



NATIONAL MIGRANT & SEASONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

Voice for the children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers

2026 Summer Internship Program

Washington, D.C.

Information Packet & Application



Photo: 2025 Summer Interns (Jean Garcia, Hannia Hernandez-Mendoza, Bryan Juarez Ruiz).

Proven Potential, Providing the Path

A unique internship program in Washington, D.C. for former Migrant & Seasonal Head Start students who are currently enrolled in college



NATIONAL MIGRANT & SEASONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

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The National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Association (NMSHSA) offers a unique internship program to current college students who participated in a Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Program. The NMSHSA Internship Program brings together the next generation of community leaders from across the country to work in Washington, D.C. Our NMSHSA interns come from migrant and seasonal farmworker families; have participated in one of our member Migrant or Seasonal Head Start programs between the ages of 0 to 5; are rising juniors or seniors in a college undergraduate program; and are active students in their community with proven potential.

The seven-week internship program includes a stipend, housing, and work placement in the Washington, D.C. area.

PURPOSE

The Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs provided the initial building blocks for success when our students were ages 0 to 5, and it is the goal of our summer internship program to provide the last push toward the finish line. The purpose of the NMSHSA Internship Program is to expose migrant students who are currently in college to various professional development and career opportunities within Washington, D.C., such as non-profit organizations, federal agencies, and Capitol Hill. During the 7-week program, NMSHSA interns will refine their professionalism, develop peer relationships, strengthen their leadership skills, make professional contacts, and connect with professional mentors.

Program participation is time-consuming and highly demanding, and it will help advance your educational goals with the development of your professional insight, skills, and networks. Many of the people you will be interacting with during this internship also come from migrant or seasonal farmworker backgrounds and honor the challenges you have overcome. We all extend our open hands of support to help you reach your full potential!

Past Internship Placement Sites:

- Farmworker Justice
- Mexican American Legal & Defense Education Fund (MALDEF)
- National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL)
- Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute (CHLI)
- National Education Association
- Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP)
- Child Labor Coalition

The National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Association (NMSHSA) consists of Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Directors, Staff, Parents, and Friends who work on issues unique to Migrant and Seasonal Head Start children and their families. By advocating for resources, creating partnerships, and affecting public policy, we help member agencies provide quality comprehensive services. For more information, contact Ilda Martinez at 202-223-9889 or ilda@nmshsa.org

Important Dates:

<i>Application Due Date</i>	January 31, 2026
<i>Arrival to Washington, D.C.</i>	June 4, 2026
<i>Placement Program Duration</i>	June 10, 2026–July 23, 2026
<i>Departure from Washington, D.C.</i>	July 25, 2026

Dates subject to change. Please email for verification.

PROGRAM DETAILS

This internship will help you gain real-world job skills, while making an impact in the area to which you are assigned. Networking with professionals who have years of experience and expertise can help you gain a competitive advantage prior to entering the workforce, or advanced studies. This unmatched experience offers first-hand opportunities and challenges of work in Washington, DC. Prepare yourself to lead with a goal to succeed.

Selected participants will receive:

- Work placement within the Washington, D.C. area and housing (housing may include a host family or other appropriate arrangements).
- Great pay and arrival allowance
- Domestic transportation to and from Washington, D.C.
- Work experience and networking opportunities
- Fun and eye-opening activities

Selected Participants must:

- Commit to a minimum of 32 hours a week at their arranged internship site
- Participate in **all** NMSHSA Internship sponsored activities
- Create one blog entry per week for the NMSHSA Internship, and two post-internship entries
- Attend the NMSHSA Public Policy Forum in June 2026, orientation, and weekly sessions
- Agree to, and comply with, **all** policies regarding work performance and personal conduct

NMSHSA Internship Program: Preparation for Success

We strive to change the lives of up-and-coming young professionals from the farmworker community through this life-changing internship experience that will help them achieve their educational and professional goals.

- Academic education can take you so far; students need related work experience and transferrable skills to get a competitive edge. The NMSHSA Internship Program provides real world experience in a professional job setting and networking opportunities with peers and prominent professionals from major organizations in the Washington, D.C. area.
- Mentors can offer guidance, help you develop useful contacts and partnerships, and provide emotional and professional support needed to get a head start in your career. The NMSHSA Internship Program provides mentorship at home, in the workplace, and among peers.
- Young leaders demonstrate higher career aspirations, increased self-esteem, and improved educational completion rates — resulting in increased civic engagement and positive impact on their communities. The NMSHSA Internship Program provides opportunities for advocacy, event-planning, public speaking, and project management.

Eligibility Criteria

- **Past enrollment in at least one Head Start Program for Migrant or Seasonal farmworker children– commonly referred to as Migrant and Seasonal Head Start**
- **Be at least 18 years of age**
- **Students currently enrolled & working towards their undergraduate degree**
- **Completed 90 quarter hours or 60 semester hours by May 2026**
- **Be in good standing at their current institution of higher learning**
- **Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program must be current with their Agency Dues**
- **Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program must be willing to verify and attest verification of applicants' MSHS Program participation.**

Selection Process

Selection for the NMSHSA Summer Internship Program is based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated potential and leadership
- A can-do attitude and willingness to overcome obstacles and learn from experiences
- A commitment to improve their community

The selection process is highly competitive. Applicants are encouraged to submit a thorough application that illustrates qualifications, character, and a willingness to take on new challenges. It is very important to consider your “CAN DO” attitude. We expect ALL participants to have the right mindset, the right attitude, and the willingness to be flexible and teachable.

Applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee comprised of NMSHSA partners and community leaders. Selected applicants will be contacted by March 18, 2026, to arrange an interview via Zoom. Final selection of internship participants will be notified by April 6, 2026.

Application Requirements

A completed application includes:

1. Completed Application Form
2. A copy of your resume
(No longer than two pages)
3. Two letters of recommendation
4. Signed Code of Conduct Form (please review— will be signed during orientation if you are selected)
5. Completed Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Confirmation Form from your previous MSHS Program.
6. NMSHSA Staff will verify the Programs' status with Agency Dues.

NOTE: The Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Confirmation Form must be completed by the current director of the program you participated in. Please start this process early and contact us if you need assistance. We are happy to help.

The Application Form should be filled out completely. If you need additional space to respond to questions, please attach extra documents to your file or hard copies. Please make sure all your documents have your first and last name. If you need assistance with any aspect of the application, please contact us at internships@nmshsa.org.

The application and all required forms can be found on the NMSHSA website: nmshsa.org

Deadline: January 31, 2026 AT 5 PM ET

Want to read more about our internship? Follow our blog! www.nmshsa.org

ACTIVITIES

Internship

Students will work at their placement sites of placement for 32 hours per week, work at the NMSHSA office 0-8 hours per week, attend all required evening and weekend networking & social events, contribute in weekly open-forums, actively work on improving their writing skills and compose a **minimum of one blog per week**, receive professional programming provided by the NMSHSA Internship and its partners, and participate in other commitments as requested. Additionally, Interns are encouraged to maintain a daily diary, as well as maintain a positive, can-do attitude. A CAN-DO attitude is very important to the staff of the NMSHSA and to the overall success of a students' experience.

Orientation and Tours

Prior to arrival in D.C., selected 2026 Interns and Alumni Interns may share a conference call to help with adjustments. After arrival and housing placement, students will receive an orientation and be taken on a whirlwind tour of Washington, D.C.

Past Internship Activities

- NMSHSA Public Policy Forum
- Capitol Hill meetings
- Tours of the Supreme Court and U.S. Capitol Building
- White House ceremonies
- Site visit to migrant farm camps
- LULAC National Conference

Weekly Forums

Interns will be required to work at their placement site Monday through Thursday. Fridays are set aside for possible work with NMSHSA, staff meetings, educational forums and discussions. Interns will meet weekly with the Internship Program Director and Internship Site Managers to discuss challenges and learning opportunities with additional training and technical assistance provided as necessary. These sessions provide an ideal environment for interns to share and exchange ideas with their cohort peers and community leaders. Activities with other intern groups may also be provided to offer opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and open-ended dialogue on issues of mutual interest.

Additional Activities

Interns will participate in the National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Association Public Policy Forum in Washington, D.C.

HOUSING & TRANSPORTATION

Housing

It is our best intent to place Interns, at no cost to the intern, with a host family in the Washington, D.C. area.

Interns are expected to assimilate with their local family, as best they can. Host families agree to provide appropriate sleeping accommodation, basic living necessities, and some meals. Interns will be responsible for their personal expenses, their entertainment, local transportation expenses (Metro, bus) and their personal meals. Additional expenses should be discussed and arranged with the host family.

If NMSHSA is not able to secure an appropriate Host Family, NMSHSA will make alternative and appropriate arrangements. Interns must be flexible with housing arrangements.

Transportation

The NMSHSA will provide round-trip transportation to Washington, D.C. for selected participants. Interns will work with NMSHSA Staff to determine specific details. Local transportation (Metro, bus) will be the responsibility of the intern. Internship Coordinator or host family will assist interns with navigation of the local transporting system. See Handbook.



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Application

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Email: _____

House Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Permanent Address

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Current Address *(Leave Blank if Same as Above)*

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Emergency Contacts

First Contact Name: _____

Phone: _____ Relationship: _____

Second Contact Name: _____

Current Education Information

Current University or College: _____

Declared Major/Minor: _____

Expected Graduation Date: _____ Number of Hours Completed: _____

Overall GPA: _____ Latest Semester/Quarter GPA: _____

Short Answer Questions *(Limit Answers to 4 to 5 Sentences)*

How do you hope to benefit from the NMSHSA Internship?

How do you see this internship support your educational /professional goals and aspirations?

What qualities and experiences make you the ideal candidate for this internship?

What accomplishment are you the most proud of and why?

Describe the most difficult challenge you faced and how you overcame it.

What do you think is the most crucial element to success?

Please discuss what one of these statements mean to you (just select one):

1. As a potential Latino(a) leader, I believe it is important to pay it forward.
2. What does a CAN-DO Attitude mean to me?



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Code of Conduct

The National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Association (NMSHSA) holds students responsible for knowing the expectations set forth in this document. These expectations exist to facilitate the educational and learning process, and to ensure a safe, fair, and successful experience for all students.

Introduction

Students who participate in the NMSHSA Internship Program are representatives of NMSHSA for the duration of their time in the program. Students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately and respectfully and will abide by the expectations and rules set forth by the NMSHSA, the Program Director, the on-site program supervisor, and their housing hosts. Any student who engages in disrespectful, hostile, or violent behavior that threatens one's self, another person, or the program will be subject to immediate disciplinary action and may be terminated from the program.

Professionalism

Students are expected to act in a professional and ethical manner during the duration of their internship. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Showing up on time for work, meetings, and work events
- Informing the internship supervisor in advance of missed attendances or tardiness
- Using appropriate language in the workplace or at work events
- Dressing appropriately in the workplace or events. We have a very strict DRESS CODE and expectations during the summer internship program. This includes appropriate dress, appropriate hair styles, excessive body art expressions and piercings. Each intern will be subject to these strict expectations during ALL phases of the summer internship program.
- Treating co-workers and co-participants with respect
- Adhering to the internship site policies and guidelines

Appropriate Action

Students participating in a NMSHSA Internship Program are expected to take responsibility for their own actions and will be held accountable for such by the NMSHSA Program Director. Students are expected to abide by the Internship Program Code of Conduct and expectations, the laws and customs that govern the host city and state where they are working, and the policies of the internship host site.

The following are prohibited:

- Violence against others. This is defined as striking or doing any other physical harm to another
- Verbal abuse of individuals at the internship host site, others in association of the Program
- Theft, damage, or vandalism to NMSHSA property, property of internship host families, or of fellow students Disorderly, disruptive, threatening, or intimidating conduct, gestures, or actions
- Drinking or drug use at the workplace or at work events
- Criminal behavior or violation of local laws
- Self-endangerment, including involvement in activities or behavior that could result in personal harm, including, but not limited to frequenting dangerous places, association with criminals, repeated intoxication

_____Initial to indicate you reviewed

Submission of an application implies you agree to the Code of Conduct. A copy will be signed in person during week of orientation. ANY violation of these expectations may result in immediate removal from the program.



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Letters of Recommendation

The selection process of the NMSHSA Internship Program includes the submission of two letters of recommendation from unrelated individuals.

The following criteria will help as the Selection Committee evaluates all the applicants:

1. Begin the letter by stating the nature and length of the relationship with this student. If the student has completed work under your direction (academic or otherwise), this should be noted, as should any contact outside of the classroom you have had with the student.
2. If a current or former academic instructor: describe and evaluate the student's academic work, especially writing assignments and projects. What is the quality or significance of her/his work, and what does it indicate about the student's future and more importantly, their potential.
3. If an employer, coach, or in any other supervisory capacity: describe and evaluate the student's work ethic, her/his capacity for problem-solving, and overall potential for success.
4. Describe the student's personality, disposition, and work ethic. This is one of the only places that the Selection Committee will learn about the student's personality before the internship.
5. The slogan of the internship is "Proven Potential, Providing the Path." Describe how our slogan applies to this student.
6. Any other pertinent information you feel the Selection Committee could use to help get a comprehensive picture of the student and the potential they would bring to the internship.
7. Please limit the letter to no more than two typed pages.

Letters can be mailed or emailed (preferred). The deadline for submitting the letters of **recommendation is: January 31, 2026 at 5 p.m. ET.**

Emailed letters should be emailed to internships@nmshsa.org

Letters can be addressed to Cleo Rodriguez, Jr., Executive Director

For any questions or thoughts, contact Ms. Ilda Martinez at

202-223-9889 or internships@nmshsa.org



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Letter of Confirmation

To be Completed by the Current Director of the Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Program

Name of Student: _____

Last

First

Middle

I, _____, as director or in

Director Name

Phone Number

official capacity, certify that the following student, _____

Applicant

attended the _____ Migrant or Seasonal Head

Name of Grantee

Start Program in _____, _____ Dates of attendance

City

State

were from _____ to _____.

Start Date

End Date

Disclaimer and Signature

I certify that answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. If this application leads to acceptance into the internship program, I understand that false or misleading information in my application may result in my release.

Director Signature: _____

Date: _____ Email: _____