

How to foster nutrition interns

This essential resource can be easily integrated into your organization. Once a relationship with the educational institution has been established, it is critical to adequately prepare the intern's integration and establish a set of objectives with the student.

The first of our Nine Core Principles of Engagement is to consider each person a gift, meaning that people are separate from their roles. People need to establish their own physical space in our quarters, but they must also establish a dynamic working relationship which will allow for rich and reciprocal interaction.

We have found the following points to be essential when considering the integration of a potential intern:

Space

Provide access to a desk and a spot for the intern to drop off his or her belongings.

Tools

Provide access to a computer

Organizational culture

Provide detailed information as to appropriate work clothes (for both the office and the kitchen), expected office hours and internal structure.

Resource person at the office and in the kitchen

Plan for short meetings with all people participating in the intern's integration.

Schedule

Plan a work schedule for the first two weeks of the internship. Then, establish a regular schedule based on the intern's objectives, reviewing the schedule and the objectives regularly with him or her.

Setting some goals

Depending on the institution and academic level, the student may have certain goals that diverge from your organizational needs. It will be a winning relationship if you have time to give to the intern. It is easier to outline the intern's goals beforehand so that all goals are met over the course of the internship.

Here are a few examples:

- Analyze the nutritional value of certain recipes;
- Develop tools for gathering data on meals;
- Standardize recipes;
- Develop tools of communication for clients and volunteers on the themes of nutrition, hygiene and food safety.

To sum up, the integration of interns can be a real challenge, but one that can be very beneficial to your meals-on-wheels.