



FRESH LOCAL NEWS FOR
RED HOOK & RHINEBECK

HIRING, TRAINING + WORKING WITH INTERNS

A Handbook for Small Newsrooms

Presented by The Daily Catch, a nonprofit,
hyperlocal news source based in
Red Hook, Hudson Valley, New York

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INTRODUCTION: WHY CONSIDER INTERNS?

For small news organizations, whether new or established, having an intern on hand sounds tempting. But for editors stretched thin covering a community alone or with tiny staffs, is the effort worth it?

On balance, the editors and publishers interviewed for this project said yes. Not only can an intern expand coverage, but also, training the next generation of reporters satisfies the mission, whether articulated or unspoken, of many newsroom leaders.

Our target audience for this handbook includes editors of both place-based newsrooms and news organizations that cover topics such as criminal justice or climate. This handbook, designed specifically to meet the needs of small-newsroom managers, is the first of its kind.

We seek to demystify the internship process for those new to it, providing tips from experienced editors from around the United States. We'll also guide editors in working with young people in this digital, post-pandemic world, where social skills and habits that editors take for granted may seem alien to new reporters. How, for example, do you teach someone who communicates primarily by text message to nail down an interview with the mayor or another key source?

The author is Barbara Selvin, who began her career as a weekly newspaper reporter. She later became a business reporter at Newsday/New York Newsday and then a professor at Stony Brook University's journalism school, where she created the internship program and directed it for 15 years. Selvin has written about weekly and community newspapers for Nieman Reports, for Poynter.org and for Grassroots Editor, the journal of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE), of which she is a member. She is the vice chair of the board of The Daily Catch, a hyperlocal nonprofit newsroom in New York State's Hudson Valley.

In 2022, when The Daily Catch was just over a year old, its founder and editor, Emily Sachar, applied for a grant from the DJ McManus Foundation to cover a paid internship. The foundation asked that the proposal include something lasting, something that would outlive a single internship, and the result is this handbook.



The foundation was created by Jason McManus, editor-in-chief of Time Inc. from 1987 to 1994, and his wife, Deborah. Jason McManus died in 2019, and the foundation is now run by Deborah and the couple's two daughters, Sophie and Mage. It has endowed a wide range of scholarships and provided grants for journalism students, women journalists and other journalism nonprofits. We thank Deborah McManus and the McManus Foundation for their encouragement and for their generous financial support.

In creating this handbook, Selvin sought advice from editors and publishers at ISWNE newspapers, as well as from members of the Institute for Nonprofit News and LION Publishers, two organizations dedicated to supporting small newsrooms and preserving independent journalism, and from small, unaffiliated newsrooms. Links to all organizations mentioned in the handbook can be found in Appendix I.

The Daily Catch encourages news organizations, associations and other interested parties to download additional copies of this handbook.

Please visit <https://www.thedailycatch.org/articles/internhandbook/> or scan this QR code:



CHAPTER 1

INTERNSHIP BASICS

Connecting with college programs

Offering summer, semester
and shorter internships

Compensating your intern:
pay or credits?

Finding grants to support internships

Working with high school interns

Broadening your scope:
internships beyond reporting





CONNECTING WITH COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Since most interns are college students, connecting with college programs is a good first step. Many colleges and universities hold internship fairs; depending on the size of the school, internship fairs may be tailored thematically – for example, communications and the arts – or open to all employers. Structures vary. Many fairs offer little more than a place for students to drop off resumes and exchange a quick couple of words with recruiters. A rare few allow for more in-depth conversations.

TIP

Check out internship fairs at local colleges.

“A fair is a great starting point,” said Scott Brinton, a veteran weekly newspaper editor on Long Island who now teaches journalism full time at Hofstra University. “You meet a lot of students all at once. Then you have to follow up – it’s hard to tell in five or 10 minutes if this is someone you really want to hire as an intern.”

It’s worth taking a half-hour, once a fair concludes, to create a spreadsheet with data on potential internship prospects. Name, email, phone number, college, major, expected graduation date, and your initial impressions are good columns to start with. (A column noting which students sent follow-up emails or thank-you notes after the fair can be useful. Experience requires the author to say it might also be depressing.) Leave room to add columns for details on subsequent contacts made both from the students to you and from you to the students.

And, of course, the spreadsheet works for prospects you find outside of internship fairs, too.

TIP

Create a spreadsheet to track your internship prospects.

The spreadsheet can help you reach out to good prospects whom you don’t hire right away. Keeping in touch builds a pipeline of potential future interns or employees.

Beyond holding internship fairs, some college journalism programs work hard to engage employers and connect them with potential interns. Others do little beyond posting whatever information you send to internal job boards. Still others offload the task to schoolwide career centers, which may or may not have staff who are sensitive to the special needs of newsrooms, so different from those of large industrial employers.

Modern career centers often use employment platforms, such as Handshake, to connect students and alumni with internships and jobs, and they ask that employers set up accounts on these platforms.

TIP

Many college and university career centers use employment platforms such as Handshake to connect students with internships and jobs. Registration is required.

Emily Sachar found working directly with the many colleges and universities near the Hudson Valley coverage area of The Daily Catch has been uneven at best. For one thing, each college has its own employment platform portal, and even those that used Handshake required separate, time-consuming entries. Results were poor, with few or no responses from students (for internships) or alumni (for job postings). She also grew frustrated with internship coordinators at area journalism programs, some of whom failed to follow up on repeated attempts at connecting. She had some luck working with leaders at one student newspaper, who referred two successful candidates, but ultimately, she found that – at least in 2022 and 2023 – LinkedIn generated the most and best internship applicants.

TIP

LinkedIn works well for internships as well as for job openings.

Although it was time-consuming, Sachar also generated a list of editors at Northeast college newspapers and wrote to them advertising internship opportunities and introducing the newspaper she edits. One yielded results: two candidates, one of whom became a successful intern.

Although Sachar said that neither Handshake nor journalismjobs.com had been useful to her, other editors recommended both. And Brinton admitted that having been an adjunct instructor before he began teaching full time helped establish a steady stream of candidates. “To be honest, most of our interns came through personal connections,” he said.

TIP

Personal connections with college journalism instructors often yield solid internship prospects.

That approach worked for Maria Piedrabuena, too. Piedrabuena launched Tu Prensa Local, the only Spanish-language news source covering Eastern Long Island, in 2020. After a former professor (disclosure: the author) invited her to speak about her career to a journalism class, two students followed up with applications to intern with her, becoming her very first interns. “That’s the time when things have panned out,” Piedrabuena said. “Just sending a blurb is not enough for students to connect. We’re not CNN.”

One of the students was from Brazil, a native Portuguese speaker with some fluency in Spanish. His first story was about a community of Brazilian immigrants, one that Piedrabuena hadn’t covered because of the language barrier, and he produced a video about a businesswoman who sells Brazilian food specialties at local farmers markets. “The Brazilian community is also part of the Latino community,” she said. “It’s part of our job – to let people know the Latino community is so diverse.”

Adding diversity to your newsroom via your intern roster may also prove useful when applying for grants. Funders often ask how well your newsroom reflects the community you cover, Walter Mullin, publisher of The Daily Catch, observed.



The student body at local colleges may be more diverse than your newsroom. Interns may connect with segments of your community you haven't been able to reach.

For news organizations covering a specific topic, colleges that offer curricula in that area may be especially helpful. Gabrielle Dion, who co-founded the nonprofit MedicateOH in 2019 to cover medical marijuana and other cannabis issues in Ohio, emphasized building relationships with instructors at trade schools or in university courses focused on the cannabis industry. “We really want to develop writers who are going to write about what we do,” Dion said.

OFFERING SUMMER, SEMESTER AND SHORTER INTERNSHIPS

Many college programs offer credit for summer internships, semester internships or even short-term internships during winter or spring breaks. Winter break at some schools runs from early December into the third week of January.

Summer is often easiest for students; they can more readily schedule full days at an internship when they don't need to work around class meeting times, campus activities and an academic workload. Even students who hold other summer jobs often can make themselves available for two full days a week or more.

Students looking for summer internships beyond their hometowns may need help finding housing or a car. When Regina Clarkin, founding publisher and editor of the Peekskill Herald, learned that the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, part of the City University of New York, paid a stipend to students who took on unpaid summer internships, she jumped at the opportunity and received three applications. One potential drawback: The intern had to live in Peekskill, a town 40 miles north of Manhattan. “Housing here is atrocious,” Clarkin said, but she scouted in the community and found a woman willing to rent an apartment at a reasonable rate.


When she held a luncheon for the intern at summer's end, the landlady came, too.



Have a plan for helping interns from out of town find summer housing.

Low-cost housing can be vanishingly rare in areas reliant on summer tourism. For Suzanne Dean, editor and publisher of the Sanpete Messenger in Manti, Utah, a small town two hours south of Salt Lake City, having a nearby college where student housing sits empty during the summer months has been essential. Her summer interns have paid as little as \$200 a month, she said.





While some summer interns have driven their own vehicles to Manti from as far away as Maryland and Minnesota, the Sanpete Messenger also has a company car that interns can use, Dean added.

Newspapers in college towns may have summer access to unoccupied dormitory rooms; check with college residence programs.

**TIP**

Check with the directors of housing at local colleges about renting unoccupied dormitory space during summer breaks.

Think beyond summer: While a three-week internship during winter break, or a weeklong internship over spring break, doesn't lend itself to full-fledged reporting experiences, you might offer a promising prospect the chance to shadow you for a day or two or three, sitting in on interviews or staff meetings or attending a public meeting with you. Watching an experienced journalist in these situations can be an eye-opener for student journalists, and watching how the student reacts can give you insight into the student's level of curiosity, quick-wittedness and even civic awareness, the lack of which is a sore point with many editors.

**TIP**

Consider asking intern prospects to shadow you for a day or two during the semester or during school breaks.

Some students happily sign on for eight- to 16-week internships during a spring or fall quarter or semester. Usually, those internships begin at the start of the semester, although some schools allow students to register for credits once the semester has begun and help them with the paperwork necessary to waive late fees. The amount of course credit may depend on the number of hours worked. (At Stony Brook, students earn one credit for every 56 hours worked, equalling one credit for eight full days; a three-credit internship, equivalent to credit for a typical classroom course, required two full days a week for 12 weeks.)

Hours for remote internships may be less structured, with students working a varying number of hours per day. Students generally keep track of their own hours and have a supervisor sign off to meet academic requirements.

Application timetables vary for summer internships, with highly competitive employers – The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, NBC News – asking for applications as early as November for the following summer. For many newsrooms, however, posting summer internship information in early April meshes with student planning horizons.

Post spring internships the preceding November, well before Thanksgiving, but don't be surprised if applications trickle in until the spring semester is about to start.

Fall internships tend to be the hardest to fill. Occasionally, a student or two will line up a fall internship during the preceding spring, but generally, students' focus is elsewhere. It's even more difficult to capture their attention during summer months, but by August, the early birds are starting to stir.

**TIP**

Posting your internships with college placement services two to three months before your start date generally works well with students' planning horizons. A last-minute flurry of applications isn't unusual.

COMPENSATING YOUR INTERN: PAY OR CREDITS?

Interns may earn academic credit, get paid, or both – or neither, though providing no compensation at all may violate federal regulations.

For years, many employers offered unpaid internships only. These employers required that interns earn credits in lieu of financial remuneration. Increasingly, however, employers recognize that unpaid internships are inherently inequitable. More and more, employers are paying their interns a wage or at least a stipend, regardless of whether the student is also earning academic credit.

Colleges and universities, not employers, handle the mechanics of academic credit. Some programs require students to have internships and to earn credit for them. Others don't require internships but offer credit for students who seek it.

Students (or their families) pay for the credits in the form of tuition, and therein lies the inequity. Credit-only internships, especially during the summer months, limit opportunities to students whose families can afford to subsidize their college education in part or in full, especially for summer internships. Here's why.

TIP

Employers who insist that students get academic credits for summer internships, instead of a wage, impose a double burden: The students have little or no time for paid summer jobs, and they must also pay hundreds of dollars for the credits.

When full-time students take an internship (paid or unpaid) for credit during a regular semester or academic quarter, their tuition covers the cost of all academic credits, including internship credits. But during school breaks, including summer breaks, students can't take a full credit load and must pay for credits individually. This puts unpaid internships out of reach for students who need paid summer jobs to save for college costs.

Unpaid summer internships require students to forgo the opportunity to earn needed cash or leave them fewer hours to work at a paid job. In addition, most unpaid summer internships must be taken for credits – which the student must then pay for. Some students can't afford this double hit.

TIP

Many colleges and universities allow interns to receive both academic credit and a stipend or wage. Best practice is for employers to pay interns and leave the question of credits to the student and the academic institution.

Another consideration: Transportation costs can limit students' ability to accept an internship offer. While federal regulations require employers to reimburse workers for on-the-job transportation expenses, commuting costs aren't covered. Whether an intern uses a car or public transportation, those costs can mount up quickly.



Employers must reimburse interns for on-the-job travel expenses; consider offering a stipend for commutation costs in addition to interns' wages.

In its richly detailed page of advice on hosting interns, the Institute for Nonprofit News notes that paying interns helps create a pipeline of future reporters who can cover broader swaths of society.

“Journalism internships are notorious for enabling the whiter and wealthier to climb a career ladder, leaving people of color and others from less-privileged backgrounds disadvantaged,” INN’s Vignesh Ramachandran and Emily Roseman write.

And, they add, interns should get more from the internship than the employer does.

“This is a big one, and might require a mindset shift,” their tip sheet says. “Interns are not cheap labor. Interns may be more costly for your news organization up front, given the amount of time, mentorship and coaching they will need to grow while under your care. ... If you can’t provide the time and resources to host an intern properly, then you’re not ready to host an intern.”

HOW TO HOST AN INTERN: TIPS FROM INSTITUTE FOR NONPROFIT NEWS (INN)

- ★ Pay interns a fair wage.
- ★ Commit to hiring interns that represent the community your news organization serves. Actively recruit interns who come from less privilege.
- ★ Craft clear and inclusive job descriptions.
- ★ Interns should get more value out of the internship than you do.
- ★ During onboarding, define clear working norms.
- ★ Don't forget about your intern.
- ★ Collect and incorporate feedback on your internship program.
- ★ Be proactive in helping your intern navigate the post-internship landscape.

For details, visit: inn.org





Are you, in fact, required to pay interns? Federal guidance is unhelpfully vague. The U.S. Department of Labor’s Fact Sheet on Internship Programs (see link in Appendix I) provides seven factors in the so-called primary beneficiary test that determines whether an intern must be considered an employee and therefore be paid. It ends with this:

“Courts have described the “primary beneficiary test” as a flexible test, and no single factor is determinative. **Accordingly, whether an intern or student is an employee under the FLSA [the Fair Labor Standards Act] necessarily depends on the unique circumstances of each case.** (emphasis added)”

Further, the fact sheet specifically addresses “for-profit employers,” but its footnote on what constitutes a nonprofit employer does not mention nonprofit news organizations.

How much to pay an intern depends on the local economy and state laws. As of this writing, the federal minimum wage was \$7.25 per hour. Thirty states and Washington, D.C., have minimum wages above the federal minimum. (See link in Appendix I.)



Consider hiring summer interns part time, so they can work outside jobs as well.

FINDING GRANTS TO SUPPORT INTERNSHIPS

Grant-funded internships may be on the rise. The D.J. McManus Foundation, based in New York’s Hudson Valley, has supported internships at three area newspapers, including The Daily Catch. And in northeastern Wisconsin, Multi Media Channels, which owns more than two dozen newspapers and other sites, developed a partnership with the Green Bay Packers and Nicolet National Bank, a civic-minded, locally based financial institution, to sponsor an internship program at its flagship weekly, the Press-Times of Green Bay, and at its Kewaunee County Star News.



Approach prominent area businesses and local foundations about financial support for internships.

Pat Wood, chairman and CEO of Multi Media Channels, approached the Packers and Nicolet Bank to support an internship program at his company, working with two local colleges, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay (UWGB) and St. Norbert’s College. Neither school currently offers a traditional journalism major; UWGB, which once had a full-fledged journalism program, now has a journalism “area of emphasis” in its communication major.

The Packers and the bank donated \$20,000 in 2023 for a pilot program, which covers stipends for nine interns per semester and the papers’ editorial support and oversight. At this writing, both are considering MMC’s proposal for a second year.



When approaching potential funders, consider proposing a pilot program.

“We have a really strong sense of giving back,” said Aaron Popkey, director of public affairs for the Packers. The team has long supported local charities in education, the arts, poverty, family and culture, he said, and it now recognizes journalism as a necessary component of its philanthropy. (Popkey, it should be noted, began his Packers career as a communications intern 30 years ago.)

“We believe we need a strong community to be able to support the team, and we know that one of the keys to that is an informed community,” Popkey said.

A Nicolet Bank spokesman said, “We as a community bank believe in local like you wouldn’t believe. It’s our value proposition.” He supplied a statement from Mike Daniels, Nicolet’s president and CEO: “Nicolet is honored to support the Press Times in their initiative to teach the next generation of reporters about the trade. When we saw the full vision of the Press Times to put tangible actions behind their words, we jumped at the chance to support them.”



Philanthropies are gaining awareness of their role in supporting local journalism. Multiple resources exist to help publishers frame grant proposals. (See Appendix I.)

For people elsewhere, this nexus of journalism support in northeastern Wisconsin shows that newspapers can make a case for philanthropy now that the internet and the rise of social media ad models have killed the ad-supported business model. Journalism as a necessary object of philanthropy is the foundational argument of organizations such as the American Journalism Project and is a core tenet of the sustainability movement in local journalism. (See Appendix I for links to journalistic sustainability resources.)

The Wisconsin project, called the Pass It Forward initiative, is sailing along, said Kris Leonhardt, MMC’s senior editor, who runs the two papers where the interns have worked. She and two colleagues screen internship applicants for passion and curiosity, asking: “Why are you pursuing this? What are you looking to get out of this?” The interns start with proofreading to build their comfort with AP style, then move on to producing weekly features and a monthly meeting story.

They meet once a month with veteran journalist George Stanley, who retired as editor of the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel in 2022 after its owner, Gannett, announced another round of job cuts.

“He is a born teacher,” Leonhardt said. “He illustrates his points in such a way that the kids are hanging onto his stories. The kids hang around after and ask him questions. He’s great for these kids.”

In addition, MMC gives its interns access to Earn Your Press Pass, an asynchronous online nuts-and-bolts introduction to journalism launched in 2022 by Joey and Lindsey Young of Kansas Publishing Ventures, owner of several community newspapers. Earn Your Press Pass is available to members of some 20 state press associations and, as of this writing, will soon be available to members of the Institute for Nonprofit News.



**TIP**

Explore Earn Your Press Pass at earnyourpresspass.com. If it's not available through your state's press association, lobby for its adoption.

The interns receive \$500 after three weeks on the job, once they have proven themselves, Leonhardt said, and another \$500 at the end of the semester, plus college credit. Leonhardt said she most enjoys Wednesdays, when the interns gather in the office to help proof that week's paper.

"It's like newsrooms of old," she said. "We're talking, it's loud, we're proofing, the kids are laughing, we're learning. There's nothing better ... It's fun sharing that with the kids. It's worth every minute."

WORKING WITH HIGH SCHOOL INTERNS

News organizations can offer internships that focus on aspects of the work beyond reporting – and that aren't limited to undergraduate college students, either.

TIP

Consider high school students for graphics, social media and office-work internships as well as reporting.

"Some of my best interns have still been in high school," said Kathy Tretter, editor and publisher of two weekly papers in southern Indiana, Ferdinand News and Spencer County Leader. She hired a high school student as a graphics intern for two hours a day, and he created more than two dozen covers for special sections "and some beautiful ads."

"He's now majoring in graphic design in college," she added.

Clarkin of the Peekskill Herald developed a fruitful relationship with Mercury, the newspaper at the local high school. She traded advice and mentorship for local coverage, supported by intern stipends from the McManus Foundation. One of those interns is now attending community college and writing three to four stories a week for the Herald.

"He's 19 and a digital native, and he's doing social media posting for me as well," Clarkin said. "He's getting great experience, and he's a very good writer and a great reporter."

At the weekly Journal Opinion in Bradford, Vermont, Alex Nuti-de Biasi, managing editor, said high school interns have very much been part of the mix. They "vary widely in abilities and interests, so they are typically handled on a case-by-case basis and usually under a structured program established by a local school," he said.



BROADENING YOUR SCOPE: INTERNSHIPS BEYOND REPORTING

Savvy young people of nearly any age can help with social media. Other office tasks expose teens to the world of work while lightening the burden for full-time employees.

“Are they willing to answer the phone, take a legal or classified, help a customer at the counter?” asked John Suhr, who is selling his South Dakota weekly, *Reporter & Farmer*, to one of his writers after running it with his wife, LeAnn, for 37 years.

Publishers should consider hiring interns to help with marketing and other business-side needs. “Give them a more well-rounded understanding of news operations,” suggested Hanaa’ Tameez, who covers the changing news business at Nieman Journalism Lab.

**TIP**

Internships on the business side can lighten a publisher’s workload.

Dion of *MedicateOH*, which covers cannabis regulation and related issues in Ohio, has leveraged her connection with the cannabis industry. She developed a writers workshop for which she offers scholarships to students, who learn alongside sales and brand ambassadors whose \$200 tuition is paid by their employers.

Over five weekly 90-minute Zoom sessions, participants learn techniques of journalism, advocacy and public relations. The workshop, now on its third round, has helped develop contributors who can write at a professional level, whether creating journalism, advocacy or sponsored content, Dion said, adding, “It’s a great way to introduce interns to what we do.”

**TIP**

Offer formal training to potential interns and writers.

CHAPTER 2

SELECTING INTERNSHIP CANDIDATES

Articulating your requirements

Interviewing potential interns

Managing expectations –
theirs and yours





Great interns can be lifesavers, injecting energy and fresh perspectives. They can bring technological expertise and explain social media. They can cover meetings and the occasional feature and make an editor's life easier.

But clearly defining the internship and the full complement of characteristics necessary for success is essential. Interviewing candidates for those qualities is key to avoiding foreseeable problems: Sometimes, interns' early enthusiasm peters out. Shyness prevents them from approaching sources. They fail to respond to editors' emails or texts. Remote work can prove challenging. Civic ignorance and inexperience lead to mistakes. Basics learned in journalism classes don't quite translate into solid meeting stories.

And like any other hire, an intern is a gamble. So much depends on personal chemistry.

ARTICULATING YOUR REQUIREMENTS

After several challenging intern experiences, Sachar of The Daily Catch has modified her approach to hiring.

TIP

Meet prospective interns in person, if possible, before offering a position.

"One mistake I made early on was hiring an intern based solely on a resume review, then a phone or Zoom conversation," she said. "Had we met in person, I might have picked up on nuances of interpersonal style that would be problematic." For instance, one young man had emotional problems that were not discernible on a phone call. But after attending one meeting, he told Sachar that his social anxiety prevented him from talking to anyone face to face. "He told us during the interview that he couldn't wait to get out and interview people for stories," Sachar explained. "But his hopes didn't align with his emotional abilities." In a face-to-face meeting, Sachar said, she might have caught these issues.

Her next summer intern came in with a lot of enthusiasm, a perfect foil to the first intern. And things started out well. But Sachar did not closely discuss the intern's day-by-day availability. Yes, the intern said she was available for the summer, but she did not clarify that she would be away for weeks at a time. This led to problems when a feature story that needed a rewrite sat unattended for three weeks.

Once the fall semester started, this same student pulled back from what had been intended as a full-year internship, citing other campus commitments and the 25-minute commute. Correcting her previous errors in interviewing, Sachar found another college student who committed to the internship. He has been successful.



Establish a candidate's availability throughout the term of the internship. Ask about any vacation plans or trips to see family.

INTERVIEWING POTENTIAL INTERNS

Walter Mullin, a former marketing executive, became publisher of The Daily Catch in 2022. He runs a side business coaching job candidates and shared these tips on conducting successful employment interviews.



Start the interview with questions about the student's college experience.

As internship candidates are most likely college students, asking them about their college experience is a good starting point:

- How did you decide where to go to college?
- Did you choose the school, or did the school choose you?
- What's been your favorite class so far? Who's your favorite professor? Why?
- Describe any jobs or extracurriculars that are relevant to this internship.

A question such as “What classes have you found most challenging or frustrating?” probes character. It's a variation on that interview chestnut, “What are your weaknesses or areas where you need to develop?” Mullin said that question is still a reliable one.

“It's a key question, and candidates often try to dodge it,” he said, with canned responses such as “I'm a perfectionist. I work too hard.” Probe if you don't get a satisfactory answer. Look for a response that shows self-awareness and reveals an area of development the two of you can talk through.





Ask about personal interests, which not only tell a lot about a candidate but may also help allay the candidate's nerves.

Don't underestimate the value of questions about personal interests. What is the last book you read? The last movie you saw? Your favorite movie or television show? One of Mullin's favorites is, "What do you like to do for fun on the weekend? Let's say you wake up on a Saturday morning with nothing on your calendar and some money in your pocket. What would you do?"

Ask candidates where and how they get their news, and try not to be horrified if the answer is "From social media." Follow up by asking whether they follow news organizations, and if so, which ones and why. Candidates should, of course, be following the news organization with which they're interviewing. Ask them to describe a recent story from your paper that stood out to the candidate and what they thought was good or important about it – or how it could have been improved. A candidate who can't think of at least one recent story may lack curiosity.



Assess how carefully the candidate has thought about what it means to be a journalist.

Assess how carefully candidates have thought about what it means to be a reporter: "What do you think are the top three skills you need as a journalist?" Follow up by asking about a challenging situation the candidate faced, how the candidate applied those skills in that situation and what the outcome was.

Another classic question is, "Tell me about a project you worked on that failed or didn't meet its goals and what you learned from the situation." Don't let the candidate wriggle out of answering. Probe gently.

Mullin likes offbeat questions that get at a candidate's problem-solving skills. Tee this one up by emphasizing that you're looking for an approach, not an answer. For example, Mullin said, ask, "How many tennis balls can fit inside a 747?"



Offbeat questions can help you assess a candidate's quick-wittedness and problem-solving abilities.

(His answer: "I would start by determining the cubic square footage of the passenger cabin, the cockpit and the baggage hold. Then I would estimate how many tennis balls fit in a cubic square foot and do the calculation to come up with the number." Answers like this hint at a candidate's ability to analyze data and to work methodically and carefully through a problem).



**TIP**

Probe candidates' experiences with remote work. Be clear about how often you expect them to check in with you.

Screen as best you can for a candidate's ability to work remotely, a requirement at a time when physical newsrooms are less and less common. Ask candidates to describe projects in which they worked in a separate location from their supervisor. What were the problems they faced? What worked well? Be transparent about your own day-to-day needs. How often do you want your interns to check in? How available will you be by text or email? How will you and your interns communicate about when they are ready to take on a new assignment?

TIP

Explore candidates' awareness of diversity and how they might find sources in unfamiliar segments of your community.

Finally, explore the candidate's awareness of diversity and inclusion by asking about campus experiences that did, or did not, show sensitivity to these concerns. Ask how candidates might reach out to people different from themselves, people who would be affected by a story idea that you suggest. What would be the candidate's approach to finding sources?

For Kris Leonhardt of The Press-Times in Green Bay, Wisconsin, the interview boils down to what drives the candidate. "I'm looking for the passion," she said, "a desire to make a difference, a desire to write stories on human beings. There has to be passion that ties to our purpose."

TIP

Beware of reporter candidates who have no questions for you during the interview.

It is also important to ask candidates what questions they may have about your organization and the internship position. Good candidates, especially good reporter candidates, should have some questions of their own. Curiosity is an essential trait for a journalist. It's a warning sign when an internship candidate asks no questions of the interviewer.

Look for candidates who care about your paper's origin story or the path of the journalists who lead it. Bonus points to the candidate who asks questions about how an enterprise story was developed or the challenges the organization is facing.



MANAGING EXPECTATIONS – THEIRS AND YOURS

For more experienced job candidates, a standard question asks what success in the role will look like. If the internship candidate doesn't ask this, you should provide the answer to establish your expectations.

Leonhardt expects her interns to write one feature story each week and to cover one board meeting per month with the same board throughout the internship.

Success might require knowing the names of all the board members after the first meeting, understanding board jargon after the second meeting, and coming up with story ideas beyond basic agenda items by the third, she said.

Whatever your expectations, make them clear during the interview.

If relevant, make sure your interns know that they're expected to shoot photos to accompany every story they cover. Smartphone photos are fine. Tell them you'll coach them on basic techniques of framing, portraiture, captioning, editing and other elements of visual storytelling. (See Appendix 3: Photography Basics)

TIP

Make your expectations about photography, audio and video skills clear.

Be clear about the hours you expect interns to work and how available they need to be for editing questions after they file. Describe your process: Will you be editing remotely over Google Docs or side-by-side in the office? Tell them that during the onboarding process, you will cover the workflow your organization uses to file stories and photos and train them in Google Docs and Sheets, if necessary.

Peggy Santoro, executive editor of the Reno Gazette-Journal, said some interns have unreasonable expectations that must be dealt with immediately. "Some of them come in with ideas for an intensive, multi-part project that just isn't feasible given the time limits, where they are in their skills, and the amount of time you can devote to coaching them," she said. "Sit down early and come up with one or two enterprise story ideas that are solid enough to enhance their portfolio, yet achievable. Between working on those and getting up and running with dailies, the eight weeks will be over in a flash."

TIP

Beware of interns with overly ambitious reporting plans. Come up with workable goals early in your time together.

CHAPTER 3

BUILDING SKILLS

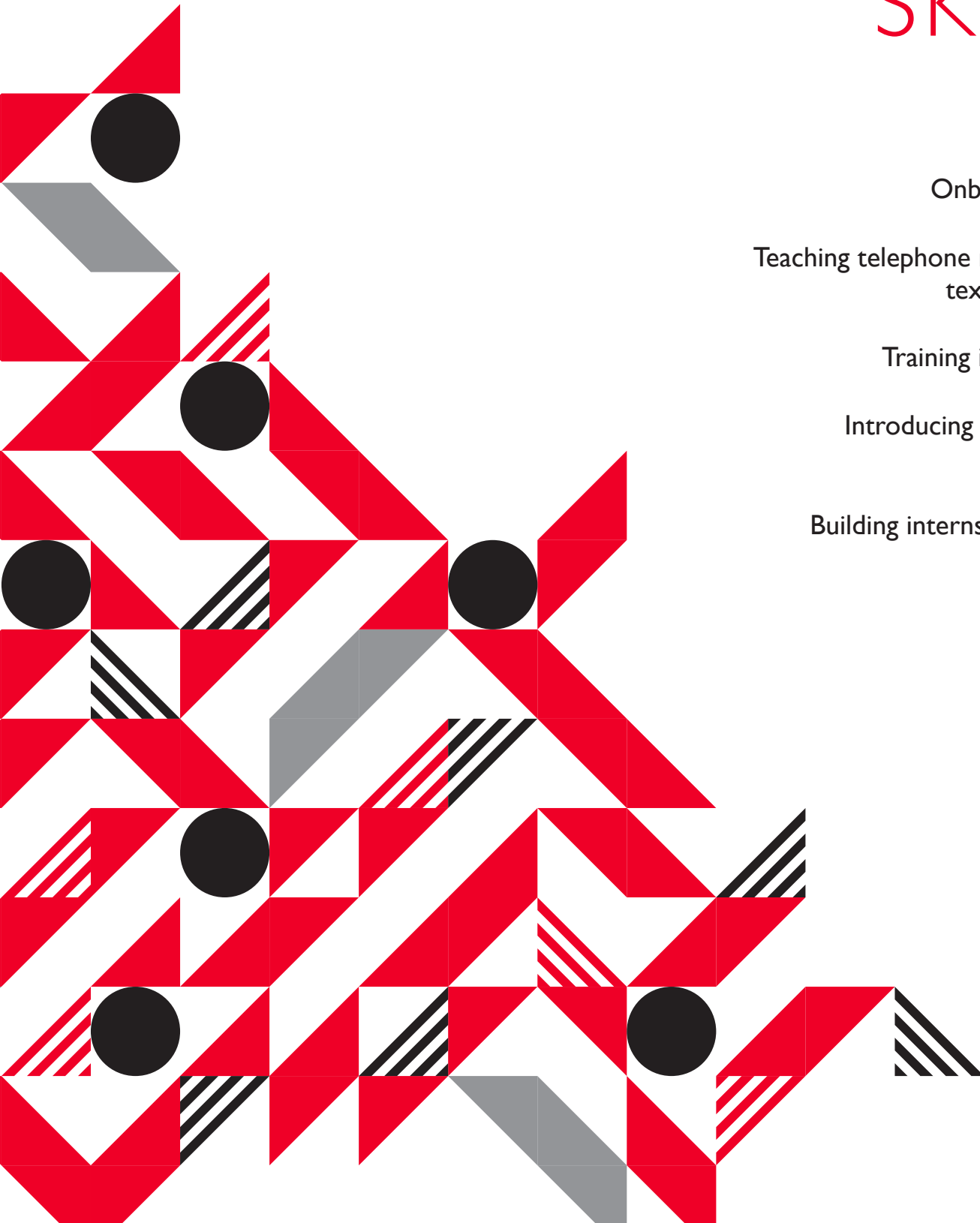
Onboarding interns

Teaching telephone manners to the
texting generation

Training interns in civics

Introducing interns to your
community

Building interns' confidence as
interviewers





ONBOARDING INTERNS

Once you have committed to hiring an intern, the next step is bringing your intern on board. This may include a formal onboarding session that discusses newsroom procedures (See Appendix 4: Onboarding Guide) or one that explores the interns' expectations.



Sit down with interns and ask what they most want to learn during their time with you.

Jonah Newman, managing editor of Injustice Watch, which covers the court system in Chicago and surrounding Cook County, sits down with interns at the start of their time with him to ask what they most want to learn. He wants, he said, “to give some structure to what they’re trying to get out of this.” At the end of the internship, he asks how well they accomplished their goals. (See Appendix 5.)

Editors may also see a need for formal or informal conversations about professionalism and ongoing instruction in civics and your local economy.

If you didn’t discuss your expectations about professionalism at your candidate interview, you may need to address this early in the internship. Some editors find that young people don’t understand the kind of dress that’s appropriate on the job, how to introduce themselves to sources, or how to make clear introductions on the phone.



Interns may need your help learning how to dress professionally, introduce themselves to sources or community members or conduct a phone interview.

Civics is another area of concern. Bill Reader, a professor of journalism at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, said that despite sitting through units on government in introductory reporting classes, “many students just seem to tune out.”

“It’s particularly maddening when you have a university in the city of Athens, which is within Athens County, surrounded by Athens Township, and all within the Athens School District, and students can’t understand the difference after it is carefully explained to them,” he wrote in an email. “I guess that kind of knowledge doesn’t sink in until somebody buys a home and learns about all the different local taxes they pay!”



Develop realistic expectations about your interns’ journalistic expertise. You are giving them the real-world experience that classroom exercises only hint at.

Beyond professionalism and civics, most interns need practice in journalistic techniques. This is where a program like Earn Your Press Pass can really come in handy. Classroom exercises go only so far. Developing background on sources and issues, preparing for interviews, asking good follow-up questions, getting sources’ contact information for later clarifications, eliciting powerful quotes, taking effective photographs, conducting telephone interviews – interns may well need help with all of these basic reporting skills.

Let’s start with the basic phone call.

TEACHING TELEPHONE MANNERS TO THE TEXTING GENERATION

A common complaint among editors interviewed for this project was young reporters’ unwillingness to pick up their smartphones and *use them to make telephone calls*. Older journalists grew up in homes with landlines, many with corded landlines, fixed to the wall – and, if you were a lucky teenager, with a cord long enough to reach into another room so you could shut the door while talking to your friends. A natural corollary was familiarity with placing and responding to phone calls.

That’s not so much the case now.

“There is a generation of people in their 20s that are somewhat terrified of using the phone for actually making a voice call,” Brian Wilson, news editor of The Star News in Medford, Wisconsin, said.

It’s not just young journalists, Wilson added: “An attorney friend of mine was noticing it in the attorneys he was hiring, that they would try multiple electronic communication options before picking up a phone and making a two-minute call. This generation grew up with texting and online messaging being the standard and always knowing who it was that was calling.”



And it's not just trying to reach sources – there seems to be a fear of phone calls in general.

“I've noticed the tendency to avoid answering a ringing landline phone” – one without caller ID – in the newspaper office, “probably in the hope that the caller will leave a message,” said Marcia Martinek, editor emerita of the Herald Democrat in Leadville, Colorado. She added that she couldn't help but wonder “if any of those calls were about a traffic accident or burning building, and the caller simply hung up rather than leaving a message.”



Develop a script for professional phone calls and practice with your intern. (See Appendix 4.)

Once Wilson had conceptualized the generational difference in using phones as phones, he came up with an effective training tool. He wrote a script, “and we actually spent a quiet afternoon practicing doing phone interviews,” with a staff member in another room and the help of the director of a local Chamber of Commerce.

“The phone skills improved greatly after that,” Wilson said.

(See Appendix 4 for Wilson's script.)



Watch out for interns' failure to follow up with sources who don't get back to them after just a single email. Teach interns to be politely persistent – to the point where sources decide that ignoring the interns' outreach is more burdensome than responding to it.

Once an intern overcomes the fear of dialing, the next hurdle is learning persistence. Peggy Santoro, executive editor of the Reno (Nevada) Gazette- Journal, said it took her a while to realize that when interns said they couldn't meet their deadlines because a source hadn't gotten back to them, that meant the intern had emailed once, “then never followed up with a call, then another call, and if necessary, another call and a door knock.”

“Most likely, they won't be open” about their lack of follow-up,” she added. “You have to spot it and nip it in the bud.”





TRAINING INTERNS IN CIVICS

Many interns – probably most – lack a basic understanding of local government, not just of how municipalities, counties, states and their agencies work, but also how court systems, tax departments, public authorities and other agencies work, as well.

Over the course of an internship, an editor can't make up for schools' abandonment of civics instruction, but providing basic resources may help. Spend an hour or two creating a simple document that describes the different levels of government and the court system in your state. Add the names of local officials and the roles of municipal boards and the names of their members, and you've got a cheat sheet your intern can use for reference.

And remember that you didn't always have this knowledge at your fingertips.



Create a cheat sheet or handbook with basic civic information and the names and contact information of key officials.

“Yes, they need education in civics and how government functions, as many of us did when we were first starting out,” said Emily Charrier, editor and publisher of two papers in Sonoma County, California. “I think a handbook that highlights who you call (in most situations) to find out what you don't know would be a helpful guide for interns.” For example: For city council, call the city clerk. How to find press and media contacts. What the First Amendment Coalition, or the open public meetings organization in your state, can answer.

“Encourage them to be seekers of info from their community and how to break through when they hit walls,” Charrier said.

INTRODUCING INTERNS TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Beyond a written civics guide, some editors invest in taking interns and new reporters around and introducing them to the main government and community sources they'll need on the job.

TIP

Take your interns to meetings you're covering. Introduce them to important local figures.

"Introduce her/him to the various movers and shakers of the community, from the ministers at local churches to the city/village council members and mayor, the local chamber of commerce head, county government officials, the chief of police, the county sheriff, local business owners and the local school superintendent and principal(s)," wrote Jonathan Whitney, who, with his wife, Nancy, published the Carroll County Review in northwestern Illinois until they closed it in December 2022, unable to find a buyer.

Reed Anfinson, a former president of the National Newspaper Association who owns or co-owns several newspapers in rural Minnesota, took that approach with a University of Minnesota intern his paper hosted one summer. "Our student was from the suburbs of the Twin Cities. He had never seen a live cow or driven on a gravel road," Anfinson said. "We took him to all the public meetings we covered and had him attend some on his own. He was a good writer and made an effort to meet people."

If face-to-face introductions are impractical, email intros can be a nice substitute.

TIP

Introduce your intern to key local people by email if in-person introductions are impractical.

Another approach that gets a reporter into the community is a local scavenger hunt. Select a variety of places and facts for the intern to discover or research. Have the intern find and take pictures around your coverage area: government offices, local retailers, parks, gathering spots such as diners and coffee shops, or places germane to a topic the intern will cover.

Brinton, who was executive editor of Long Island's Herald Community Newspapers before leaving to teach journalism full time, used an activity called "Found Stories" to get interns talking to community members. The idea was to go out and search for story ideas by talking to people on the street. Found Stories forced interns to get out of the office and develop the knack of identifying story ideas, a skill with which, Brinton said, many interns struggled.





Scavenger hunts or an activity like Brinton’s “Found Stories” event get interns talking to people outside of the office.

“Everyone, including me, was required to participate” in Found Stories, Brinton said. “We got incredible scoops sometimes. One editor would end up helping authorities catch a guy who was cheating [Hurricane] Sandy victims out of hundreds of thousands of dollars.”

At the least, he went on, interns began to better understand their communities. And Found Stories, which took place once a summer, served as a team-building exercise, too, with a pizza party beforehand that gave the interns and staff a chance to chat and get to know each other.

“We tried to make it fun,” Brinton said.

BUILDING INTERNS’ CONFIDENCE AS INTERVIEWERS

Without innate curiosity, a young person is unlikely to become a good reporter. Establish that a candidate has that drive to ask questions before you make an offer. Then the editor’s job is to refine that drive and build the intern’s confidence in talking to sources


Talking through questions ahead of meetings and scheduled interviews is helpful, Sachar said. “With interns, it’s a really good exercise to practice framing questions around the five W’s and the H and have them come up with a list of questions before every interview,” she said. “I review it, and then sometimes I’ll say, ‘What about some more questions around this?’” She also reminds interns to check LinkedIn and other social media, even Wikipedia, to learn more in advance about the people they’re meeting.



Talk through questions with your intern before every meeting and interview.

Interns don’t always understand how many quotes a good story needs or what makes a powerful quote. “They need to learn how you interview to get quotes, what kinds of questions will yield a quote,” Sachar went on. “I’m trying to talk to them about the importance of getting emotional and opinionated comments from people. That’s what makes a good quote. It’s not information. It’s not facts. It’s emotion, opinion, colorful language, emphasis. You don’t get that asking yes-no questions.”





Sachar, like Wisconsin's Leonhardt, is a fan of the Earn Your Press Pass program, a set of eight online, self-guided topics in journalism basics, each with five or six modules. While Joey and Lindsey Young, the program's creators, intended it for use in training community members to be reporters, many editors have found it helpful with interns and even as a brush-up for full-time staff. "Interviewing Skills" is the first of its eight topics, described thus: "Being able to conduct a good interview is one of the most important skills any reporter can have. This lesson will explain the steps to preparing for and managing an interview as well as how to take effective notes and get useful information from your sources."

**TIP**

Give your full-time staff access to Earn Your Press Pass, too. It's an excellent refresher course.

Perhaps the greatest book ever written on journalistic interviewing is "Creative Interviewing: The Writer's Guide to Gathering Information by Asking Questions," by the late Ken Metzler. It's out of print, but inexpensive used copies are often available online. Metzler breaks down an interview into 10 stages: defining the purpose, conducting background research, requesting an interview appointment, planning the interview, meeting your respondent/breaking the ice, asking your first questions, establishing an easy rapport, asking "the bomb," recovering from the bomb and concluding the interview. He covers conversational dynamics, how to phrase questions, learning to listen, learning to observe, note-taking and much more. His approach is supportive, conversational and accessible, and the book is a quick read.

**TIP**

Buy a used copy of "Creative Interviewing: The Writer's Guide to Gathering Information by Asking Questions," by Ken Metzler and share it with your intern.

CHAPTER 4

MANAGING INTERNS

Holding weekly editing sessions

Insisting on communication

Making interns a part of the team





An internship is an educational experience, and interns learn the most when editors meet with and coach them consistently.

HOLDING WEEKLY EDITING SESSIONS

Weekly meetings and one-on-one editing sessions, whether in person or remote, are essential, editors said.

Miya Jones, founder and editor of Shades of Long Island, has had 20 interns in both reporting and marketing roles in the four years since the debut of her online-only site, which covers minorities, millennials and Generation Z in the bi-county suburban region. She finds her interns through contacts at local colleges and on Handshake, she said. All of her interns work remotely, but she meets with each once a week on Zoom and connects regularly by text message.

Her interns use the Calendly app to schedule weekly appointments. Jones blocks out her availability on the app, and students sign up for spots that work with their schedules. Prior to the weekly meeting, Jones said, she will have inserted comments, edits and suggestions into that intern's story submission using Google Docs. During the Zoom call, they discuss the work together.



**Weekly meetings and one-on-one editing sessions are essential.
One-on-one editing sessions can work both remotely and in person.**

Hofstra's Brinton said weekly meetings should be a requirement for every internship. "To me, it's a matter of commitment," he said. "If the intern's committed to work, you have to be committed to them."

His was not a small newsroom – when Brinton left in 2022, Herald Community Newspapers had 18 publications, with 26 editors, reporters and photo editors, plus summer interns – and many of the editors weren't long out of college themselves. Besides weekly hour-long training sessions for the regular staff every Friday on a wide variety of editorial topics, each editor whose paper had an intern was required to meet with the intern for one half-hour each week.

Brinton insisted that editors put their weekly intern mentoring sessions on the office schedule. “It’s a really busy business,” he said. “So unless you schedule it, oftentimes it gets overlooked.”

TIP

Use some sort of formal scheduling system to ensure that weekly mentoring meetings don’t slip through the cracks.

At the weekly sessions, “the most important thing is to go over the stories with the interns line by line” and, secondly, to discuss other possible approaches to the story, Brinton said. Interns produced one story a week during their eight- to 10-week internships and helped fact-check the annual community guide for the paper to which they were assigned. Stories had to have at least three sources, preferably four. And each intern had to have a working story list of five ideas the mentor had approved.

That’s where interns needed the most help, Brinton said: finding stories. “It’s not always apparent to them what constituted a story, or what constituted a story that would be in a newspaper,” he said. Although editors assigned many of the interns’ stories, “we did a lot of work in story ideation.”

TIP

Coach your interns in recognizing story ideas.

Sachar said she maintains a steady stream of ideas for each intern and launches each intern with a story that requires only one or two sources. Then, if the intern seems ready, she builds on success with stories that are more complex. In assigning features, she taps into the interns’ personal interests.

INSISTING ON COMMUNICATION

Let interns know how often you expect them to check in with you and that you expect a prompt response when you text, email or call them.

TIP

Stress the absolute necessity of responding to your texts and emails.

Interns may be shy about reaching out to their editors, fearing that they’ll be a nuisance – or worse, afraid of appearing inept or stupid. Occasionally, interns disappear or “ghost” their editors, failing to respond to repeated attempts to reach them by text, call or email.



Ghosting needs to be dealt with firmly, not just because it's annoying in the moment, but also because young people need to understand that ignoring workplace supervisors is unacceptable.

Once the point is made, be as clear as you can that more communication is better than less. "Overcommunication is not a wrong approach" in either direction, reporter to editor or editor to reporter, Sachar said. She lets her interns know that she wants a morning check-in every day that the intern is scheduled to work.

She uses these check-ins to help interns structure their days. If an intern is going to cover a night meeting, for example – in her coverage area, municipal boards usually meet at 6:30 p.m. – the intern should plan to work 10 a.m. to 3:30 or 4 p.m., then take a break, and show up for the meeting early, at 6 p.m.

Sachar tells her interns: "'Assume you're going to make mistakes. Assume you're going to have trouble finding the room. Assume you're going to be misdirected and that you may need to go to the bathroom.' It's really crazy, but you walk through this sort of preparation for interns and junior staff."



Interns should know how best to contact you when they have questions during a meeting.

Sachar also texts with interns during meetings to ensure they have a clear sense of what topics will actually yield stories. Sachar usually posts stories about evening meetings on the paper's website the following day, giving interns time to follow up with sources once they have reviewed their notes with her.

If interns get stressed about missing an impending deadline, reassure them that it's far better they tell you in advance.

"Tell them, 'If you come to me, we can work through it,'" Jones said. "It's not life or death. That's important to let them know. They'll be more likely to communicate with you and less likely to ghost you."

MAKING INTERNS PART OF THE TEAM

Among interns' most common complaints are feeling ignored and not having enough to do. While these forms of neglect tend to happen most in larger workplaces, be sure you make time to include your interns in as many aspects of your work as possible.



Include your interns in staff meetings unless you're discussing personnel matters.

"It was important to have them at every editorial meeting and to encourage them to share ideas and speak up," said Gordon Cameron, president and interim executive director of the Ontario Community Newspapers Association, about his time running a group of weekly newspapers in the province. "I did my best to treat them as if they were staff reporters, albeit with a lower expectation when it came to the number of stories written and the initial quality of those stories, which made them feel welcome and a part of the team."

Brad Brown, who was editor and publisher of Quad Town Forum in southern Saskatchewan until he sold his paper in 2023, said he also expected interns to participate fully in editorial meetings. He kept an open-door policy, he said, was available both during and beyond work hours and held a weekly debrief, "even if it was just 15-20 minutes about how the intern felt things had gone the previous week, both of us sharing our thoughts on what worked, what didn't."

Also important: ensuring that the intern was assigned "stories of value, not just flush and filler." To an extent, Brown said, this was "a bit of 'sink or swim,' but it was also important to make them feel like they have some worth to the organization."

And there was a social aspect to Brown's workplace, too: "We would often go in together on a group lunch after we went to press each week, and celebrate staff birthdays with cake, nachos or whatever toward the end of a workday. The intern was never, to my memory, assigned to a story during those times and was always invited to participate.

"It seems like a little thing," he said, "but that sense of belonging in any workplace is absolutely invaluable."



Include your interns in office celebrations.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING THE INTERNSHIP

Evaluating the intern

Evaluating the internship

Staying connected with promising
interns

Summing up





EVALUATING THE INTERN

Internships taken for academic credit usually require the workplace supervisor to complete an evaluation form at the end of the internship period. Sometimes those forms are shared directly with interns, and sometimes they go to the college's internship coordinator. Either way, when an editor takes the time to complete these forms thoughtfully, the student benefits.

A college internship coordinator can use the information to reinforce any message the editor wants to convey to the student in post-internship debriefs. Often, the coordinator knows the student well and can encourage the student to build on the lessons of the internship, such as gaining the confidence to be more forthcoming with ideas and suggestions.



Take the time to complete college evaluation forms thoughtfully. Your comments give internship coordinators material to reinforce in post-internship debriefs.

Beyond that formal evaluation, talk to your intern about both problems and successes. Pointing out problems comes naturally to editors, but also catch your interns doing something right, especially when they have corrected errors you noted previously. They finally remembered your style rules on capitalizing titles? They included all the information you need for a caption? They gathered good data for a chart to accompany a story? Let them know you noticed.

EVALUATING THE INTERNSHIP

The end of an internship is also an opportunity for newsroom managers to get feedback about their internship programs.



Exit interviews can show you ways to strengthen your internship program.



One way is through exit interviews. In addition to giving feedback on your intern's performance, ask your departing intern directly: What worked for you, and what did not? What accomplishments had the most value for you? What could we have done differently to make your internship more enriching?

These questions may also be asked in writing. Jonah Newman, managing editor of Injustice Watch in Chicago, shared a template for a post-internship evaluation form. (See Appendix 5.)

Clarkin of the Peekskill Herald turned her exit interview into a luncheon at which her summer intern talked about what he had learned. Later, she said, "He wrote me this wonderful card. He wasn't sure he could cut it as a reporter. Now he knows this is something he could do and wants to do. He was so appreciative of what he learned from this job."

STAYING CONNECTED WITH PROMISING INTERNS

Having had a great experience with an intern, what can you do to stay in touch if you don't have a job to offer immediately or if the student has to go back to school?

Offering freelance work is one obvious answer, and many editors do just that. Inviting former interns to community events in which the news organization plays a role, and to company parties, are two more ways to keep the lines of communication open. Offering to write letters of recommendation may not work directly toward bringing your intern back, but it certainly builds goodwill.



Find ways to stay in touch with your best interns. They may return for a second internship or a job or refer their friends to your workplace.

Newman said he created a spreadsheet for all the interns who have come through Injustice Watch, noting when they interned and for how long, and including a link to the former intern's LinkedIn profile. He uses the spreadsheet less for staying in touch and more for demonstrating the impact of the internship program when recruiting – Chicago is a competitive environment for top journalism interns – and to show potential funders what their support can enable.



Keep track of your interns' careers on a spreadsheet after they leave. Use this information to recruit future interns or to attract potential funders.



SUMMING UP

Hosting internships requires thoughtful preparation and a fair amount of work. Is it worth it?

Chin up!

College students are eager to please. They want to learn. If they've made the effort to apply to work with you, chances are excellent that they'll work hard. Not only will you gain coverage that you might otherwise have missed, but you'll also have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped to train the next generation of journalists and to preserve the work that means so much to you, to your community, to our democracy. You may end up hiring that intern upon graduation or for a second summer or semester. You never know, with young people, which thing you've said will become a touchstone. You never know how that one summer in your newsroom will shape a young person's life.

APPENDICES





APPENDIX I. LINKS FOR HANDBOOK SOURCES

RESOURCES

American Journalism Project <https://www.theajp.org/>

Calendly <https://calendly.com/>

Earn Your Press Pass <https://earnyourpresspass.com/>

Grassroots Editor, the journal of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors
https://www.iswne.org/grassroots_editor/
(membership required)

Handshake <https://joinhandshake.com/about/>

INN <https://inn.org/>

See also: How to Host an Intern: Advice from Nonprofit News Leaders

<https://inn.org/research/peer-research/how-to-host-an-intern-advice-from-nonprofit-news-outlets/>

and this discussion of INN partners that have supplied grants to pay interns

<https://inn.org/resources/internships-fellowships/>

ISWNE <https://www.iswne.org/>

See also information on ISWNE's summer internship program

https://www.iswne.org/site/forms/online_services/newspaper_application/iswne_foundation_newspaper_application_for_summer_internship_program/

Journalism & Women Symposium <https://jaws.org/>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/>

LION Publishers <https://www.lionpublishers.com/>

See also these links on building financial sustainability:

<https://www.lionpublishers.com/make-my-news-org-sustainable/>

Metzler, Ken. *Creative Interviewing: The Writer's Guide to Gathering Information by Asking Questions*. Out of print, but used copies are available online.

National Newspaper Association/Foundation <https://www.nna.org/>

Nieman Journalism Lab <https://www.niemanlab.org/>

Nieman Reports <https://niemanreports.org/>

See also

<https://niemanreports.org/articles/local-weeklies-are-covering-the-communities-big-dailies-ignore/>

Northwestern University/Medill Local News Initiative <https://localnewsinitiative.northwestern.edu/>

See also “The State of Local News 2023,”

<https://localnewsinitiative.northwestern.edu/projects/state-of-local-news/2023/>

Poynter.org <https://www.poynter.org/>

See also Barbara Selvin’s coverage of weekly newspapers for Poynter

<https://www.poynter.org/author/bselvin/>

State Minimum Wages <https://www.ncsl.org/labor-and-employment/state-minimum-wages>

State Press Associations <https://www.ereferencedesk.com/resources/newspapers/press-associations.html#State%20Press%20Associations>

U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet on Internship Programs <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/71-flsa-internships>

NEWS ORGANIZATIONS CITED

Carroll County Review <https://www.newspapers.com/paper/carroll-county-review/28707/>
(northwestern Illinois; shuttered in 2022)

Ferdinand News/Spencer County Leader <https://www.ferdinandnews.com/> (southern Indiana)

Herald Community Newspapers <https://www.liherald.com/> (Nassau County, Long Island, New York)

Injustice Watch <https://www.injusticewatch.org/> (Illinois)

Journal Opinion <https://jonews.com/> (eastern Vermont)

MedicateOH <https://medicateoh.com/> (Ohio; statewide)

Multi Media Channels <https://www.mmclocal.com/> (northeastern Wisconsin)

Flagship: The Press Times <https://gopresstimes.com/>

Story about grants for Pass It Forward internship program: <https://stevenspoint.news/2022/12/16/green-bay-packers-give-back-nicolet-bank-mmcc-partner-for-local-journalisms-future/>

Herald Democrat <https://www.leadvilleherald.com/> (central Colorado)

Peekskill Herald <https://peekskillherald.com/> (Hudson Valley, New York)

Petaluma Argus-Courier and Sonoma Index-Tribune
[Petaluma Argus-Courier](#), [Sonoma Index-Tribune](#) (northern California)

Quad Town Forum <https://grasslandsnews.ca/category/quad-town-forum/quad-town-news/>
(southern Saskatchewan)

Reporter & Farmer <http://www.reporterandfarmer.com/> (northeastern South Dakota)

Reno Gazette Journal <https://www.rgj.com/> (western Nevada)

Sanpete Messenger <https://www.facebook.com/officialsanpetemessenger/timeline/> (central Utah)

Shades of Long Island <https://shadesoflongisland.com/> (Long Island, New York)

TBR News Media, home of The Village Times Herald, formerly The Village Times <https://tbrnewsmedia.com/village-times-herald/> (North Shore of Long Island, New York)

The Daily Catch <https://www.thedailycatch.org/> (Hudson Valley, New York)

See also <https://www.thedailycatch.org/about-us/>

And this story about the McManus grant that supported the writing of this handbook: <https://www.thedailycatch.org/articles/daily-catch-receives-15000-grant-from-dj-mcmanus-foundation-to-launch-2023-college-internship-program/>

The Star News <https://www.centralwinews.com/> (central Wisconsin)

Swift County Monitor-News <http://www.swiftcountymonitor.com> (western Minnesota)

Tu Prensa Local <https://tuprensalocal.com/> (Eastern Long Island, New York)





APPENDIX 2. PHONE MANNERS

Source: **Brian Wilson, News Editor, The Star News, Medford, Wisconsin**

WHAT TO DO WHEN MAKING A CALL OR ANSWERING THE PHONE

When making a phone call at The Star News:

Hello, my name is _____.

I am a reporter with The Star News in Medford.
(If you're calling someone outside the area, identify Taylor County or Wisconsin.)

I am working on an article about _____ and was wondering if there was someone who could answer some questions I have.

[WHEN YOU GET THAT PERSON]

Hi, my name is _____ and I am a reporter with The Star News in Medford.

I'm working on an article about _____ and they put me through to you.

To whom am I speaking?

How do you spell that?

Do you have a specific title?

Is this a good time to talk?

[IF NOT, THEN ASK WHEN YOU SHOULD TRY CALLING BACK. BE SURE TO GET THE PERSON'S NAME AND PHONE NUMBER OR EXTENSION]

[Ask your questions, remembering who, what, why, where, when and how. Have questions prepared to ask, but be ready to ask follow-up questions to clarify information or ask for additional details. Use active listening throughout the conversation.]

[WHEN DONE THE INTERVIEW]:

"Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. It was very informative."



When answering a phone call at The Star News:

“Hello, this is _____. How may I help you?”

[LISTEN TO WHAT THEY SAY AND TAKE NOTES WHILE LISTENING.]

[IF THE CALLER IS RETURNING YOUR CALL]:

“Thank you for calling me back. I am working on an article about _____ and had a few questions to ask you. Is this a good time to talk?”

[IF NOT, THEN ASK WHEN YOU SHOULD TRY CALLING BACK. BE SURE TO GET THEIR NAME AND PHONE NUMBER OR EXTENSION]

[ASK YOUR QUESTIONS]

[*** ALWAYS ASK FOR A NAME AND A PHONE NUMBER WHERE YOUR SOURCE CAN BE REACHED *****]**

[IF IT IS A COMPLAINT ABOUT A STORY, A QUESTION ABOUT HOW SOMETHING APPEARED IN THE STAR NEWS or SOMEONE IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS BEING FROM A LAW FIRM, RESPOND TO THEM SAYING:]

“I will have you talk with News Editor Brian Wilson. Let me transfer you to him.”

[IF IT IS SOMEONE WANTING THEIR NAME KEPT OUT OF THE PAPER]

“Those decisions are made by publisher Kris O’Leary. You may reach her at our Abbotsford office at 715-223-2342.”

[AT THE END OF THE CALL, THANK THEM AND WISH THEM A GOOD DAY.]

APPENDIX 3. PHOTOGRAPHY BASICS

Source: Emily Sachar, Founder & Editor, The Daily Catch, Red Hook, New York

Note: Sachar created these slides for a workshop she held with her interns and junior reporters.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mBjPvBVYqtRUY3O8Lkl-Ja09KDMODp3n/view?usp=drive_link



APPENDIX 4. ONBOARDING GUIDE

Source: Emily Sachar, Founder & Editor, The Daily Catch, Red Hook, New York

INTERN ONBOARDING:



KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

- Mayor, Town Board, etc.
- Important departments or agencies

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

- County Executive or Supervisor
- County Legislature or Board of Supervisors
- Important departments or agencies

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

- Assembly
- State Senate

CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES in our coverage area

INTRODUCING YOURSELF

- Reporter Intern for The Daily Catch
- Always get a phone number and email for EVERY source. ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS!

SIGN UP FOR EMAIL LISTS

SIGN UP FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

(Facebook/Instagram/X [formerly Twitter]): Great source of story ideas

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH Daily Catch SOURCE LIST

HOW TO UPDATE DC SOURCE LIST: Send Emily new sources

STUDY EARN YOUR PRESS PASS VIDEOS

STUDY CODE OF ETHICS

[Society of Professional Journalists Ethics Code](#)

PLANNING FOR PHOTOS FOR ALL STORIES (OURS v. THOSE PROVIDED BY SUBJECTS)

VIDEO FOR STORIES

FOIL

GREAT BOOK TO READ (CHEAP):

Creative Interviewing: The Writer's Guide to Gathering Information by Asking Questions, by Ken Metzler. Out of print, but used copies are available online.



WORKFLOW FOR SUBMITTING STORIES:

For stories:

Create a Google Doc with your name, the name of the subject and the date you file, so, e.g., PATRICIA/CAR SHOW 2-1-2023. Please then share it with me and give me all editing rights at emily.sachar@XXX.com.

Then, please text me to tell me the story is ready to view (xxx-xxx-xxx).

For images:

Please create a Google folder and label it similarly to the story; for example, CAR SHOW PHOTOS 2-1-2023.

Place any photos you already have and the best Instagram photos (if relevant) for which we have permissions, so we have at least one photo for every 250 words of copy. No need to write captions, as I will look first to see which photos we will want to use.

TO-DOS for all STORIES:

Check spelling of every street, name, committee, etc. (Use the Internet.)

MINOR CHILDREN PHOTOS AND INTERVIEWS

For interviews and photographs of children, we need permission if they are under 18. Ask the child for his parents' contact info; try to get parent's permission in writing. A text is fine. Use discretion with people with disabilities or teens over 18.

COMMUNICATING DURING TOWN/VILLAGE/BofE MEETINGS

Emily is available by text during meetings so you can share your thoughts and any news you think deserves coverage. Then, depending on what it is, we'll decide when you need to file. If, for instance, there's a big fiery argument at a meeting, we may want to write it up right away. If, on the other hand, things are quiet and calm and there's just some soft news, you can write it the next day in most cases. Some stories require follow-up, so you and Emily will work together to figure out the best time to file.

QUOTES

- Quotes are for opinion, emphasis, strong feeling/emotion, **not for facts** unless there is literally no other way to quote a key source in a story.
- Plan for quotes so you have them and won't turn in stories bereft of quotes.
Questions that can yield quotes:
 - Why is such-and-such important?
 - How do you feel about such-and-such?
 - What is the best/worst thing about such-and-such?



APPENDIX 5. INTERNSHIP EVALUATION FORMS

Schools generally provide intern evaluation forms for employers to complete at the end of an internship, but employers can also flip that script to find out what interns thought of their experiences.

You may adapt the form at this [link](#) (template courtesy of Jonah Nathan, [InjusticeWatch.com](#).) Ask your interns what they learned, what went well, and what could have gone better.

See also this [Cal Matters](#) form and the [Texas Tribune fellowship survey](#), both linked, with permission, from <https://inn.org/research/peer-research/how-to-host-an-intern-advice-from-nonprofit-news-outlets/>.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barbara Selvin began her journalism career during her last summer of college writing freelance stories for The Village Times, a weekly newspaper in her Long Island hometown. After graduating, she reported full time for Suffolk Life Newspapers, an ambitious free-circulation newspaper that came out twice weekly in 24 zoned editions covering Eastern Long Island.

Selvin went from working for weekly papers to writing about them. While attending Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, she published “News and Local Chambers” in Grassroots Editor, the journal of the International Society of Weekly Newspapers. (She has since written about community journalism for Poynter.org and Nieman Reports.) After Columbia, Selvin freelanced for business publications, worked briefly at The Stamford (Connecticut) Advocate and then joined New York Newsday as a business reporter.

In 1999, she began teaching in the journalism program at Queens College, part of the City University of New York. In January 2000, she became an adjunct instructor at Stony Brook University, a flagship campus of the State University of New York system, which then had a journalism minor of long standing. She was integral to the successful expansion of the minor into a School of Journalism, the first in the SUNY system, in 2006. She was the School’s first full-time academic hire, and she created the School’s internship program, which she directed until she retired from Stony Brook in 2022.

In 2021, Selvin joined the board of The Daily Catch, a hyperlocal nonprofit news organization in New York’s Hudson Valley founded by her friend and former Newsday colleague Emily Sachar. She is now the board’s vice chair. She also serves on the board of the Journalism & Women Symposium, a national nonprofit organization. She lives on Long Island with her husband of four decades. Her three children and two grandsons live in New York City.



ABOUT THE DAILY CATCH

(This handbook was funded by a grant awarded to The Daily Catch in 2022 by the DJ McManus Foundation.)

The Daily Catch is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan online newspaper with federal 501(c)(3) status devoted to reporting on the news, personalities, and activities of people, schools, merchants, farms and government in and around the Hudson Valley, New York communities of Red Hook and Rhinebeck. In addition to providing daily news coverage and quality photography, the paper reports on trends in these communities and conducts enterprise and investigative journalism.

The Daily Catch was founded as The Red Hook Daily Catch in 2021 by veteran journalist Emily Sachar, who assumed the roles of editor-in-chief and publisher during the first year. In June 2022, Board Member Walter Mullin, a cable media executive, was named publisher. Sachar has remained editor-in-chief and CEO.

In 2022, The Daily Catch was recognized for distinguished feature writing by the New York News Publishers Association. And in 2023, the paper earned six awards — in feature writing, education beat coverage and headline writing — from the New York Press Association. The Daily Catch’s relationship with a Ukraine correspondent, Pavel Kuljuk, was the subject of an episode on NPR’s podcast “Rough Translation” in August 2022. Abbreviated versions of this episode aired on NPR’s “Morning Edition” and “All Things Considered.”

The Daily Catch was founded on the premise that every town deserves the benefits of incisive, accurate, sensitive journalism. The paper also endeavors to cultivate the next generation of capable reporters. The Daily Catch has two staff reporters, an events editor, a copyeditor, and a social media manager, and it offers paid internships to high school and college students.

The Daily Catch is supported entirely by grants and donations.

The Daily Catch is a member of ISWNE, the Institute for Nonprofit News, LION Publishers, the New York News Publishers Association and the New York Press Association.

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The Daily Catch encourages news organizations, associations and other interested parties to download additional copies of this handbook.

Please visit <https://www.thedailycatch.org/articles/internhandbook/>

or scan this QR code:

