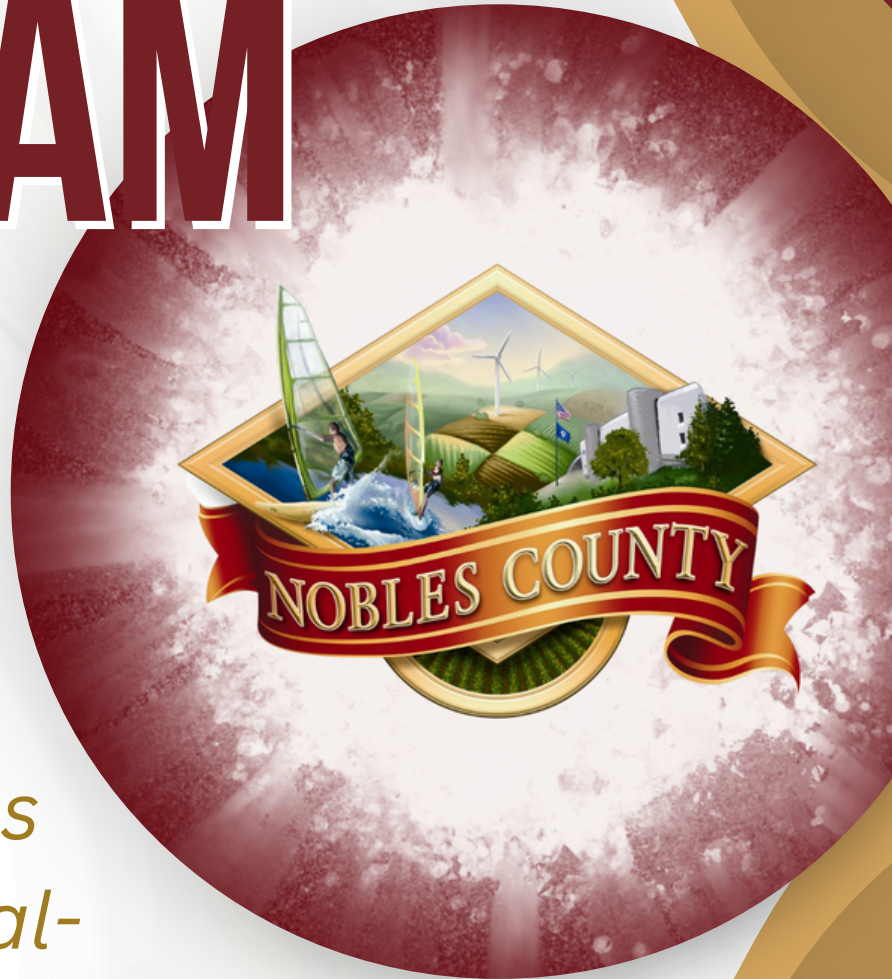


Nobles County

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

2026

*Building the future
workforce in Nobles
County through real-
world experiences*



 SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA
PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

HISTORY OF PROGRAM



The Nobles County Internship Program was inspired by a successful initiative in neighboring Martin County. Former Nobles County Commissioner Don Linssen attended a meeting where he learned about Martin County's efforts to connect students with local employers through internships. Recognizing the potential of such a program, Linssen brought the idea to Nobles County Administrator Bruce Heitkamp, remarking that "Martin County is on to something good."

Heitkamp reintroduced the concept locally, and in 2023, Nobles County partnered with the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) to officially launch its own internship program. That summer, 15 college students, both traditional and non-traditional, gained hands-on experience by interning with local businesses. Participants could earn up to \$17 per hour and work up to 29 hours per week.

Following the program's successful first year, the Nobles County Commissioners voted to continue the initiative. In 2024, another 15 interns participated, further strengthening the connection between local students and local employers.

Now in its fourth year, the Nobles County Internship Program continues to provide students with meaningful, hands-on career experience while helping local businesses connect with emerging talent. In 2026, the program matched 13 local students with businesses and organizations throughout Nobles County, giving them the opportunity to explore careers, build professional skills, and gain valuable real-world experience.

What began as an idea inspired by a neighboring county has grown into an ongoing investment in the future of Nobles County — helping students discover career opportunities while strengthening connections between local talent and local employers.



NOBLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Justin Ahlers
District 1



Gene Metz
District 2



Bob Paplow
District 3



Robert Demuth, Jr.
District 4



Chris Dybevick
District 5



THE INTERNS

Phothong

*Minnesota West Community
and Technical College*

Kaden

Prairie Elementary

Madeline

Forward Worthington

Bethzabeth

*District 518 Community
Education*

Stephanie

Phytocare

Andrew

First State Bank Southwest

Nevaeh

Worthington Area YMCA

Marisa

Worthington Area YMCA

Ariel

Mick's Repairs

Mery

Worthington Family Dental

Bailey

Worthington Area YMCA

Mallory

*Nobles County Prairie Justice
Center*

Maria

Adrian Dental



NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

PHOTHONG

Host Site: *Minnesota West Community & Technical College*

Location: *Worthington, Minnesota*

Internship Area: *Student Support Services*

School: *Minnesota West Community & Technical College*

Field of Study: *Administrative Assistant*



**Minnesota West
Community &
Technical College**

This summer, Phothong gained valuable hands-on experience through an internship with Minnesota West Community & Technical College in Worthington.

Working in Student Support Services under the guidance of Linda Pesch, Phothong had the opportunity to strengthen professional skills while learning more about onboarding, employee resources, communication, organization, and the important role administrative and Human Resources professionals play in supporting employees.

One of the highlights of the internship was creating a New Employee Onboarding Resource Guide, giving Phothong the opportunity to take on a meaningful project while building skills in Microsoft Office and Teams. Phothong shared,

“The internship has been very helpful because I have gained hands-on experience and developed professional skills that I will use in my future career.”

After graduating from Minnesota West, Phothong plans to continue their education and eventually earn a bachelor's degree in Business. Their goal is to pursue a career in Human Resources or another administrative office position.

NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



KADEN

Host Site: *Prairie Elementary*

Location: *Worthington, Minnesota*

Internship Area: *Occupational Therapy*

School: *Minnesota State University, Mankato*

Field of Study: *Exercise Science*

This summer, Kaden gained valuable firsthand experience through an internship at Prairie Elementary in Worthington.

Working alongside Occupational Therapist Lori Mulder, Kaden had the opportunity to observe what a career in occupational therapy looks like and see how occupational therapy is used in a school setting.

The experience gave Kaden a closer look at the day-to-day responsibilities of an occupational therapist while providing valuable hands-on learning and career exploration. Kaden shared that they really enjoyed the experience and appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the field firsthand.



Currently studying Exercise Science at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Kaden plans to continue their education by attending graduate school.

NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



MADELINE

Host Site: *Forward Worthington*

Location: *Worthington, Minnesota*

School: *South Dakota State University*

Field of Study: *Advertising & Public Relations*



This summer, Madeline Petersen gained hands-on experience while exploring her interests in advertising, public relations, design, and communications through her internship at Forward Worthington.

As an Advertising & Public Relations student at South Dakota State University, Madeline had the opportunity to work on a variety of creative projects. From designing posters and creating social media content to contributing to larger projects such as websites, visitor guides, and informational materials, the internship helped her discover what she enjoys most about her field.

“This internship has really helped me realize I enjoy designing and creating,” Madeline shared. She also discovered that she enjoys collaborating and working with others rather than working independently.

While Madeline is still exploring her future plans, the experience has helped her better understand the types of work and projects she would enjoy pursuing in her future career.

NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



BETHZABETH

Host Site: Community Education

Location: Worthington, Minnesota

School: University of Minnesota
Morris

Field of Study: Spanish & Secondary
Education



This summer, Bethzabeth gained valuable hands-on experience through an internship with Community Education in Worthington.

Working under the guidance of Sharon Johnson, Bethzabeth had the opportunity to gain experience across four different departments within Community Education. One of the highlights was helping with the NCIC department and interacting with middle school and high school students.

As a Spanish and Secondary Education student at the University of Minnesota Morris, these experiences gave Bethzabeth the opportunity to work with the age groups she hopes to teach in the future while building stronger connections with youth in the community.

“This internship has been very helpful! I have enjoyed and grown from all the different experiences,” Bethzabeth shared.

Looking ahead, Bethzabeth plans to become a Spanish high school teacher and continue her education by earning a master's degree in the education field.

NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



STEPHANIE

Host Site: *Phytocare*

Location: *Worthington, Minnesota*

Internship Area: *Sales & Business Development*

School: *South Dakota State University*

Field of Study: *Agricultural Science*



This summer, Stephanie gained hands-on experience and explored different career opportunities through her internship with Phytocare in Worthington.

Working in Sales and Business Development under the guidance of Bob Tims, Stephanie had the opportunity to experience different areas of the company and gain a better understanding of the type of work that interests her most.

Through the internship, Stephanie discovered that while marketing may not be the right fit for her, sales is more her style. The experience helped her learn more about her strengths, interests, and the direction she would like to take in her future career.

One of the highlights of Stephanie's internship was the opportunity to network with professionals in the agriculture industry. She also attended the World Pork Expo in Des Moines with Phytocare, where she gained valuable industry exposure and made new connections.

Stephanie, who is studying Agricultural Science at South Dakota State University, plans to pursue a career in the agriculture industry and is particularly interested in land appraisal.

“This has been a great hands-on learning opportunity that has helped me learn more about my interests and future career path,” Stephanie shared.

NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



ANDREW

Host Site: First State Bank Southwest

Location: Worthington, Minnesota

Internship Area: Loan Officer/Banker

School: South Dakota State University

Field of Study: Agricultural Science



FIRST STATE BANK

SOUTHWEST

This summer, Andrew Mulder gained firsthand experience exploring the financial side of agriculture through his internship with First State Bank Southwest in Worthington.

Working alongside Jeremy Balster, Andrew had the opportunity to learn more about how a bank operates and how loan officers evaluate financing requests from commercial and agricultural businesses. Throughout the internship, he gained experience with important financial tools and processes, including balance sheets, collateral tables, risk ratings, and loan evaluations.

The experience gave Andrew, who is studying Agricultural Business at South Dakota State University, a clearer picture of the career opportunities available in banking and finance. It also helped him discover a career path he may not have previously considered.

“I could very well see myself working in a bank in the future, and I would not have known that without this internship,” Andrew shared. **“I am very thankful to PIC for giving me this opportunity and experience.”**

Andrew hopes to build a career on the financial or business side of agriculture and says this internship has been a major step in helping him identify his future career path.

NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



NEVAEH

Host Site: Worthington Area YMCA

Location: Worthington, Minnesota

Internship Area: K-Club Camp Lead

School: Minnesota West Community & Technical College

Field of Study: Elementary Education



This summer, Nevaeh gained valuable hands-on experience working with children through her internship as a K-Club Camp Lead at the YMCA in Worthington.

As an Elementary Education student at Minnesota West Community & Technical College, Nevaeh's internship gave her an opportunity to gain experience directly connected to her future career goals.

Working with children throughout the summer helped her strengthen important skills, including leadership, communication, responsibility, and working with different personalities.

The experience has given Nevaeh a better understanding of what it takes to work with children and has helped prepare her for her future in education.

Nevaeh plans to become a 3rd or 4th grade teacher. Her experience at the YMCA has allowed her to explore her passion for working with children while gaining real-world experience she can carry with her into the classroom.

NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



MARISA

Host Site: Worthington Area YMCA

Location: Worthington, Minnesota

Internship Area: Camp Coordinator

School: University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Field of Study: Media



This summer, Marisa Thier gained valuable hands-on experience as a Camp Coordinator at the Worthington Area YMCA.

Working under the guidance of Karri Olmanson, Marisa had the opportunity to learn what it takes to coordinate activities, stay organized, communicate effectively, and keep things running smoothly. Her internship helped her strengthen important skills in planning, organization, communication, and leadership.

The experience also gave Marisa a better understanding of the coordination and behind-the-scenes work that goes into creating successful programs and activities.

Marisa is studying Media at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and hopes to pursue a career in documentary filmmaking. She plans to use her media skills to tell meaningful stories and capture real-life experiences.

Her experience at the YMCA has given her valuable skills and real-world experience she can carry with her as she continues working toward her future career.

NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

ARIEL

Host Site: *Mick's Repairs*

Location: *Worthington, Minnesota*

Internship Area: *Automotive Technician*

School: *Minnesota West Community & Technical College*

Field of Study: *Automotive Technology*



This summer, Ariel Enrique Davila gained valuable hands-on experience as an Automotive Technician intern at Mick's Repairs in Worthington.

Working alongside experienced professionals, Ariel had the opportunity to strengthen his automotive knowledge, develop new skills, and gain confidence working on vehicles. The hands-on experience has helped him better understand the work involved in the automotive field and prepare for his future career.

One of Ariel's favorite parts of automotive work is helping others. He enjoys helping customers understand what is happening with their vehicles and takes pride in providing dependable service and caring for others.

Ariel plans to continue building his skills as an automotive technician while saving money to eventually start his own automotive side business. His long-term goal is to have his own garage equipped with the tools needed to work on customers' vehicles.

Ariel's internship has been an important step toward that goal, giving him real-world experience and the opportunity to learn from experienced professionals. His supervisor, Kelly, shared that the internship went well and that they enjoyed having Ariel as part of the team.

NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



MERY

Host Site: Worthington Family Dental

Location: Worthington, Minnesota

Internship Area: Dental Assistant

School: Augustana University

Field of Study: Biology with a Pre-Dental Emphasis



Worthington
Family Dental

This summer, Mery gained valuable hands-on experience as a Dental Assistant intern at Worthington Family Dental in Worthington.

Working alongside Dr. Tracy Grossman and the dental team, Mery had the opportunity to learn about many different aspects of dentistry and experience the day-to-day operations of a dental office. The internship helped her connect what she is learning at Augustana University to a professional setting while gaining valuable exposure to the career she hopes to pursue.

As a Biology student with a Pre-Dental emphasis, Mery plans to continue her education by attending dental school and pursuing a career in dentistry. “This internship has been very helpful as I prepare for my future in dentistry,” Mery shared. The experience has strengthened her knowledge of the field and given her a closer look at the profession she hopes to enter.

Mery's internship was also a positive experience for the Worthington Family Dental team. Karin Deslauriers shared that working with Mery was a great experience and that they would gladly host her again.

The team also sees the value of providing internship opportunities for local students as they explore careers and prepare for their futures.

NOBLES COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



MERY

Host Site: Nobles County Attorney's Office

Location: Worthington, Minnesota

Internship Area: County Attorney Intern

School: University of Michigan

Field of Study: Political Science & Philosophy

This summer, Mallory gained valuable firsthand experience in the legal field through her internship with the Nobles County Attorney's Office in Worthington.

Working under the guidance of Nobles County Attorney Braden Hoefert, Mallory had the opportunity to gain a closer look at the work of an attorney and explore the legal profession firsthand.

While Mallory already knew she wanted to attend law school, the internship confirmed that becoming an attorney is the career path she wants to pursue. Most importantly, the experience helped her discover a strong interest in criminal law and made her even more excited about her future career.

After completing her undergraduate education at the University of Michigan, Mallory plans to attend law school. Her long-term goal is to return to Southwest Minnesota and practice criminal law.

Mallory's supervisor, Braden Hoefert, shared that having her as an intern was a great experience. While Mallory did not have the opportunity to observe a jury trial during her internship, something she had hoped to experience, the Nobles County Attorney's Office hopes she can return next year.

THE BANQUET



Interns, host site representatives, Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council staff, and Nobles County Commissioners gathered to celebrate the conclusion of another successful Nobles County Summer Internship Program.

The luncheon provided a meaningful opportunity to reflect on a summer of growth, hands-on learning, professional connections, and career exploration. This summer, 14 local students gained valuable experience while interning with eight Nobles County businesses and organizations.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the celebration and helped make this summer's program a success. A special thank you to our host sites for investing in these students and providing meaningful learning experiences. We wish our interns the very best as they return to their universities and continue pursuing their future career goals!

