Urban Planning Intern

MCKENNA

McKenna's team of talented planning, design, and building professionals help municipal leaders develop and maintain communities for real life. From street festivals, neighborhood parks, and storefronts, to parking spots, coffee shops, and farmers' markets, we want your community to thrive. McKenna provides planning, zoning, building, landscape architecture, community and economic development, and urban design assistance to cities, villages, townships, counties, and regional agencies, as well as select private clients, based on skilled and effective public engagement.

POSITION OVERVIEW

McKenna's Interns are passionate, talented, and creative students who want to make a difference and see their work efforts result in tangible, inspirational outcomes. Our work is purposeful and impacts people by influencing the state of the environment; ultimately, we take pride in helping to improve quality of life in our great Midwestern communities. McKenna's team members enjoy the benefits of our practice, from the diversity of projects in a diverse range of communities, to our fast-paced, creative, and collaborative team culture.

Our Intern will work closely with the team of McKenna planners to develop and provide on-time, on-budget planning and design work that is of the highest technical and creative quality. Interns receive mentoring and supervision to support them as they handle a variety of tasks and assist project management teams.

The ideal candidate has a good understanding of graphic communication and is in their junior or senior year of study whether in urban planning, urban design, architecture, or landscape design. In addition, the candidate should have the ability to think critically and creatively, be able to adapt to changing environments, and be able to work well independently and as part of a collaborative team.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Project Support and Delivery: Assist Senior Planners and Project Managers in delivering creative, high-quality, and on-schedule planning, design, and zoning projects for both public- and private-sector clients.

Planning and Design Analysis: Conduct research, prepare maps, analyze data, used to contribute to reports and recommendations for master plans, zoning ordinances, economic development strategies, and placemaking initiatives.

Public Engagement: Assist in preparing for and participating in public presentations, meetings, and workshops with municipal boards, commissions, community stakeholders, and professional organizations.

Team Collaboration: Work collaboratively within multidisciplinary project teams—including planners, graphic designers, mapping specialists and administrative staff to produce technically sound and visually compelling work products.

Client Relationship Building: providing excellent service, demonstrating initiative, and representing McKenna professionally in all interactions.

Technical and Graphic Production: Contribute to the preparation of maps, reports, graphics, and other deliverables that effectively communicate planning and design concepts, ensuring all work meets McKenna's creative and technical standards.

Meeting Participation: Attend and support evening meetings, with team members to assist in planning, zoning, and development discussions within client communities.

Professional Growth: Demonstrate commitment to continuous professional development, learning, and participation in firmwide training opportunities.

The Urban Planning Intern is committed to assisting McKenna Planners and Project Managers with specific projects including, but not limited, to the following:

- Serve as an Intern on a multitude of project(s), helping to deliver creative solutions to our clients throughout the Midwest, primarily local units of government. Projects range from providing ongoing and continuing service in the areas of zoning, form-based coding, master planning, economic development, and placemaking, to special projects in planning, design, economic development, transportation, etc.
- Work on harmonious teams with other planners and designers, mapping specialists, graphic designers, and administrative staff.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Education: Undergraduates in their junior or senior year studying urban planning or urban design. Students in other relevant areas of study will also be considered

Experience: Zero (0) to 6 months of experience in professional planning and/or design positions, in either municipal or private settings. Ideal candidates will have had one related internship prior to holding this position.

Teamwork: Ability to work on harmonious teams and respectfully function as a productive and enthusiastic member of a team, under the direction of McKenna's Leadership Team, Project Directors, and Project Managers.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Collaborative and Creative: Work as part of a dynamic, multidisciplinary team of planners, designers, and specialists who value open communication, creativity, and mutual support.

Hybrid and Flexible: Operate within a hybrid schedule balancing remote work with in-office collaboration from one of McKenna's offices (Northville, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, or Columbus, Ohio).

Community-Focused: Engage directly with local governments, public stakeholders, and community members to create meaningful, real-world impacts that enhance the quality of life across Midwestern communities.

Fast-Paced and Purpose-Driven: Work on diverse and concurrent projects that demand adaptability, time management, and a shared commitment to excellence and innovation.

Supportive and Growth-Oriented: Enjoy mentorship, professional development opportunities, and a positive work culture where passion for improving communities is both encouraged and celebrated.

Office Setting: Most work is performed in a professional office environment with standard equipment such as computers, printers, plotters, and teleconferencing tools. The role involves extended periods of sitting, computer use, and interaction with colleagues and clients.

Field and Site Visits: Occasional travel to client communities, project sites, or public meeting venues is required. Site visits may involve walking over uneven terrain, outdoor exposure, or brief standing periods while evaluating physical environments or documenting field conditions.

Public Meeting Environment: Evening attendance at planning commission, city council, or community workshops may occur in various public settings such as municipal buildings, schools, or community centers.

Noise and Distraction Level: The office and meeting settings are typically moderate in noise level, with occasional interruptions due to collaboration or public engagement activities.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this internship position, send your cover letter and resume in confidence to the attention of Human Resources at **hr@mcka.com**. Internship positions may be available in any of our offices: Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Northville, Detroit or Columbus. Please specify your location preference. The timeframe for the internship is usually mid-May to mid-August 2027. McKenna can be flexible on start and end dates. We will work with qualified candidates to arrange a schedule that is mutually beneficial.

This is a paid internship, with an hourly rate ranging from $22-$23/hour. Both full-time and part-time positions are available.

McKenna is an Equal Opportunity Employer and strives to create a dignified work environment where all team members can thrive. Candidates with non-traditional backgrounds and transferable experience are encouraged to apply.