

GOLDEN LEAF FOUNDATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

For an administrator to help develop and to implement an internship opportunity for recipients of the Golden LEAF Foundation's 4-Year Scholarship

RESPONSES DUE BY NOON, JULY 16, 2021

About the Golden LEAF Foundation

In 1999, the North Carolina General Assembly established The Golden (Long-term Economic Advancement Foundation), Inc. ("Golden LEAF") to administer funds received by the state under the Master Settlement Agreement with tobacco manufacturers. Golden LEAF is governed by Articles of Incorporation that were approved by the General Assembly. For twenty years, Golden LEAF has used its funds to build economic opportunity across North Carolina through leadership in grantmaking, collaboration, innovation, and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation.

Golden LEAF focuses on funding projects that address critical issues facing rural, tobacco dependent, and economically distressed communities in North Carolina. Efforts include educating students and training workers to meet the demands of employers in rural North Carolina; constructing critical infrastructure necessary to create jobs and expand industry; and addressing needs of the agriculture community and developing new markets and opportunities for North Carolina farmers.

Golden LEAF is governed by a 15-member board of directors that is appointed by the North Carolina Governor, Speaker of the House, and President Pro Tem of the Senate. Its staff of 18 is led by President and Chief Executive Officer Scott T. Hamilton. Golden LEAF's office is in Rocky Mount, North Carolina.

The 4-Year Scholarship Program

From its inception, Golden LEAF has awarded scholarships to students from rural North Carolina communities to attend 4-year colleges and universities in North Carolina. For the last several years, the program included two main components:

1. 215 new awards of \$3,000/year (up to \$12,000 over four years) for students to attend a 4-year North Carolina college or university of the student's choice. Golden LEAF contracts with the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA) to manage the program. NCSEAA receives scholarship applications, selects the Golden LEAF scholars using criteria established by Golden LEAF, and administers the scholarship awards. Criteria include that the students are from a rural North Carolina county that is economically distressed or tobacco dependent and express an interest in returning to a rural North Carolina community to work after graduation.
2. An optional leadership development program operated by the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina. Students who participate in the leadership development program are required to identify and complete a summer internship (paid for by Golden LEAF) in a rural North Carolina community. The Center for Creative Leadership also manages the internships, including approving work sites and paying students. This opportunity is open to all interested Golden LEAF scholars (no application required).

Golden LEAF prioritizes internships as a way to connect the scholars to rural North Carolina and help increase the likelihood that, upon college graduation, the scholar will return to rural North Carolina to live and work.

In connection with a recent strategic planning process, Golden LEAF completed an evaluation of the 4-year scholarship program. Data from the evaluation showed that scholars who completed an internship in rural North Carolina were currently employed in rural North Carolina at a higher rate than their peers who did not. As a result of the evaluation and strategic planning process, Golden LEAF is making several changes to the 4-year scholarship program. One of those changes is to offer Golden LEAF scholarship recipients an internship opportunity separately from the leadership development program. The internship will be offered on a competitive basis to all Golden LEAF 4-year scholars completing their freshman, sophomore, or junior years. By separating the rigorous leadership development component from the summer internship opportunity, Golden LEAF anticipates reaching additional students that may not have previously opted into a combined program.

Golden LEAF plans to offer internships through the revised program beginning in the Summer of 2022.

Components of the Revised Internship Opportunity

Golden LEAF is finalizing the details of the revised internship opportunity and will engage the successful candidate selected through this RFP process in that effort. Golden LEAF anticipates that the revised program will include the following key elements:

1. The opportunity will be available to all currently enrolled Golden LEAF scholars who are completing their freshman, sophomore, or junior years. Golden LEAF anticipates that demand will exceed available funds and therefore internships will be offered on a competitive basis. Golden LEAF anticipates awarding approximately 100 internships in the first year. Golden LEAF also expects to increase the number of awards as the program matures. (Students that participated in the Center for Creative Leadership program in past years and who are still enrolled in that program will continue to be eligible to complete an internship through that program.)
2. Internships must be related to the students' courses of study and career plans. Successful applicants will demonstrate an interest in working in a rural North Carolina community after graduation.
3. The program will include a hybrid model in which students can identify an internship site and apply for an internship at that site or apply for an internship from a list of pre-qualified opportunities. Golden LEAF anticipates a range of entities will participate in this program as internship sites including for-profit businesses, nonprofits, and governmental entities. All internship sites must be located in a qualifying rural North Carolina county as determined by Golden LEAF and be approved by the administering entity within guidelines established for the program.
4. The internships will pay a fair wage (using Golden LEAF funds) that will make them attractive to students. They will be of long enough duration to ensure the students have a meaningful experience and an opportunity to earn income during the internship. Golden LEAF expects these to be summer internships. Golden LEAF is considering what other financial assistance beyond the base internship compensation may be critical for the program's success, such as travel, housing, and other allowances.
5. The internship will include a capstone project or paper in which the student assesses the internship experience and how it furthered their education and career plans.
6. The internship opportunity will enable Golden LEAF to deepen its relationships with scholars and with internship sites to enhance Golden LEAF's mission.

Request for Proposals and Scope of Work

Golden LEAF is seeking proposals from qualified organizations to work with Golden LEAF to finalize the new internship opportunity and to administer it. The internship opportunity will be an initiative of Golden LEAF and a component of the Golden LEAF scholarship. Golden LEAF expects the role of the internship administrator to include the following scope of work. (Development of all processes, requirements, guidelines, etc., will be completed in collaboration with Golden LEAF.)

1. Creating an internship application intake, selection, and review process.
 - a. The selection process should include interviews, short essays, or other means of qualitative assessment of a student's capability and match with the proposed internship site and the student's demonstrated commitment to rural North Carolina.
 - b. The selection must allow for a hybrid model in which students secure internships directly or as part of a qualified pool for participating internship sites.
 - c. The selection should consider geographic diversity among scholars.
2. Selection of students to receive the internships and training students regarding the requirements and expectations of the program.
3. Evaluating proposed internship sites to ensure that they will provide an appropriate work experience for the students.
4. Establishing requirements and onboarding processes for internship sites participating in the program and developing reporting forms and guidelines to ensure consistency among the sites. Requirements will include elements such as a scope of work for the internship and commitments to provide appropriate support and supervision to the intern.
5. Providing support and oversight to students as they complete the internship, including regular check-ins with students and internship supervisors during the internship.
6. Establishing opportunities to expose students and internship supervisors to additional programming or resources during the internship to create a relationship among the students, internship sites, and Golden LEAF and to further Golden LEAF's mission to support economic development in rural North Carolina.
7. Developing and managing a process to pay students for hours worked that minimizes burdens on internship sites. If the program includes other compensation, e.g., travel allowances or housing stipends, managing payment of those funds and ensuring their use for approved purposes.
8. In coordination with Golden LEAF, communicating to students, businesses, and other interested parties regarding the internship opportunity, including recruiting businesses to participate in the program.
9. Maintaining relationships with participating internship sites to encourage their continued engagement in the program.
10. Reporting to Golden LEAF regarding the program using metrics and data agreed upon by Golden LEAF and the internship administrator.
11. Undertaking additional or different elements of the internship opportunity agreed to by both the internship administrator and Golden LEAF.

Qualifications

Golden LEAF seeks an administrator with demonstrated understanding of Golden LEAF's mission and with experience managing an internship opportunity or another program that requires similar knowledge, resources, and considerations.

The administrator should also possess the following qualifications:

1. Understanding of and familiarity with college and university internship programs and financial aid offices.
2. Prior experience managing an application process of similar scale anticipated for this program, including design of the process, intake and review of applications, and selection of recipients.
3. Ability to develop rapport with the students and sensitivity to issues that may arise during the student's internship experience, such as ensuring the students have adequate support from supervisors at the internship sites and opportunities to complete meaningful work.
4. Familiarity with legal and practical considerations related to internships, e.g., Fair Labor Standards Act, insurance requirements, educational requirements, etc., or the ability to develop familiarity with those issues.
5. Capacity to develop and manage processes to implement the financial elements of the internships, including to make payments for the hours worked by the interns and any other supportive payments approved.
6. Ability to work with Golden LEAF to communicate with rural North Carolina businesses regarding internships, to help students and businesses learn about the program, and to retain businesses as internship sites in the program.
7. Presence in North Carolina strongly preferred.
8. History of successful operations that indicates it will be able to administer the program in the future as an ongoing initiative of Golden LEAF.

Proposal

Proposals must include the following:

1. **Work plan:** Address at a high level how the applicant would accomplish the elements of the scope of work of the administrator.
2. **Timeline:** A timeline for finalizing the program requirements and application processes and for selecting students and internship sites that would allow the program to offer internships in the Summer of 2022.
3. **Qualifications:** Describe the applicant's relevant qualifications, including expertise, knowledge, and experience conducting similar or related work.
4. **Previous work:** Include examples of work performed that is similar to the proposed role of the administrator.

5. **References:** Include three references of individuals or organizations who can address comparable or relevant work done by the applicant.
6. **Personnel:** Information about the key personnel, whether employees of the applicant or contractors, that the applicant expects to be directly involved in the project and descriptions of their roles and qualifications.
7. **Budget/cost proposal:** A detailed budget for the project and each major component of the project.

Timeline

June 16, 2021	RFP issued
July 16, 2021	NOON - Deadline for submission (see below for details)
July 21, 2021 (approximate)	Finalists selected
July 26-30, 2021 (approximate)	Interviews with finalists (location TBD: virtual or in-person in Rocky Mount, NC)
August 5, 2021 (anticipated)	Selection of administrator (approval by Golden LEAF Board) complete and contract start date

Proposal Evaluation

Golden LEAF will select the proposal that it believes will deliver the highest quality deliverables at the best value. The decision will be made through a competitive process that includes factors such as:

- Qualifications of administrator
- Demonstrated understanding of the objectives of the internship opportunity
- Familiarity with issues related to internship programs
- A work plan that addresses the scope of work for the program
- Background in or demonstrated understanding of Golden LEAF’s mission and work
- Creativity and analytical ability
- Cost effectiveness of proposal

Submission

Complete proposals are due by NOON Eastern time on Friday, July 16, 2021.

Proposals must be submitted by e-mail in .pdf format to Kasey Ginsberg at kginsberg@goldenleaf.org.

Submission by mail, fax, or any method other than e-mail to the address above will not be accepted.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that Golden LEAF received the submission.

Inquiries

Inquiries concerning this RFP should be submitted to Kasey Ginsberg, Director of External Affairs, by Wednesday, July 14, 2021, at kginsberg@goldenleaf.org.

Additional Information

1. All costs incurred in responding to this RFP are the responsibility of the applicant and will not be reimbursed by Golden LEAF.

2. Golden LEAF reserves the right to not select an administrator for this project or to select an administrator for a scope of work that differs from the scope of work described in this RFP.
3. Golden LEAF will negotiate a written contract with the selected administrator.
4. Golden LEAF is subject to the North Carolina General Statutes regarding public records. North Carolina's public records laws open to public inspection most of the records, including emails and other electronic communications, in Golden LEAF's possession. Information regarding certain exceptions to required disclosure of public records applicable to Golden LEAF is [available at this link](#).