

# Student Internship Information Guide

---



## WHO WE ARE

Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. is a private, non-profit human service agency that is focused exclusively on non-residential, community-based programming. We seek to engage human service systems to rely less on institutional care and invest more in supporting families and neighborhoods. Founded in 1975, YAP works with 13,000 families per year in 19 states in over 100 communities across the United States and in Ireland, and supports programs in Sierra Leone, Guatemala, Scotland, and Hawaii. YAP currently works with juvenile justice, child welfare, behavioral health, developmental disability, autism spectrum and education systems to offer community-based alternatives for the highest risk children, youth, young adults and families. YAP's strength-based approach to working with youth and families is grounded in the awareness that the basis for change lies mainly in the trust relationship formed between the youth/family and their staff. YAP hires staff recruited from the same neighborhoods as our families, and employs a holistic services model that combines elements of wraparound, positive youth development and current best practice to most effectively meet the needs of our youth and families.

YAP has received national recognition as an effective community-based alternative to institutional placement. In June 2008 we were mentioned in the Annie E Casey Kids Count Lead Essay as an example of an organization who has done good work around the country providing community-based alternatives to detention. Our model has been cited by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and several other respected professional groups as a "promising practice" in providing effective alternatives to institutional care. We have also been recognized by the Bridgespan Group as one of the fastest growing non-profit organizations in the past 30 years.

YAP thrives as a cutting edge learning organization, with a clear mission and solid values, constantly looking for ways to improve our services and systems change efforts. We are committed to changing outcomes for the most at-risk youth by working to change how our communities support, care for, organize and empower vulnerable young people, adults and families in the US and abroad.

*YAP's mission is to provide individuals that have been, are, or may be subject to compulsory care with the opportunity to develop, contribute, and be valued as assets so that communities can have safe, proven, effective, and economical alternatives to institutional placement*

### *Core Principles:*

- Individualized Service & Treatment Planning*
- Cultural Competence*
- Partnership with Parents*
- Focus on Strengths*
- Family Empowerment*
- Team Work*
- Community-Based Care*
- Unconditional Caring*
- Corporate and Clinical Integrity*
- Giving Back*

## **On being community based...**

Since its inception, Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP) has maintained a commitment to providing services in the communities where we live and work. Our offices are located in the neighborhoods where our typical client lives, as a means of assuring our services are accessible and culturally competent to those who need and use them. Our presence in the local community also solidifies our presence as a stakeholder and member of the local community, invested in developing and nurturing the capabilities and strengths of our families, systems, and community partners to further build community capacity.

## **Where the money comes from...**

Historically, YAP's funding base has been rooted in federal, state, and county purchase of service contracts. YAP has more recently begun to expand our funding base include private foundations, state and federal grants, corporations, and individual donors.

## **What we can offer to an intern student...**

Because of our wide range of programs, locations, and initiatives, YAP provides students from multiple-disciplines exposure to diverse opportunities within one setting. Administrative and corporate management, to grassroots advocacy, to intensive one-on-one or group work with youth or families- YAP will work with each student to design a learning agreement that helps capture the breadth and depth of experience that will provide a real-life context to what is being learned in school with the opportunity to apply and sharpen skills. More specific information regarding our programs follows on next page.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

### **Administrative Internships (Harrisburg, PA)**

Opportunities are available for undergraduate and graduate students who are pursuing careers in communications, marketing, finance, graphic design, information technology and business. At YAP's Administrative Headquarters in Harrisburg, PA, students have the opportunity to work in a variety of functional departments. Interns must be available for a minimum of 10 hours per week. Some intern positions do not require students to work in Harrisburg and can be done remotely.

#### **Departments and Special Projects Include:**

Auditing and Monitoring  
Communications, Marketing and Development  
Contracts  
Employee and Program Development  
Fiscal  
Human Resources  
Information Technology  
Performance and Quality Improvement  
Procurement  
Program Services  
International Youth Advocacy Federation  
Autism Institute  
YAP VOICE

### **Direct Service Internships (Across all YAP locations)**

YAP has programs in over 120 counties in 19 states. Programs vary based on local need, but program types include:

#### Child Welfare

- Traditional Advocate
- Family Support/Family Preservation
- Reintegration

#### Juvenile Justice

- Detention Alternatives Programs
- Reintegration
- Traditional Advocate

#### Mental Health

- Behavioral Health
- Mental Health Outpatient Clinic
- Developmental Disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorders

#### Education

#### Adult Services

# OVERVIEW OF THE STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

## Purpose

The student internship program at Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. has two purposes:

1. To provide a positive experiential learning experience for aspiring professionals seeking to enter the social service or business field. It provides the opportunity to reality test skills, ideas, expectations, and goals.
2. To assist YAP, Inc. in achieving our goals in providing the most effective and efficient services to our youth and families.

As students are provided most of their education through the classroom, it is the philosophy of YAP, Inc. that the primary process for learning in an internship should be through direct experience. Therefore, students doing an internship at YAP, Inc. are given a great deal of responsibility and, where applicable, contact with the agency clientele. This varies according to program assignment, educational program and the amount of time the student has available for an internship.

## Program opportunities and assignments

A determination of which program a student will be placed will be made between the student and the Coordinator of the Internship Program. Placement is based on the interest of the student, the needs of the agency, and an assessment of which program would provide the greatest opportunity for the student to achieve their goals for an internship.

The YAP, Inc. Internship is a minimum ten-hour per week requirement. Although tasks are separated according to program, all programs entail similar responsibilities for student interns and are well structured, giving students a positive developmental learning experience.

## Orientation and Beginning

On the first day the student begins their student internship, they will receive a formal orientation from their local supervisor to the program or department and their role in it. This orientation is done either individually or with a group and will take place at the site where the internship is performed. The orientation provides the student with a Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. manual specific to their program containing all of the necessary information and forms that the student will need in performing their responsibilities at the agency.

The orientation will include:

1. A tour of the site in which the student will be working.
2. An in-depth review of the policies and expectations of student interns.
3. An in-depth review of the procedures of the program/department in which they are placed.
4. A review of all forms the student will be working with in their internship.
5. A description of student supervision.

The first one to two weeks a student is at Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. should be a period of orientation and observation. It is a time in which students should become familiar with the process by which the program or department operates and learn directly from their supervisor and staff what is involved in all aspects of the program or department in which they are working.

After the second week, students should begin getting more actively involved in work assignments (such as counseling sessions, conducting intakes, contact with other agencies, conducting follow-ups, and recreation, technology, etc). By mid-semester, a student should be completely familiar with the operation of the agency and should be actively involved with all aspects of the program in which they are working. From mid-semester to the end of a student's internship, a student should work primarily on developing their skills as a practitioner with special efforts made in areas designated during their mid-semester evaluation.

### **Supervision**

Each student will be required to attend supervision on a weekly basis. Supervisors are assigned to students according to program and educational needs. This may take the form of either group or individual supervision. Supervision will include both discussions of issues related to the work the student has been doing, as well as educating the student on different processes and systems. In addition to weekly supervision, graduate level students take part in a biweekly group supervision, which acts as an educational and supportive forum for case discussions.

### **Training**

All Interns are required to participate in a YAP Orientation Training; furthermore, all students are recommended to attend the Basic Advocacy Orientation Curriculum, as well as our Behavioral Health and Autism Training Curriculums. Students can work with their individual supervisor on planning their training schedule.

### **Semester Contracts**

As students begin their internship at Youth Advocate Programs, Inc., each student is required to develop a contract. This contract should reflect the student's goal for their internship and objectives for achieving each of these goals. It should be used by the student and supervisor as a guide for the student throughout the semester and will be used as part of their evaluation. Contracting is an ongoing process and is reviewed frequently and changed as needed. Contracts need not be limited to experience in a specific program, but can include shadowing or observation opportunities across various YAP programs or departments. The specific activities should be discussed and developed with the Internship Coordinator in the development process.

### **Documentation**

Each Youth Advocate program has slightly different documentation systems. In general, each student is required to document work or services performed by the student on each day at the agency. The student will be oriented and provided with the appropriate material at orientation, along with an explanation of how the forms are to be filled out. The purpose of these forms is to have written documentation of the work the student is doing. Additionally, we endeavor to have approximately 40% of direct service Interns time spent providing direct in-person services to clients. This is monitored through supervisory review of the student's monthly activities.

## **Intern Application Process**

The initial step is for the applicant to complete the attached internship query form and email it to the Coordinator of the Student Internship Program ([internship@yapinc.org](mailto:internship@yapinc.org)).

The Internship Coordinator will contact the applicant to confirm receipt of the inquiry and then alert local staff to the inquiry. Based on mutual interest, the prospective student will be contacted for an interview. This interview has a three-fold purpose:

1. To provide the applicant with a description of Youth Advocate Programs, Inc., its programs, philosophy and types of service.
2. To describe the Student Internship Program and opportunities available.
3. To assess the student's interests and capabilities and make a determination as to whether Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. would be an appropriate intern setting.

The Coordinator of the Internship Program is available to meet with the representatives of colleges or universities who want to explore placing student interns at Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. Student interested in an internship at Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. should complete the attached application and email it back to the Coordinator of the Internship Program ([internship@yapinc.org](mailto:internship@yapinc.org)). In order for interns to be accepted into the program, they must complete the YAP full Intern Application form and pass the appropriate DMV and criminal and child abuse clearance checks. Many students work their internship hours during evenings and weekends. It is highly recommended that students make these hours available in order to meet program requirements.