

## EVALUATING AN INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Internships, especially unpaid internships, work on the barter system. You are bartering your time, energy and skills for training, hands-on experience, contacts and increased marketability. Think carefully about the internship offers that you receive. Make sure that you are getting what you need from this exchange.

Here are some key components of a successful internship:

- Work feels meaningful and useful
- Work challenges you to grow
- Supervisor/staff make you feel a part of the work group
- Supervisor/staff are accessible to you (on site and available) and willing to guide you and answer your questions
- Opportunities to learn about the career field present themselves through your day-to-day activities, through informal conversations with staff or by participating in staff meetings, observing site visits or staff training sessions

You won't know for sure the benefits or disadvantages of any internship until you are actually on the job. By asking some of the following questions beforehand, however, you may learn a lot about the position for which you are applying.

- Would you describe some of the projects or assignments I would be involved in and what my role would be?
- What type of supervision do interns receive? Do interns meet with supervisors routinely? How do interns get feedback on their work?
- How do you describe the work culture at this organization?
- What are the most important qualities you seek in an intern?
- Would you give me an example of an intern you thought of as outstanding? What made the intern outstanding?
- Are interns included in staff programs such as staff meetings, seminars or training sessions? Do interns observe site visits or meetings with clients?