

My name is Tori Gruber, I am currently a senior getting my degree in Criminal Justice and Psychology. I am interning with the Department of Human Services, specifically focusing on child (and occasionally adult) protective services. This letter describes the benefits and challenges of interning.

Having the responsibility of an internship in addition to the normal rigors of academics is challenging, however it is rewarding in many aspects. One of the biggest challenges I have faced is the steep learning curve. As an intern, we do not go through the trainings that employees go through, yet we are working side-by-side with the employees who have had that training. However, most of the employees have been willing to help me and answer all of my questions. Another challenge of having an internship is the amount of time you should put in it—with no financial compensation. Over the course of the summer, I put in over 200 hours, which makes it difficult to have a job and have classes on top of that. Another challenge for interns (and specifically my field) has been the emotional roller coaster of the work and the cases I have worked on. It is difficult to read the case files and see the atrocious things parents have done to their children. I have also been the recipient of their anger during home visits. With training comes ways to deal with that, and I have started to learn how to take care of myself and what I need to do to regenerate from what I see and experience.

However, the benefits far outweigh these challenges. For a company, an intern is someone they are willing to hire because you have shown them you are a hard worker and are obviously passionate about the field because you are willing to put in all this work for free. Another major benefit is you get practical experience in the field. Books and professors can only teach you so much about the field—but experience can give you that extra knowledge and understanding of the field. It also gives you a leg up when applying for future jobs outside of

college. Also, it verifies if this is the field that you want to be in and really belong in. I have had multiple internships throughout college, all helping me figure out what field I belong in. This internship has helped me determine that I want to go get my masters in social work and that I want to work in child protection services. I wouldn't have been able to make that decision if it wasn't for this internship. Internships are not easy and just like any job, there are good days and there are bad days. However, internships help to make those important connections in the field and help to get a job in that field right out of college.