goals?
- G. Have you been given the opportunity to continue to work at your host organization beyond the end of your internship? If so, in what capacity and what did you decide to do?
- H. Attach your revised résumé, incorporating your internship experience and tailored to the requirements for the position you are seeking after graduation.
- I. If/when complete, submit a copy of your capstone project or thesis to the Stevenson Center.

### *Section 4. Program Improvements*

- A. What suggestions do you have for improving the courses, workshops, and other learning opportunities in the program? What should be kept? What should be removed/changed? Should the time that students spend on campus before their professional practice remain one year or be lengthened by a semester? *Please note that feedback about specific courses may be compiled and shared with faculty, but your confidentiality will be maintained.*
- B. Complete the post-program Learning Inventory available from the Assistant Director.

- C. Please provide any ideas that would improve the Fellows Program, including ideas relating to site placement, field support, course preparation, communications, or any other component. Thank you for your input.

### **Grading**

This course is not a guaranteed A. To the contrary, Fellows must complete the required reports in a professional and timely manner. These reports, along with the submitted work samples and supervisors' evaluations, will determine Fellows' grades for the internship course. The Stevenson Center Assistant Director, in consultation with Department Graduate Coordinator and/or Department Chair as needed, will determine the grades. Any feedback on Stevenson Center programs that you do not feel comfortable including in your reports may be shared directly with the Director. The grade will be based upon the following criteria:

- Your timely completion of tasks listed in this Program Manual, including the workplan and bi-monthly reports and the submission of work samples.
- The evaluation of your work performance by the site supervisor approximately every two months.
- Attendance and participation in any scheduled workshops on campus. Students will be notified in advance of the workshops. This requirement is waived for Fellows outside of Illinois, but other off-campus conferences and workshops may be required for those Fellows.