Leaders in Animal Care

Animal Care is a leader in determining standards of humane care and treatment for animals in the United States. As part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), we carry out and enforce these standards through inspection, education, and cooperative work with States, industry, and nongovernmental organizations.

A Unique Opportunity

We are dedicated to attracting and recruiting a diverse workforce to advance our goals. In doing so, we see great value in hiring students to help them link academic learning with professional employment. Animal Care has developed a robust externship program that allows motivated students to gain unpaid work experience in various areas of interest. Externships last from 1 to 4 weeks. Opportunities are based on the availability of Animal Care personnel throughout the United States. We offer two types of externships:

- Office-based experiences in Riverdale, MD; Fort Collins, CO; and Kansas City, MO
- Field-based experiences located throughout the United States

These opportunities cover many organizational areas, including, but not limited to:

- Nonclinical veterinary care
- Compliance inspections
- Administrative support
- Policy development
- Human resources and finance management
- Information technology
- Emergency programs
- Outreach and training
- Stakeholder engagement

If you extern with us, we’ll work with you to develop an individual learning plan to maximize the benefits of your externship experience, both for you and for Animal Care.

Want To Apply?

If you’re enrolled full- or part-time in a regionally accredited college or university and you have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better, you are eligible to apply. To do so, submit the following materials to aceextern@aphis.usda.gov:

- Your resume, including work experience, educational institution, major, GPA, and expected graduation date
- A narrative essay of 750–1,000 words answering the following:
  - Why are you interested in an externship in Animal Care?
  - What do you want to gain from the externship experience?
  - How does this experience relate to your career aspirations?
  - What contribution will you make to the Animal Care program?
  - What is your preferred type of externship (i.e., office or field), geographic location(s), and specific timeframe for participation?
- Transcripts (official or unofficial) for all completed college or university coursework to date
When To Apply

Key deadlines for submission of the required materials are as follows:

- June 1 for fall
- November 2 for spring
- March 1 for summer

We encourage you to apply early to allow time for placement and accommodations.

Other Information

We accept students based on Animal Care’s needs and priorities and students’ interests. Unforeseen circumstances (e.g., a natural disaster) may force us to cancel established externship opportunities, but we will make every effort to find alternatives to cancellation.

If selected, you are responsible for your housing and transportation costs, as well as other personal expenses during the externship. You will be required to sign a Confidentiality Disclosure, a Volunteer Agreement, and other consent forms.

In addition, if you are selected for a field-based externship, you will be required to submit negative results of a tuberculosis test within the past 6 months.

Contact Us

For more information on externship opportunities, email Animal Care at acextern@aphis.usda.gov or call us at (301) 851-3751.

To learn more about the Animal Care program in general, visit us online at www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-welfare.

USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Photo credits: Cover photo by USDA/APHIS, Scott Bauer; all other images by USDA/APHIS, R. Anson Eaglin.

Issued June 2013
Slightly revised June 2015