

# NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

2024



SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA  
**PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL**

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# HISTORY OF PROGRAM

The original idea came from Don Linssen, a commissioner at the time, who attended a meeting with some representatives of Martin County. Martin County had its own internship program designed to match students with local employers. Linssen liked the idea, and told Bruce Heitkamp, Nobles County Administrator, that Martin County is on to something good.

Heitkamp reintroduced the idea of an internship program, and in 2023 the county partnered with the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council to launch its own program.

Fifteen interns participated the first year by interning at local businesses for the summer. This opportunity is available for college students from Nobles County, whether they are traditional or non-traditional students. They can be paid up to \$17 an hour, depending on the position, and can work a maximum of 29 hours per week.

After a successful first summer, the Nobles County Commissioners voted to continue the program for another year.

# MEET THE COMMISSIONERS



**Justin Ahlers**  
District 1



**Gene Metz**  
District 2



**Bob Paplow**  
District 3



**Robert Demuth, Jr.**  
District 4



**Chris Dybevick**  
District 5



# THE INTERNS

**Wendy Agustin Lopez**  
*Billion Motors*

**Casey Salinas**  
*Worthington Area YMCA*

**Junior Giron Bamaca**  
*Henning Electric*

**Princess Martinez Barajas**  
*KIVU Immigration Law PLLC*

**Josiah Boever**  
*Lowe's Sheet Metal Inc.*

**Beatriz Gabriel Agustin**  
*Nobles County Family Services*

**Elizabeth Ramos Loza**  
*District 518 Community Education*

**Bailey Newman**  
*Vaxxinova*

**Josh Horn**  
*FORWARD Worthington*

**Josue Torres Reyes**  
*Adrian Plumbing and Electric*

**Jabier Lopez**  
*Adrian Plumbing and Electric*

**Erkinesh Bonnet**  
*Nobles County Library*

**Mia Nixon**  
*Creative Healing Space*

**Ariadne Barrera Garcia**  
*District 518 Community Education*



# MIA NIXON

**Creative Healing Space**

*Social Media Intern*

**University of North Dakota**

*Communications/ Space Studies/*

*Social Media*



## **What is your favorite part of your internship?**

The freedom to create my own content!

## **What is the most valuable thing you have learned so far?**

To problem solve when things do not go as planned or something happens that is out of your control

## **What is the most valuable thing you have learned so far?**

To problem solve when things do not go as planned or something happens that is out of your control

## **In what ways has this experience impacted you?**

This experience has exposed me to various events, cultures, challenges, and values in our community.

## **Note for the commissioners**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn and apply my knowledge throughout this internship. I have greatly appreciated being challenged and taught what a job in this field might look like after graduation.



# ELIZABETH RAMOS LOZA

**District 518 Community Education**  
*Educational Assistant*

**Minnesota West**  
*Human Services - Child Development*

## **What is your favorite part of your internship?**

My favorite part of the internship is undoubtedly the opportunity to directly engage with students and families, supporting them on their journeys. I find great joy in the daily interactions with students and families, whether it's helping a student open a carton of milk, providing words of encouragement, or witnessing their growth and progress. Each day presents new challenges and opportunities to make a meaningful impact in their lives, which is incredibly fulfilling and inspiring to me. Another aspect of my internship that I truly enjoyed was building connections with the staff throughout the entire Community Education building. Melanie Kuhl and Sharon Johnson have been instrumental in guiding me and providing opportunities to expand my knowledge and learn new skills. Their support has been invaluable in helping me grow professionally and personally during this internship. I am grateful for their positive impact and encouragement throughout this experience.

## **Why did you apply for this internship experience?**

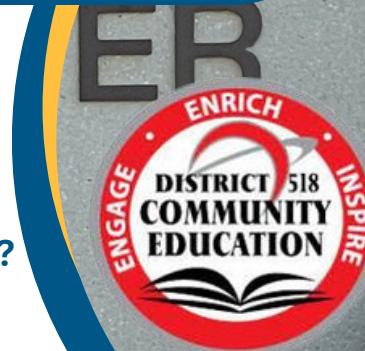
I applied for this internship experience because I saw the flyer about the PIC Program while working at the Nobles County Library. This opportunity motivated me to pursue my goal of returning to college and completing my education. Additionally, my familiarity with Melanie, the Early Childhood Coordinator, grew from my son attending preschool at the same facility. I also knew Sharon Johnson, the Community Education Director, through previous volunteer connections with the Nobles County Integration Collaborative involving myself and my siblings. Community Education felt like the perfect fit for me because it offered the chance to engage in a variety of tasks while maintaining close connections with both students and the community. This alignment with my interests and goals made the internship an ideal opportunity to gain valuable experience and contribute meaningfully within an educational setting.

## **In what way(s) has this experience impacted you?**

During this internship at Community Education, I've established meaningful relationships with staff, students, and families, fostering a sense of belonging and value within the community. My growth within the organization has been substantial—I've contributed to the preschool program, collaborated with the preschool secretary on attendance management, and actively participated in summer programs with the Nobles County Integration Collaborative youth development leaders. Additionally, I will also be involved in office tasks and preparing for upcoming back-to-school activities. Overall, this internship has been an overwhelmingly positive experience. I've received a warm welcome from everyone and have acquired valuable skills and knowledge that will undoubtedly benefit my future endeavors.

## **Note for the commissioners**

I want to express my deepest gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this program. As a mother of two toddlers, pursuing my education has been a challenge amidst balancing childcare and financial responsibilities. This internship has provided me with the flexibility to continue providing for my children while working towards completing my degree. If all goes well this summer, I am on track to graduate—an achievement that means the world to me and my family. Thank you for your support and for making this opportunity possible. It has made a significant difference in my life and has set me on a path towards achieving my goals.



# ARIADNE BARRERA

ADULT BASIC  
EDUCATION

**District 518**  
**Community Education**  
*Adult Basic Education Intern*

**Southwest Minnesota State  
University**

*Teaching English as a Second  
Language (TESL)*



## **What is your favorite part of your internship?**

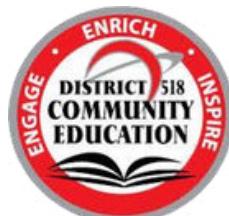
My favorite part of my internship is being able to learn and connect with various people in the community. I enjoy hearing and learning different languages, helping others find resources in the community, and obtaining more experience in the education field. In addition, the staff has been very helpful and supportive in helping me learn and gather more resources for my own learning.

## **What is the most valuable thing you have learned so far?**

The most valuable thing I have learned so far is that everyone always has something to give. A lot of the people I have met and connected with have exchanged new ideas, stories, and resources with me and vice versa. I have appreciated creating this rapport and understanding a little bit more about the community around us.

## **Note for the commissioners**

I want to thank everyone who makes and made this experience possible, not only for me but for others as well. It is an amazing opportunity and I am glad I have been able to take part in it.



# BEATRIZ GABRIEL

**Nobles County Community Service**  
*Public Health Nurse Intern*

**College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University**  
*Nursing*

## **What is your favorite part of your internship?**

My favorite part about working as a PHN is being able to form relationships with the families I visit and be able to give back to the community.

## **Why did you apply for this internship experience?**

I applied because I have not had any public health experience. I have always been interested in learning more, but had not had that opportunity until now. Especially, with a paid internship I could enjoy it and not worry so much about having another job to make money for tuition.

## **What is the most valuable thing you have learned so far?**

I have learned that there are so many resources out there to help those in need especially first time moms who are looking for help with their baby and education.

## **How has this work experience changed your perspective about staying in Southwest Minnesota for a career?**

I have always wanted to stay in Minnesota. This experience has made me realize how much this community here is diverse and always willing to help. I love the culture here and working with all these families has really made this experience better.

## **In what way(s) has this experience impacted you?**

I have learned about how much people in our community need help and how many resources we have available. It has impacted me by wanting to do more to always help people.

## **Note for the commissioners**

Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity. It has truly been a highlight of my year. This experience has taught me so much, and I want to thank you so much for that.



# JOSH HORN

**Forward Worthington**

*Tech Intern*

**Dakota State University**

*Computer Science*

## **Why did you apply for this internship experience?**

I applied for this internship experience because I wanted to work in the area during the summer and be able to put some valuable work experience on my resume to help with future internships and jobs that I will apply for.



## **How has this work experience changed your perspective about staying in Southwest Minnesota for a career?**

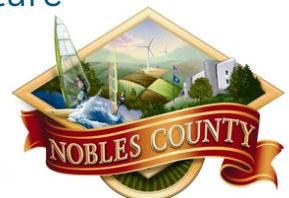
I feel that this experience has shifted my perspective slightly towards staying in Southwest Minnesota for a career. However, it might be difficult to find a full-time job in the Computer Science field while still staying in Southwest Minnesota, so that is likely the largest factor in deciding whether or not I stay in the area.

## **In what way(s) has this experience impacted you?**

This experience has impacted me in a few ways. First off, I haven't had an internship before or had a job where I've worked this many hours per week, so it's been an introduction to the working world for me. I've had the ability to learn more about all of the people I work with, which has been great, as I tend to keep to myself, and I've had to get out of my comfort zone a bit. All in all, it's been a great experience that I'm glad to have had the opportunity to take.

## **Note for the commissioners**

I'm very thankful for this opportunity, it's been an awesome experience for me and gives me very valuable experience to put on my resume for future opportunities.



# JUNIOR GIRON BAMACA

**Henning Electric**  
*Electrician Apprentice*

**Minnesota West Technical and  
Community College - Jackson**  
*Electrician Program*

227-9522

## **What is your favorite part of your internship?**

My favorite part of the internship were days where it went by fast, or when it came to working as a group

## **Why did you apply for this internship experience?**

I applied because I wanted to get more experience out in the field and I had not found what company I wanted to work at. it went by fast, or when it came to working as a group

## **What is the most valuable thing you have learned so far?**

The most valuable thing I have learned so far is that you can't do everything by yourself.

## **In what way(s) has this experience impacted you?**

I have learned that everyone sees things differently and have ideas of their own

## **Note for the commissioners**

Thank you!



# BAILEY NEWMAN

**Vaxxinova**

*Research and Development Intern*

**South Dakota State University**

*Major - Animal Science*

*Minor - Animal Health*



## **What is your favorite part of your internship?**

My favorite aspect of this internship is the diversity in work, having the opportunity to work across three different departments, as well as to observe a few others. This internship has exposed me to many new concepts, which has opened doors to new opportunities. I have worked closely with the Research and Development team, PCR team, and the farm site team, and each have provided me with many new insights into various career paths I may pursue. I have been able to grow more confident throughout the past 12 weeks and have been trusted to perform tests and tasks independently. This internship has been incredibly rewarding as I have developed new skills and techniques that will likely benefit me in the future.

## **Why did you apply for this internship experience?**

I applied for this internship because I was originally uncertain about my future career path, and this opportunity description sounded as though, and has proven to expose me to various new fields. The diversity of working directly alongside three different departments has assisted in clarifying my future career paths. I applied for this internship as it is located in my hometown, and I value a close-knit community, often found in local businesses. This experience with Vaxxinova has proven to have that same sense of community.

## **What is the most valuable thing you have learned so far?**

The most valuable thing I've learned from this internship is how diverse a single company can be in their job opportunities and how significant an impact of a community-oriented work environment can have. The guidance I have received from everyone here has been excellent, especially when learning new concepts and challenging topics. I have acquired many new practical skills and techniques that will be beneficial to me wherever I go after this program. I have discovered that lab work is much more collaborative rather than independent, working alongside and interacting with other departments. In addition to developing technical skills, I have also strengthened my personal networking abilities, forming many new relationships and connections. I look forward to further building these connections over the next 3 weeks of this opportunity.



# ERKINESH BONNETT

**Nobles County Library**  
*Library Assistant*

**TorchBearer International**  
**Austria/Spain**  
**Bible College**

**What is your favorite part of your internship?**

Being able to help my coworkers with simple tasks and hearing about their day



**Why did you apply for this internship experience?**

I was looking for a job that would build credibility for my future careers.

**What is the most valuable thing you have learned so far?**

Being able to have an idea and not just talk about it but make it happen for the better of the community and individuals.

**How has this work experience changed your perspective about staying in Southwest Minnesota for a career?**

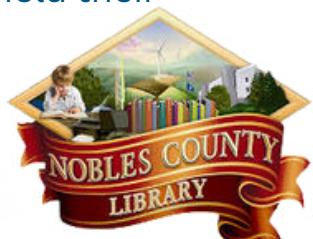
Learning about where people from the community have come from encourages me to leave Southwest Minnesota.

**In what way(s) has this experience impacted you?**

This experience has taught me that I am able to impact others lives for the better even with the mundane things. For example a task such as simply printing documents for patrons(important documents) impacts their lives.

**Note for the commissioners**

Thank you for allowing us to have this experience. This experience has changed my perspective on my ability and how I can help the community. I would love to see this opportunity to continue so others can gain experiences, yield their power, and change in some form.



# PRINCESS MARTINEZ BARAJAS

**KIVU Immigration Law PLLC**

*Administrative Assistant*

**Gustavus Adolphus College**

*Political Science and Peace,  
Justice, and Conflict Studies*



## **Why did you apply for this internship experience?**

I would say my favorite part of this internship has been being able to work directly with clients! I have enjoyed preparing legal documents. A high level of interaction with our clients is important. It has been very rewarding to see the direct impact my work has had on several client's lives. This internship has fully proven that I am able to make a positive difference in people's lives.

## **Why did you apply for this internship experience?**

I applied for this internship because I knew I could gain hands-on experience in the field of law. I have always been interested in law, specifically immigration law. It was even more exciting to learn that this internship would take place in my hometown. I was excited to stay within the Southwest Minnesota region because I knew I would be able to help my community's specific legal needs.

## **Note for the commissioners**

Above all, I want to thank you so much for this amazing opportunity. I have grown so much as a person throughout this internship. I have gained valuable knowledge by having this hands-on experience! I would not have been able to learn everything I did in my internship, in a classroom setting.



**KIVU**

IMMIGRATION LAW

WORTHINGTON, MN



SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA  
**PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL**



# CASEY SALINAS

**Worthington YMCA**

*Programs Director*

**University of Minnesota**

*Physical Activity and Health  
Promotion*

## **What is your favorite part of your internship?**

I really enjoy working with all the different youth programs. It has been a very good learning experience for me as I learn to work with different age groups. I think that having this experience will be great for my future career.

## **What is the most valuable thing you have learned so far?**

How to think on the fly. Since I've been working with kids, and their attention spans can be quite low, I've had to be ready to switch my plans at a moment's notice. I learned the importance of having a back up plan just in case. Without this I would be scrambling to think of something to pass the time.

## **Note for the commissioners**

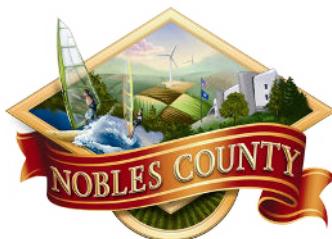
Thank you for allowing for me to have this chance to grow and explore my potential career interests.



# HOST SITES

*Thank you!!!*

**Billion Motors**  
**Worthington Area YMCA**  
**Henning Electric**  
**Kivu Immigration Law PLLC**  
**Lowe's Sheet Metal Inc.**  
**Nobles County Family Services**  
**District 518 Community Education**  
**Vaxxinova**  
**FORWARD Worthington**  
**Adrian Plumbing and Electric**  
**Nobles County Library**  
**Creative Healing Space**



# RECOGNITION EVENT

On July 31st, the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council and Nobles County Commissioners hosted an Internship Appreciation Event at the Nobles County Historical Society. This was a time for all of the interns, along with their host site mentors, to meet the commissioners who supported them and celebrate another successful internship season. Thank you to all who made this event a success.

