CALS NYS Internship Program

WAYNE COUNTY HEALTH STATUS IMPROVEMENT & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ASSISTANT

Internship Position Description

1. **Host Name**: SOAR, Strengthening Our Area Residents (a project of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wayne County and collaborators)

2. **Host Background Information**: Wayne County Cornell Cooperative Extension educational system enables people to improve their lives and communities through collaborations that put experience and research knowledge to work. CCE Wayne provides educational programming and activities in the areas of agriculture, nutrition, and youth and family development. Focusing on the assets, issues and the needs of Wayne County, CCE Wayne strives to develop strong and vital communities.

3. **Internship Position Name/Title**: Health Status Improvement & Community Development Project Assistant

4. **Internship Position/Project Context**: The primary focus of the internship is to support the implementation of Phase III of the SOAR project, a community development initiative focused on improving individual health status and overall community health (see project overview below). Phase III (December 2015-November 2016) of the project involves engaging community members to implement the plan for addressing health priorities created by residents during Phase II. With a small staff, the intern will play a key role in citizenship engagement and activity implementation.

5. **Internship Position Description**: The exact duties of the intern will depend on where the project is in the asset-based community development process at the start of the internship. Anticipated types of responsibilities include the following: Participating in outreach activities; attending trainings and resident meetings; assisting with organizing and engaging residents in resident driven community activities related to planned strategies; collecting and reporting data on resident driven projects and activities; developing and implementing outreach activities about the project at various community events/festivals/meetings and to individual residents. A plan of work articulating specific roles and responsibilities will be jointly developed and finalized by the student intern and the supervisor during the pre-departure course.

6. **Basic Qualifications and Preferred Experience**: The intern should be comfortable working/speaking with the public. Experience with community outreach will be a huge plus. S/he should have an interest in rural areas, community development, and well-being. An ability to look at an issue in an interdisciplinary way will be most helpful. We are looking for someone who wants to be an integral member of a team and who is willing to embrace duties assigned them. A background/coursework in community development, eco-tourism or community health will be helpful. An intern with a love for outdoor activities such as fishing, kayaking, hiking and biking will fit well in this community.

7. **Internship Schedule**: We are flexible with scheduling and the intern may need to work some evenings and weekends. The 8 hour community engagement component of the internship position will be included in the total 40 hour work week.
8. Expected Outcomes (for Intern): Some of this is outlined above. Depending on where the SOAR project is on its timeline, and therefore the specific responsibilities assigned to the intern, it is expected that the intern will have an opportunity to increase their skills in the following areas: engaging diverse populations, presenting to community groups, interacting with local media, strategic planning, and utilizing social media for community development. This community development project has the potential to be transformational for the Galen-Savannah Community. Keeping the intern’s goals in mind, we will strive to shape his/her role in the project to provide valuable experiences and educational benefits.

9. Location of Assignment: Main base will be the SOAR office in downtown Clyde, but the intern will likely be at locations and events throughout the Galen-Savannah Community.

10. Other: Rural area with very limited access to public transportation. Reliable transportation required.

SOARS PROJECT OVERVIEW
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wayne County has received funding from the Greater Rochester Health Foundation (GRHF) for a Neighborhood Health Status Improvement Project. The premise of the grant is that health is affected by the economy, education levels, employment/income, transportation and environment/housing. These factors are called the “social determinants” of health. Only about 10% of health status is determined by the availability of health services. In other words, when it comes to health, where you live makes a difference. Lower income communities usually have low levels of education, high levels of poverty, and limited access to services. The GRHF believes that healthy communities lead to healthier residents. If a community is strong and vital its residents are more apt to be healthy. The elements that make people healthy are personal behavior (not smoking, eating healthy foods, physical activity); social relationships (connections with friends, family, groups); physical environment (quality of housing, air, water, streets, sidewalks, etc.); economics (employment status, level of income, education level); and access to medical care.

The project focuses on the community of Clyde, Savannah and Galen. The Galen-Savannah community is home to 6,020 residents. Children from the community attend the Clyde-Savannah Central School District and both school buildings are located in Clyde. The school district serves as the hub of this rural community by providing a learning/academic center for youth and a gathering place for school functions, social activities and physical activity opportunities. The village of Clyde and the Hamlet of Savannah are surrounded by farmland and preserved wetlands owned by NYS and US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Erie Canal passes through the southern part of the town of Galen, including the Village of Clyde. This community provides many opportunities for hiking, biking, boating and exploring nature.

Phase I of the project began on December 1, 2013. The focus for Phase I was identifying assets in the community. The project is entering Phase II which is the planning phase. The GRHF is funding the project because they want to show that the health status of residents, in fact, improve if the social determinants of health in their neighborhoods improve. This is not a traditional health improvement grant with prescribed strategies. Rather it is an untraditional community development grant. Its objective is to improve the economic, social and physical environment of the area’s residents with the ultimate goal of improved health.

Phase I asset mapping brought residents together to determine key health priorities for the community. Increasing activities for youth, seniors, and families; increasing opportunities for restaurants, small businesses, shopping, jobs and tourism; increasing safety of the community; and beautification of the community were all identified as avenues to improve the overall health of the community. Phase II brought residents together to identify focus areas for these health priorities and develop plans to address these areas in the implementation phase (Phase III). Phase III will now focus on implementing the plan created in Phase II. Technical assistance is provided by a professor from Northwestern University through the GRHF. Additionally, $10,000 of the grant funds will be set aside for Resident Health Promotion Projects. These projects are led by residents in the community who have proposed ways to make the community a better place to live.