



Small Town
Summits

Internship Church Handbook

Recommendations and guidelines
for a fruitful church internship in
small places

SMALLTOWNSUMMITS.COM

Investing in the next generation of Christian leaders in small- town churches

Across rural New England, small-town churches continue to serve as vital centers of worship, discipleship, and community care. They are significant to the mission of God to flood even the most remote places with gospel truth and community. At the same time, many Christian college students and young adults sense a growing interest in church centered life, but lack opportunities to experience the daily realities of congregational life outside of large churches, those set in suburban settings, or structured campus programs.

Our goal

To equip local churches to raise up a generation of Christians for a lifetime of faithful Christian service in small-town New England.

How does a **STS Ministry Internship** help accomplish this?

The **STS Ministry Internship Program** is designed to bridge this gap by placing young adults into immersive, mentored summer ministry experiences within rural churches.

We equip and encourage small-town New England churches to provide internships that bless the church, equip the intern, and inspire young adults to plant their life in rural New England.

Program Overview

EXPECTATIONS &
GUIDELINES



18-25 year old
college student,
seminary student, or
recent graduate

8 to 12 week summer program

(May-August 2027)



**Rural New
England Church**
with a heart to equip
the next generation of
Christian workers

Program expectations

STS Ministry Internship will incorporate the following aspects:



Mentoring & spiritual formation

Relational investment towards spiritual and ministry maturity



Practical ministry & service

Hands-on service and supervised ministry experience in the church



Ministry reflection & evaluation

Ongoing feedback & reflection on program goals & personal growth

This model is intentionally designed to reflect real-life ministry rhythms, combining church service, community engagement, and personal responsibility.

How many weekly ministry hours?

What is a realistic expectation for your church to provide in terms of ongoing intern work? This includes practical responsibilities, logistical help, meetings, active ministry, etc.



10 hrs/wk

A meaningful internship should have at least 1-2 days/week worth of responsibility and engagement.



15-20 hrs/wk

This is the most common part-time internship expectation of responsibility.



30-40 hrs/wk

Some churches can provide a full-time internship; however, more compensation should be expected.

Not all ministry hours need to be supervised; however, they should encompass time devoted to ministry or service of the church, along with any mentoring or logistical meetings.

How can we **support & compensate** our intern?

Not all compensation is monetary; however, interns should not feel a financial burden in an internship.



We can provide housing

Most churches provide an apartment or have their intern stay in a guest room in a member's home.



We can provide food/meals

Most churches organize a significant portion of meals for the intern or provide a food stipend.



We can help with transportation

In the case an intern doesn't have a car, churches can provide a temporary vehicle or transportation.



We can help find them a part-time job

Consider reaching out to local businesses and ask about temporary, part-time opportunities.



We can pay a stipend or salary

Some can provide a modest monthly stipend, while others can afford a part-time (or full-time) salary.

Idea

Organize a meal schedule where your intern rotates meeting church families by joining them for dinner!

How can we help with intern housing?

We highly recommend providing ongoing housing for a ministry intern. There are several creative ways you could go about this.

☐ At the church building

If you have a bed, a shower, and a kitchen then letting them stay at your building is a great option.

☐ In a guest room

A church member might have a guest room they wouldn't mind housing an intern with.

☐ In an apartment

The church might own a separate apartment or be willing to find one; however, compensation for the intern's costs should be provided.

Idea

If hosting an intern the entire time is too much for one family, consider 2-4 week increments for several families.

How will we **mentor** & **disciple** our intern?

Relational investment in the growth and spiritual formation of your intern is vital to a fruitful internship.

Weekly mentoring meeting with a pastoral staff member

Required for the STS Ministry Internship

Mentoring goal checklist

- ☐ **Relational learning** | “Tell me about you.”
- ☐ **Spiritual check-in** | “How are you and Jesus?”
- ☐ **Hopes & goals** | “Where do you want to grow?”
- ☐ **Ministry reflection** | “How is this experience going so far? Is it meeting your expectations?”
- ☐ **Homework reflection** | “What are you learning?”
- ☐ **Strategic planning** | “What are we doing next?”

Idea

Require a realistic amount of homework. Consider 1-2 books that focus on spiritual formation or practical ministry.

What areas of **hands-on ministry** can we provide?

Intern responsibilities should be both a blessing to the church's needs and helpful in giving the intern life-giving and practical ministry experience.

Consider these examples:

- ☐ Children's & youth ministry leadership
- ☐ Worship & music participation
- ☐ Community outreach & evangelism
- ☐ Small group leadership & discipleship
- ☐ Pastoral visitation & care
- ☐ Vacation Bible School & summer programming
- ☐ Administrative & organizational support
- ☐ Media, communications, & digital ministry

Knowing areas of intended hands-on ministry will help us pair the right intern with the right church.

How will we reflect and evaluate on how it went?

Reflection and assessment of the internship experience is vital for ongoing fruitfulness.

Intern Assessment

Each intern will be asked to reflect on the experience

- ☐ What were the most helpful aspects of your internship experience?
- ☐ How could your experience have been better?
- ☐ Did you grow more in your personal relationship with Christ?
- ☐ Did you grow more in your confidence, skill, experience, and desire for ministry?

Church Assessment

Each church will be asked to reflect on the experience

- ☐ What was fruitful and encouraging?
- ☐ What could have been better?
- ☐ What was it like working with your intern?
- ☐ Was your church blessed, strengthened, and encouraged by this internship?

How can **STS** support our internship?

STS wants to be as involved as would be helpful to maximize the fruitfulness of the internship.

Consider these examples:



STS Visit during the internship

STS can come visit with the pastor and intern to connect and encourage.



Monthly call with the intern

STS can do regular check-ins with the intern to provide added investment and encouragement.



Monthly call with the church

STS can do regular check-ins with the church to help answer questions or provide practical wisdom.

Idea

Incorporate an STS call during one of your weekly mentoring meetings as an open time to ask questions and share updates.

EXAMPLE INTERNSHIP



Jason is a 24-year old seminary student from Kentucky with a desire for rural pastoral ministry.



Grace Community Baptist is a church in rural Vermont averaging 75 on a Sunday morning and one full-time staff pastor.

Program timeline

May 1st – July 24th, 2027 | 12-week Internship

Arrival | Jason arrives at Grace Community

Week 1 | Settling in, orientation, first Sunday

Weeks 2-11 | Ministry rhythms, weekly meetings

Week 12 | Reflection, celebration, prep for departure

Departure | Jason departs for Kentucky

STS Evaluations | Intern & church provide feedback

Housing

Guest Room | Jason stays with Steve & Cheryl, an empty nester family with a spare room.

Compensation

Meal schedule | Jason goes to visit a different church family for dinner 3x/week based on a rotating meal schedule.

Meal stipend | Jason receives \$100/wk as a meal stipend to cover the rest of his food costs.

Part-time job

“Tabers Restaurant & Mini-golf” | The church found a part-time seasonal job for Jason (20 hrs/wk).

Weekly ministry responsibilities

Mentoring Meeting | Jason meets with Pastor Ryan every week for spiritual investment & planning.

Social/website updates | Jason uploads the sermon video and posts on the church FB page.

Youth Ministry | Jason works with the youth team and is tasked to prepare (3) short sermons.

Outreach Event | Jason works with the elders to plan and coordinate (1) community event.

TOTAL HOURS | Jason is given an average of **15-20 hrs/wk** of ministry responsibility.

What we expect of our interns

- ☐ Be ideally between **18-25 years old** (college, seminary students, or recent graduates preferred)
- ☐ Provide a clear **testimony of Christian faith**
- ☐ Be actively involved in a local church
- ☐ Demonstrate a willingness to serve in a rural, small-town context
- ☐ Commit to the duration of the internship (8-12 weeks)
- ☐ Be willing to secure and maintain a **part-time job** during the internship
- ☐ Provide **two references** (pastoral and personal)
- ☐ Complete a brief application and interview process

Prior ministry experience is helpful but not required. A teachable spirit and commitment to Christ-centered service are essential.

What we expect of our churches

- ☐ Be in agreement with **The Gospel Coalition Confessional Statement**
- ☐ Be a church in a **small place in New England** with a heart for equipping the next generation.
- ☐ Provide **clear ministry supervision & weekly mentoring**
- ☐ Offer or coordinate **furnished housing** for interns
- ☐ Provide or coordinate **most meals or meal support**
- ☐ Integrate interns into the life & ministry of the church
- ☐ Offer meaningful ministry responsibilities (not limited to observation)
- ☐ Designate a **primary ministry mentor** (pastor or staff leader)
- ☐ Participate in periodic program check-ins and evaluations
- ☐ Support interns in helping find **local part-time employment opportunities**

Host churches are not expected to create artificial programs, but rather to invite interns into the real, ongoing life of the congregation.

Budget expectations

This program is designed to be low-cost for interns while relying on church partnership and community support.

- ☐ Housing (if subsidizing an apt.) | **\$1,200-\$2,500**
- ☐ Meals/food (providing stipend) | **\$1,000-\$2,000**
- ☐ Programs admin & materials | **\$400-\$800**
- ☐ Insurance & contingency | **\$300-\$600**

Total Estimated Program Cost: \$2,900 – \$5,900

Funding options

Costs are typically covered through a combination of:

- ☐ Host church contributions
- ☐ Individual donor sponsorships
- ☐ Partner church networks
- ☐ Intern part-time employment income

Outcome expectations

The **STS Ministry Internship Program** is more than a summer experience—it is a formative season of discipleship, service, and vocational discernment.

Our hopes for each intern

- ☐ Gain hands-on experience in a ministry setting
- ☐ Develop practical leadership & communication skills
- ☐ Grow in spiritual maturity & personal discipleship
- ☐ Understand the unique opportunities & challenges of rural ministry
- ☐ Build lasting relationships with pastors & churches
- ☐ Discern future pathways in ministry, missions, or lay leadership

Host churches will benefit from renewed energy, expanded ministry capacity, and meaningful investment in the next generation of Christian leaders.

Would you consider offering an internship?

God is faithfully at work in small towns across New England. Through this internship, we seek to strengthen those churches while forming young adults who are grounded in Scripture, shaped by community, and prepared for lifelong service in Christ's Church. And by God's grace, call many of these interns to a life of service in small-town New England.

The 2027 **STS Ministry Internship Program** is an invitation to invest deeply in both people and places—believing that faithful, ordinary ministry continues to bear extraordinary fruit.

Let's connect!

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