



KEELER GARDENS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Keeler Gardens is a nonprofit educating urban communities on connecting with nature and the benefits to our health and well-being realized from that connection. Our site is a Chicago city lot with well over 200 cultivars of trees, shrubs, edibles, and ornamentals. We also host community cats and beehives for added opportunities. Work involved in developing and maintaining the site requires intuition, dedication, critical thinking, and a true interest in connecting and working with nature. Attention to detail is necessary along with a willingness to get dirty when needed. Applicants should contact Chief Horticulture Specialist, Gina Iliopoulos, at 773-750-5482 or gina@KeelerGardens.org, referencing the internship.

Our goal is to offer students the opportunity to learn a multitude of skills through hands-on, and sometimes repetitive, work. Students should feel they are learning something valuable every day and are instructed to keep a notebook or journal. The hope is that students will take initiative based on their desires and interests, communicate those interests and work with us to create an ideal working relationship. Additionally we apply a great deal of science and art to the internships, which can be formalized to meet requirements for educational credit.

Interns are supervised by either the program director or the horticultural specialist for a six-week period, or a custom timeframe when applicable. Hours per week are flexible depending on availability and tasks at hand. Scheduling is often dependent on weather, which may lead to some weekend scheduling. Interns must wear a proper attire, closed-toed shoes, long pants, safety goggles, and gloves when necessary.

Internships are considered entry level, unless otherwise specified, with specific required qualifications. Applicants should be organized, creative, enthusiastic, candid, respectful, interested, have a strong desire to learn, be dedicated to their role, and take initiative to make the internship a success.

Internships are either unpaid or sponsored. Unpaid internships are on a volunteer basis with the benefit of a structured and comprehensive learning environment. Sponsored internships are paid to the intern through donations to the internship fund. These positions are limited to a stipend of \$595 per year, per intern. Sponsored internships are funded, at \$2000 per student, through donations to cover the intern stipend, materials, and curriculum. If you wish to sponsor an intern for a full session or donate to the internship fund please contact Gina Iliopoulos for details, at 773-750-5482 or gina@KeelerGardens.org, referencing sponsoring an internship. We also have customized sponsorship for events and programs that can be developed for specific interns.



Students can apply in pairs if they would like to work together with a friend or family member, either in the same role or in different capacities. We will consider requests for joint applications.

The following are example descriptions and can be adjustment based on site needs and applicant interests. Depending on staffing, responsibilities from different positions may be included in any one position. Internships can be customized to meet the needs of sponsors, educational institutions, and individuals.

Horticulture

Learn about plant materials, soil, and wildlife support. This role will give you experience on a variety of plant materials, design techniques, and environmental management.

Skills needed:

- Interest and willingness to work outside in all weather
- Physical flexibility to work with hand tools, large garden tools, and in soil
- Attention to detail

Task Description:

- Learn and perform basic maintenance such as weeding, cutting flowers and branches, watering, digging, and planting.
- Assist with soil management including examining soil for health, applying powder or liquid additives, and installing mulch.
- Assist with projects, such as monitoring plants, feeding birds, and possibly some simple building projects.

Media

Support Keeler Gardens' blog, Facebook, Twitter, GrowIt!, PlantsMap, and Instagram profile by taking and organizing pictures. This internship will give you experience in photography and supporting social media.

Skills Needed

- Ability to use smart phone and/or camera to take photos
- Good organizational skills
- Knowledge or willingness to learn about PC file structure

Task Description:

- Follow processes to identify, tag, and name folders and files for all imagery and videos.
- Assist in creating periodic blog posts and publishing them onto the website.
- Assist in social media engagement, working with a schedule.
- Advanced opportunity of development of quality videos with narration, music, and extensive editing.



Business Administrative Support

Support Keeler Gardens in an administrative role. This role will educate on bookkeeping, donor relations, scheduling, and communication.

Skills Needed

- Attention to detail
- Good grammar and typing skills
- Willingness to interact with donors and community members

Task Description:

- Entering income and expenses
- Reaching out to community members, program participants, and potential donors via mail and phone
- Updating lists

Building Projects

Building a variety of structures to support the mission of connecting with nature. This role will educate on basic building skills. This is an excellent opportunity for creative expression, including many aspects of art and cultural expression.

Skills Needed

- Willingness to work outdoors with building materials and tools.
- Willingness to use protective gear and supplies.
- Physical flexibility to work with heavy materials

Task Description:

- Preparing materials for use in projects like sealing wood, painting, and cleaning.
- Use of tools such as saws, hammers, screwdrivers, and other to assemble structures.
- Clean up of all tools and materials.



Advanced Opportunity in Facilities Management

Opportunity to learn and develop management processes of all physical inventories on site, including systems, equipment, supplies, and materials. An additional broader scope relates to identifying structural issues, improvements, and risk management on site. Other projects may also be proposed. This role is related to other projects and roles, as it is in support of many aspects of site management. This role will educate on materials management skills along with the connection between overall processes and site needs in relation to the details of specific equipment and materials.

Task Description:

- Assist with inventory management, including creating and maintaining databases of site equipment, supplies, and materials, and identifying shortages.
- Assist with materials management, including proper maintenance and storage of all equipment and consumables. Includes but is not limited to tool sharpening, repair, cleaning, and storage systems; watering systems development/improvement incorporating rain barrels, hoses, connectors, and attachments; tracking and organizing donated materials for use in horticulture design and projects; and organizing support materials for use on site such as containers, fertilizers, and soils.
- Assist with systems management, including development of processes, or improvement of existing processes to increase efficiency and resource conservation.

