

2024 Annual Report

CSU Extension Internship Program



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

What makes CSU Extension internships unique?

Our internship program pairs Extension faculty experts from around the state with on-campus University faculty who work together to give CSU students meaningful, hands-on learning experiences where they contribute to applied research efforts all across Colorado.

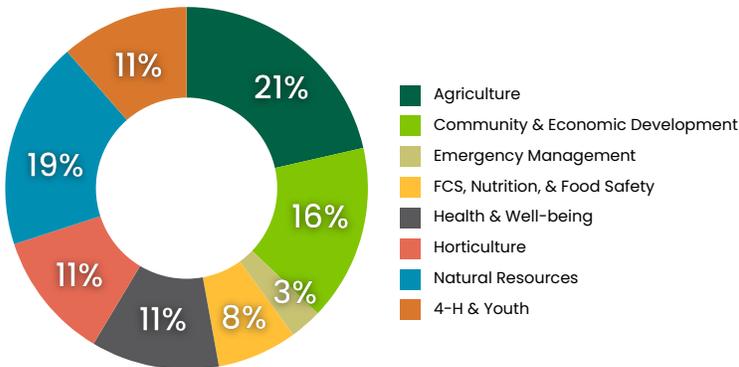
Every year, dozens of paid internships open to any student at CSU, regardless of their academic program. Internships often involve significant time spent in the field, ranging from literal agricultural research fields to economic centers in small mountain towns and county fairs where students engage with eager young learners.

Student interns develop specific research skills with the support of their mentors while also exploring new interests, improving their professional communications, strengthening community connections and preparing for their careers after graduation.



2024 CSU Extension Interns

Internship Topic Areas



Program Numbers

Since its beginning in 2018, the CSU Extension Internship Program has grown tremendously!

- 365 total internships over the past six years
- All 8 colleges and CSU Pueblo have had interns
- 581 applicants in 2024 (compare to only 150 applicants in 2019)
- 70% female, 23% male, 6% non-binary (2024)
- 54% White, 18% Multiracial, 14% Asian/Pacific Islander, 10% Hispanic, Latino/a/x, Spanish, 4% Black or African American (2024)

Intern Home Colleges

- College of Agricultural Sciences: 16
- College of Business: 1
- College of Health and Human Sciences: 12
- College of Liberal Arts: 11
- College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences: 8
- School of Education: 1
- School of Public Health: 2
- Walter Scott, Jr. College of Engineering: 2
- Warner College of Natural Resources: 17

“ These real-life examples of [Extension specialists] doing such meaningful work is **exactly what I was hoping I’d be able to learn** from this summer.

– Addie Rzonca
Ph.D., Applied Developmental Science



“ I loved the work and it was a **great experience!** You may not feel like you’re ‘qualified’ for certain internships, but that’s the whole point of an internship: **to help you gain experience!**

– Brooke Burkey
B.S., Horticulture



“ Throughout the summer internship, I developed my software and data management skills. I also learned from my mentor **how to be consistent, persistent, and not to give up until getting results.**

– Adwoa Amankwaa
Ph.D., Civil Engineering



Thank you to our partners for their generous contributions to the 2024 Extension Internship program!

College of Agricultural Sciences, College of Business, College of Health and Human Sciences, College of Liberal Arts, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Office of Engagement and Extension, Garrett Collopy Foundation, Judy and Ron Blackwelder, President’s Office, Provost’s Office, and Walter Scott, Jr. College of Engineering.

2025 student applications are open Jan. 13–Feb. 10

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The 70 summer Extension interns played a crucial role in strengthening community-focused engagement efforts statewide.

For example...

College of Health and Human Sciences: Andrea Donlucas and Antonella Torres Peralta **fostered 4-H outreach with Latinx communities**, developing bilingual educational programs that not only fostered youth development, but created community connections to help ensure Extension is able to continue to meet the needs of diverse populations. One of Andrea and Antonella’s mentors commented, “The most impactful part of the internship was expanding our capacity, especially to youth we really haven’t engaged with before in Adams County.”

Warner College of Natural Resources: Andrew Schwartz and Chloe Miller served as water quality technicians. Andrew **researched the Cameron Peak Fire’s impact on water quality**, focusing on nutrient mobilization, algal growth in reservoirs, and downstream water quality effects. This research supports water managers in making informed decisions to ensure clean water for Northern Colorado residents. Chloe **monitored the effects of urban and agricultural inputs**, as well as post-wildfire impacts, on the Cache la Poudre River.

College of Business: Janeth Gomez Solis **built connections between CSU Extension and the Hispanic/Latinx community in El Paso County** by engaging with community leaders, conducting focus groups, identifying interpreters, and more.

College of Agricultural Sciences: Kaden Robbins **analyzed the effectiveness and cost of virtual fencing technology** compared to traditional hard fences. Kaden worked closely with ranchers, learning about how they used the technology and drawing lessons for other producers.

Walter Scott, Jr. College of Engineering: McKenzy Johnson **taught drone piloting skills to underrepresented Denver high school students**, ultimately preparing them to take the FAA Part 107 commercial drone license exam. The program reached 42 students from over 26 schools, and McKenzy played an active role in their development by leading flight teams, updating course materials, and supporting students individually.

College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences: Marta Shenker and Zoe Tai **developed an interactive emergency animal response resource database** by collaborating with emergency managers, CSU Extension staff, and community members across Colorado. “The internship expanded my knowledge and understanding of how emergency preparedness helps communities be ready for disasters,” Zoe said.

Thank you to all our mentors who support the Extension Internship program!



Zella Benson (right) searches for bumblebees using radio telemetry near Red Feather Lakes in Larimer County. Scan the QR code to read Zella’s story about her internship experience



Faith Reeder at a 3D building scan site in Steamboat Springs



Bekzat Nurmakhanov uses the SRES Cone Drill to plant millet for research trials



All-Spanish gardening class led by CSU’s El Paso County Extension office as part of Janeth Gomez Solis’s internship

“One of the new perspectives I gained with this position is how diverse the population in Colorado Springs is. I think one thing I’ll be able to walk away with is the **public impact our Hispanic/Latinx community can have when they are engaged in community programs.**”



– **Janeth Gomez Solis**
B.S., Business Administration,
Marketing Concentration

“Connecting with local business owners and leaders has been invaluable. **I love having opportunities to connect with communities**, and this was a great way to learn more about rural areas in Colorado.”



– **Sai McCollum**
Ph.D., Economics



Brooke Burkey interviews a Colorado Master Gardener in Steamboat Springs. Scan the QR code to hear Brooke talk about her internship, "Celebrating 50 Years of Master Gardeners History"



“ This internship gave me the opportunity to **gain field research experience**, spend time outdoors, **network with veterinarians**, and learn more about mammalian, amphibian, and fish disease transmission. **For anyone considering applying to the Extension Summer Internship, DO IT!**

– Reid Ballard
Third year DVM student



College of Agricultural Sciences: Bekzat Nurmakhanov **conducted a comprehensive market analysis for alternative crops in the San Luis Valley** by evaluating the financial viability of different crops and providing a complete supply chain analysis.

College of Liberal Arts: Sal McCollum **researched the role of agritourism in fostering economic development in rural communities** within Montezuma County. Sal researched agritourism’s potential to enhance downtown economies, gathered insights from local stakeholders during site visits and events, and developed recommendations for utilizing agritourism as a tool for economic growth, specifically in rural towns like Cortez and Mancos.

Warner College of Natural Resources: Jazz Hennes **taught natural resource management and conservation education to underserved youth** in Jefferson County, particularly those living in low-income apartments. Jazz says, “I think the future of conservation and natural resources lies on expanding education on those topics and making it available to anyone, especially youth.”



Sean Nelson (back left corner) listens as Elaine Gay shares stories of her family’s historic ranch



Jazz Hennes teaches a young student about habitats and ecosystems

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2024 Student Intern Experience

- 90% would recommend this internship to a friend
- 85% better understand of how research can be applied in communities

2024 Faculty Mentor Experience

- 96% recommend participating in the program
- 80% feel more connected to campus and to other people in the field

Watch more intern stories!



In "Stream Restoration Volunteer Monitoring," Madison Stroker helped assess the ecological benefits of human-made beaver dam "analogs" and shared priority sites for stream restoration projects with CPW



In "Virtual Fencing," Kaden Robbins studied the economics of virtual fencing compared to traditional fencing at ranches in Gunnison County, Colorado



Nancy Bartholomew catches bees with a grad student at the CSU Flower Trial Gardens in "Native Bee Watch Community Science"



Prasiddha Shakya (left) at the Ute Theater in Rifle, Colorado

“ Getting to know the city and people of Rifle made me realize how much value they see in the theater. **Applying my academic training to local economic issues has been profoundly rewarding.**

– Prasiddha Shakya
Ph.D., Economics



Tigist Brunson conducts aggregate and organic matter sampling

“ One of my proudest moments was taking the lead on a soil health analysis in the lab. This not only improved my technical skills but also gave me more confidence in my abilities.

– Tigist Brunson
B.S., Soil & Crop Sciences



“ The internship program is an excellent way for CSU students to **engage directly with community-based partners on real work improving communities statewide.**” – 2024 Faculty Mentor

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