

Top 10 Reasons to Intern at the USDA's CNPP

Here are the Top 10 reasons compiled by the summer 2008 interns.

- 10. CNPP is a small agency, but its influence on the lives of Americans is huge.*
 - 9. CNPP covers national policy development, implementation, and communication—all in the same place. What a great way to start your résumé.*
 - 8. Billions of hits on MyPyramid.gov have shown that even your great-uncle likely knows about MyPyramid. So most people will know what you're working on during your internship.*
 - 7. CNPP has an exceptional staff, with diverse backgrounds and interesting career experiences that you can tap into.*
 - 6. You have the opportunity to evaluate and find ways of applying cutting-edge (as in "hot off the press") research in public health.*
 - 5. At lunch, you can have conversations about the micronutrients in your lunch and no one will roll his/her eyes at you!*
 - 4. Field trips and visits to monuments, festivals, government meetings, and tours of the Capitol and the White House... all filled with photo ops that will make your Facebook page the envy of all your friends!*
 - 3. You will be in the Nation's Capital, working side-by-side with national nutrition leaders. What a powerful internship!*
 - 2. We have fun and eat often! Did we mention CNPP staffers love chocolate? (It's the antioxidants, we think.)*
- And the number one reason to intern at the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy & Promotion is...**
- 1. CNPP is the "Center" of the Nutrition Universe. There's no place else like it. Period.*

Introduction

Spending time in the Nation's capital can be a powerful experience. And as a student intern, you can use the power of your education to have an internship that places you right in the center of nutrition public policy development and implementation, as well as promotion, marketing and communications.

You can use the power of your professional and personal interest in nutrition, public health, economics, food science, education, and marketing and communications as an intern with USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion.

The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion is one of the few places where you can have the experience of working on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, electronic nutrition-education tools that help Americans eat according to the Guidelines, the USDA Food Plans, evidence-based systematic reviews, and many other exciting projects that directly benefit the American public.

Degree Areas Applicable to CNPP Programming

CNPP is seeking interns pursuing degrees in a variety of majors. A sample list of potential degree areas includes:

Human Nutrition/ Health Sciences:

Clinical Nutrition	Community Nutrition	Dietetics
Foods and Nutrition	Food Science	Food Technology
Health Policy	Nutrition Education	Nutrition Policy
Nutrition Science	Public Health	

Public Administration and Social Sciences:

Adult Education	Agricultural/ Applied Economics	Economics
Educational Psychology	Family and Consumer Sciences	Statistics
Institutional Management	Public Policy	Psychology

Communications:

Educational Communications	Marketing	Public Relations
Media and Technology		

Examples of Projects

The following are examples of projects completed by CNPP interns.

- Social Media Strategies for Release of the 2010 DGA
- Dietary Guidelines Comment Database Summaries
- A State-by-State Look at Obesity in the United States
- MyPyramid Tracker Portion Database and Platform Development
- The *Dr. Oz Show*: MyPyramid Challenge
- National Nutrition Month Promotion: Employee Wellness Programs
- Abstract for ADA entitled “Dietetic Internship Information Management and Technology Training at a Federal Agency: Skills to Advance Practicing Dietitians into the 21st Century”
- *Let’s Move!* Recipe Analysis
- PowerPoint Presentation: Whole Grains; Health and Nutrition Symbols Research
- Healthy Eating Index Verification
- 10 Tip Series
- Growing a Healthier You: Nutrition from the Farm to the Table: Gardening Series
- PowerPoint Presentation: Report of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, for the Independent Bakers’ Association’s 36th Annual Convention
- Nutrition Evidence Library: Dietary Guidelines-related Project
- Apps for Healthy Kids Competition

- Nutrition Education in the USDA
- A “Guide for authors and reviewers” for translating the messages and concepts of the Dietary Guidelines for American for consumer materials
- Food-group modeling of nutrient profile updates and modeling “what if” scenarios by using the MyPyramid food-intake patterns
- Text and graphic layout plans for sections of MyPyramid for Preschoolers
- Production of video podcasts and audio podcasts promoting MyPyramid.gov and strategies for healthful diets and lifestyles.
- Ingredient and commercially produced food matches in databases used to revise the USDA Food Plans
- Updates to the MyPyramid grouping system for vegetables
- Strategic development for working and communicating with MyPyramid corporate partners

Application Process

Applicants must submit a cover letter, résumé, and official transcript to be considered for the CNPP Internship Program. The cover letter must include the following:

- A description of your degree/major.
- An indication of the CNPP long-term projects of interest to you.
- Your preferred start and end date.
- The number of days and hours per week you are available to be an intern.
- A statement acknowledging that you are willing to intern on a voluntary, unpaid basis.
- The contact information of your faculty/staff advisor.
- Your contact information, including telephone number.

You may submit your cover letter and résumé via [email](#) or US mail to the address below. (Your official transcript must come directly from your school's registrar.)

USDA Center for Nutrition Policy & Promotion
 3101 Park Center Drive
 Room 1034
 Alexandria, VA 22302
 ATTN: CNPP Internship Program

Submission Dates

<i>Dates of Internship</i>	<i>Deadline for Submission</i>
January-May	October 1
June-August	March 1
September-December	June 1
4-Week sessions	Two months beforehand

Notification of Acceptance

Within two weeks after the deadline, selected applicants are notified of their acceptance. Notification will be immediate if incomplete packages are received, the applicant does not meet the requirements, or there is a clear indication that the internship will not be mutually beneficial.

Questions and Answers about Internships at CNPP

What is the structure of the internship?

The internship program is a major effort by CNPP to provide experiences to undergraduate and graduate students, enrolled in US colleges or universities, who are studying or have a strong interest in nutrition, public policy, community nutrition, economics and food behavior, or other areas related to nutrition, health, and well-being.

The internship program at the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion is designed to accommodate students in practicum classes, those fulfilling the requirements of dietetic internships, and those not currently enrolled in a practicum class or dietetic internship but who want such an experience at the Federal level.

The internship program is a formal collaboration between the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion and your university, as represented by your instructor(s) or advisor.

What are CNPP's long-term projects?

The long-term projects are the following:

1. Nutrition Evidence Systematic Reviews
2. Dietary Guidelines for Americans
3. Communicating the Dietary Guidelines for Americans: Electronic Tools
4. USDA Food Plans
5. USDA Health Eating Index
6. Growing a Healthier You: Nutrition from the Farm to the Table
7. Expenditures on Children by Families (Cost of Raising a Child)

Are there any field trips, orientations sessions, or opportunities to attend conferences/events that are built into the structure of the internship?

Yes. Field trips, orientation sessions and/or opportunities to attend conferences/events are built into the structure of the internship program and may include the following: day trips to visit the US Capitol, the US House of Representatives, the US Senate, the Library of Congress, as well as other U.S. government agencies as they relates to the scope of work and assignments during the student's internship session. The interns will have the opportunity to attend conferences, special

events and other educational or cultural events. The types of events and conferences will depend upon the timing of the internship.

Who can I apply to be a CNPP intern?

The program is designed for students enrolled at US accredited colleges and universities, including community colleges.

The program is designed for those interested in (1) the development of nutrition policy and communication, (2) public health policy promotion, (3) economics and food consumption, (4) nutrition research, (5) development of nutrition education materials and electronic tools, and (6) communications, customer marketing, and public affairs.

How long are the CNPP internships?

The internship program is designed to provide experiences to students over the course of a semester (or trimester) or during a summer break. Special arrangements may also be made for shorter term experiences such as a 4-week rotation.

What type of experience will I gain?

Interns may gain experience in:

- Nutrition Policy Development
- Nutrition Research
- Nutrition Communications
- Public Affairs
- Nutrition Marketing and Outreach
- Food Plan Development
- Consumer Expenditures
- Nutrition Evidence-based Systematic Reviews

What type of work will I be doing?

Projects vary throughout the year. You may be involved in activities such as:

- Creating nutrient profiles of food groups and food intake patterns of MyPyramid.
- Helping to determine and implement campaigns related to any of Dietary Guidelines-based educational tools.
- Updating the food prices database that supports the USDA Food Plans.
- Writing a “Nutrition Insight” that characterizes a population group by its Healthy Eating Index scores or other topics of interests.
- Writing an “Evergreen” piece that would be targeted to a particular audience or for a particular time of year (e.g., eating well during the holidays).
- Updating nutrition messages associated with electronic nutrition-education tools.
- Supporting the work of the new Nutrition Evidence Library.

Is this a paid internship?

Student internships at the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion are volunteer positions.

Is housing provided by CNPP?

No. CNPP will provide interns with information and online resources for finding short-term housing in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

What are the start and end dates for the internship?

The start and end dates for the internship are fairly flexible and will be determined based on the needs of individual interns. However, a fixed schedule is available for those wishing to have a semester-based internship.

Can I receive college credit for participating in the internship?

Yes. Students enrolled in courses that require a field experience or internship could receive course credits through their internship with CNPP. Students are typically able to arrange for academic credit through their educational institutions; CNPP is willing to coordinate with academic institutions to establish the conditions suitable for academic credit and to incorporate specific evaluation requirements into a student's placement.

Are the internships full-time or part-time?

Internships may be full- or part-time, depending on a student's schedule and academic needs. Schedules are flexible and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Are interns allowed to work off-site (or to telework)?

No. Students are expected to work on-site, unless there is an exception. For example, the Office of Personnel Management may determine that Federal employees may use unscheduled telework arrangements because of inclement weather. In instances such as this one, the student will need to check with his/her preceptor.

About the USDA and the Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Mission Area

Abraham Lincoln called the [US Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) the “people’s department” because the Department’s work was so closely tied to the American people, most of whom were farmers at the time. Now, USDA’s scope is much broader, but improving people’s lives remains the core of its success. Everyone with an interest in good nutrition, food safety, and the health of the American landscape has a stake in USDA’s programs and activities.

The mission of meeting the needs of the American people is carried out by USDA’s numerous agencies and offices, from the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (located in the mission area of Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services) to agencies such as the Food Safety and

Inspection Service, the Agricultural Research Service, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and many more. USDA has stewardship of more than 190 million acres of national forest land; fights hunger at home and abroad; supports land-grant colleges and universities; and battles against bugs, pests, and diseases that threaten American agriculture and ecosystems. USDA has responsibilities for protecting, promoting, and evaluating the production and consumption of American agriculture. It ensures that agricultural products imported and produced for domestic distribution in commerce are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled.

Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS)

As one of the mission areas of USDA, the [Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services](#) (FNCS) ensures access to nutritious, healthful diets for all Americans. Through food assistance and nutrition education for consumers, FNCS encourages Americans to make healthful food choices. FNCS consists of two agencies: the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) [Organizational Chart](#)

The USDA [Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion](#) (CNPP) works to improve the health of Americans by developing and promoting dietary guidance that links the best evidence-based scientific research to the nutrition needs of consumers. CNPP is committed to making a difference “Every Day, Every Way” by promoting the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). To accomplish these goals, CNPP advances consumer messages that assist the American public and supports the use of the USDA’s food guidance system that can be personalized for individuals to reach their dietary goals.

The staff members at the CNPP have a diverse educational backgrounds and experiences. CNPP staff members are

- Nutritionists who are registered dietitians who have masters’ degrees or doctorates.
- Economists with doctorates.
- Food scientists and public health scientists with doctorates.
- Public affairs and marketing specialists with degrees in fields such as journalism and marketing.
- Family and consumer science specialists with doctorates.

CNPP Staff have attended a broad range of universities including the following:

James Madison University
University of Minnesota
Michigan State University
American University
University of Maryland
Cornell University

University of Mississippi
Vanderbilt University
University of Pennsylvania
The Pennsylvania State University
New York University
South Carolina State University

Seton Hall University
West Virginia University
University of Birmingham
Boston College
East Case Western Reserve University

Howard University
Rutgers University
University of Southern California
State University of New York at Albany

Many CNPP staff members have taught at the university level and some are currently affiliated with university programs as adjunct teachers.

CNPP staff members are well known among public- and private-sector food and nutrition communities.

Food and Nutrition Service

The [Food and Nutrition Service](#) (FNS) increases food security and reduces hunger in partnership with cooperating organizations by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence. USDA's 15 nutrition assistance programs are the first line of our Nation's defense against hunger. They include large, well-known programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (previously known as Food Stamps), the school meal programs, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), as well as many smaller programs.

Contact Information:

Julia M. Dinkins, PhD
Program Administration Specialist
cnppstudentprogram@cnpp.usda.gov
703-305-7600