



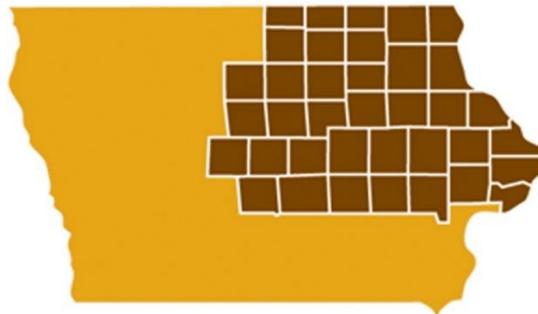
## 2026 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AWARD GUIDELINES

### PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PROGRAM AWARDS

The Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA) was designated by Congress in 1996 in recognition of northeast Iowa's nationally significance resources and heritage related to American agriculture. Within the 37-county area, much of the heritage of America's agricultural revolution still exists and is in need of preservation and interpretation. Iowans and visitors desire opportunities to learn about the farms, the industries, and the people who strive to maintain a safe and wholesome food supply.

SSNHA's Partnership Management Plan calls to preserve and tell the story of American agriculture and its global significance through partnerships and activities that celebrate the land, people, and communities. The agricultural stories of the area are being explored through interpretation of six themes:

- The Fertile Land;
- Farmers and Families;
- The Changing Farm;
- Higher Yields: The Science and Technology of Agriculture;
- Farm to Factory: Agribusiness in Iowa; and
- Organizing for Agriculture: Policies and Politics.



Each theme embodies different features of the area's heritage. Taken together the themes allow visitors to interpret and experience the story in many ways: in small towns and larger cities; along trails and country roads; and on farms, natural areas, local museums and historical buildings.

To help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Management Plan, Silos & Smokestacks, a 501(c) 3 nonprofit, offers matching program awards to provide and leverage funding for new projects across the region that preserve, interpret, and develop heritage resources within these thematic areas and expand visitor experience opportunities, elevating the quality of the heritage area individually and collectively.

Funds for the SSNHA's program awards are federal dollars provided by federal appropriations and administered through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

## INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

Staff is available to assist you with your questions and to discuss your application in advance of its submission. You are encouraged to call early in your proposal development to produce a thorough application. For more information or questions regarding this program award, please contact Laura Elfers, Program Director, at [lelfers@silosandsmokestacks.org](mailto:lelfers@silosandsmokestacks.org) or 319.234.4567.

## GOALS OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AWARD

Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA) established the Internship Program Award to support sites, attractions and events of educational value that focus on America's agricultural stories as it relates to the 37 counties of northeastern Iowa. The following are the goals of the program award:

- Expose interns to the diverse careers related to agriculture and cultural organizations in northeast Iowa and provide opportunities for students to establish positive relationships with various SSNHA heritage sites.
- Provide opportunities for interns to expand his/her experiences and skills and to apply concepts and philosophies learned in the classroom to on-the-job situations.
- Aid SSNHA heritage sites in hiring qualified and enthusiastic interns that offer fresh new perspectives and skills to the heritage site and its mission.
- Enhance the site's agricultural connection through projects that preserve and interpret America's agricultural and agricultural industrial stories and its significance to the nation and the world consistent with the SSNHA Interpretive Plan.

Internship Program Award recipients are required to hire interns **enrolled in college**, including traditional students, non-traditional students, or juniors/seniors in high school.

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants must be a designated Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area heritage site. All applicants must be able to meet matching requirements outlined below.

## ELIGIBLE INTERN PROJECTS

Interns may be hired to complete a specific project such as educational programs, interpretation, marketing, graphic design, preservation, conservation and/or agricultural related. Intern projects proposed must stem from and support development of at least one of the six key interpretive themes as outlined in the SSNHA Interpretive Plan. The six key interpretive themes include The Fertile Land, Farmers and Families, The Changing Farm, Higher Yields: The Science and Technology of Agriculture, Farm to Factory: Agribusiness in Iowa and Organizing for Agriculture: Policies and Politics.

Projects must demonstrate how it will help preserve and interpret America's agricultural and agricultural industrial stories and its significance to the nation and the world. Projects should also provide a valuable experience for the intern, as well as for the site.

*Some preference will be given to applicants who have not received an intern program award the previous year.*

## **ELIGIBLE INTERN TIMEFRAME AND COMPENSATION**

The official internship period for 2026 will be from May through August. Students and Heritage Sites may arrange mutually agreeable beginning and end dates. Interns should work between 240 hours and 480 hours. Interns must be paid at least Federal minimum wage. Applicants may need to consider a higher wage to attract qualified candidates; it is expected that all applicants provide a fair wage to the intern for the scope of work in that community.

## **AWARD RANGE**

Funds are to be used to pay up to 75% of the wages of a summer intern. Maximum award is \$3,000.

## **APPLICANT MATCH REQUIREMENT**

*1:1 Non-federal Match minimum; Match must be 25% Cash minimum and up to 75% In-Kind.*

Applicants must provide 1:1 non-federal match minimum to the funding request. At least 25% of the applicant's contribution must be in cash. Additional match above the 1:1 is allowed.

*Example with minimum match requirements:*

*Expected intern wages: (40 hrs x 12 weeks x \$8/hr) = \$2,880*

*Award request (75% of intern wages): \$2,160*

*Applicant Cash Match: \$540*

*Applicant In-Kind Match: \$1,620*

Projects funded through the SSNHA Internship Program must document the ability to provide matching funds at the time of application. *Please provide a letter signed by the applicant's financial officer or authorized representative, documenting the amount of match funding being contributed to the proposed budget.* This match must come from a source other than federal funds, such as state, local, and/or private funds.

Cash matches require that actual money change hands and must be documented with copies of invoices and cancelled checks. In-kind matches must be directly attributable to the project. Personnel time for employees, volunteers, and consultants as well as contributions of services, materials and supplies are considered in-kind match and must be documented. Applicant match must come from a source other than federal funds, such as state, local, and/or private funds.

All project funds must be expended within the award period. *Under no circumstances should the recipient begin work on the project until the agreement has been signed by both a SSNHA representative and the awardee recipient. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in the revocation of your award.*

## **AWARD CYCLE**

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| January 23, 2026        | Applications due at Noon to the Silos & Smokestacks Office |
| Late February 2026      | Awards announced   |
| Early March- April 2026 | Awarded sites post intern requests with area colleges      |
| May 2026                | Intern begins work at site                                 |
| Late June               | Site visits by SSNHA Staff                                 |
| August 31, 2026         | All internship positions/projects completed.               |
| September 15, 2026      | Last day to submit Final Report                            |

## **AWARDEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Before submitting your application, the authorizing official of the applicant site should review the following awardee responsibilities to determine if the site is able to comply with these requirements.

The awardee is required to:

- Be subject to the provisions of Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirement for Federal Awards (2CFR 200), as applicable.
- Allow inspection of program award records by Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area and authorized federal agencies during the funding period and up to three years following completion of the program award.
- Provide fiscal and final performance reports as requested, including photographs of project and program activities.
- Comply with all applicable laws including but not limited to the following, as applicable:
  - [Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act](#).
  - Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act ([NAGPRA](#))
  - National Environmental Policy Act ([NEPA](#))
  - Americans with Disabilities Act ([ADA](#))
- [Comply with the Davis-Bacon Act](#) for construction contracts over \$2,000.
- Provide certificate of General Liability Insurance (\$1,000,000 per occurrence).
- IRS Letter of Determination of Non-profit Status (if applicable).
- Outdoor sign projects are required to follow the SSNHA Sign Guidelines. (Contact the SSNHA office for a copy).
- Acknowledge SSNHA funding in all printed materials, exhibits, signage, social media or other projects supported by this award by including the Silos & Smokestacks logo and/or "this project is funded in- part by the Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area." When possible, the use of the logo is preferred.

## **PROJECT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

All applicants must fill out the online application form and answer all questions in the space provided.

**All applications must be submitted online by Noon CST on January 23, 2026.**

**I. Application Form** (must be filled out electronically)

Go to <https://www.silosandsmokestacks.org/partner/funding-opportunities/>. At this page you will find the link to fill out the online application form. To save and return to the application later, the applicant must complete the first page. At the top of the consecutive pages will be a gray bar that reads "Save & Continue Survey Later." Click to fill in your email address twice.

Applicants will be emailed a personalized link to your application. **Email will come from Alchemer.**

**Once the application is complete you will be prompted to review all your answers & download a PDF version for your records.**

The signature of the legal representative or highest elected official of the applicant organization is required. By signing the application, the applicant certifies that to the best of their knowledge and belief, data in the application is true and correct, including commitment of local resources; the document has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant; and the applicant will comply with all applicable federal and state requirements, including the above if assistance is approved.

## **II. Budget Form**

The budget should include the intern wage costs charged to the award funds and the intern wage cash match, as well as any intern project costs supported by applicant or third party cash and in-kind contributions. Please attach a Budget Explanation to explain budget items.

*Download and save the Budget Form to your computer through Google Docs. (You do not need an account to do this) Then upload completed Budget Form to the application.*

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA CHECKLIST**

All checklist items should be addressed in the application.

- New or existing program.
- Expected outcomes for project and intern.
- Ties to the SSNHA interpretive themes consistent with SSNHA Interpretive Plan.
- Sustainability of the project beyond internship program funding.
- Clear scope of work and reasonable timeline.
- Anticipated wage.
- Designated supervisor capable of providing guidance for the intern.
- Matching funds for wage.

### **SILOS & SMOKESTACKS REVIEW PANEL AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

In order to maintain the highest standards of fairness in the competition for funding, Silos & Smokestacks operates to avoid any possible conflict of interest. Any member of the Internship Program Review Committee, Partnership Panel and Board of Trustees will abstain from deliberating or voting on any proposal in which he/ she is connected through employment, through service as an unpaid consultant to the project, volunteer or as an officer or other representative.