



## Internship & Job Shadow Opportunities

*Focused on Orientation & Mobility (COMS/NOMC) and Rehabilitation Teaching (VRT/RTB)*

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) welcomes partnerships with colleges and universities to provide meaningful, hands-on internship and job shadow experiences for students pursuing careers in Orientation & Mobility (O&M) and Rehabilitation Teaching. This document is intended to support faculty in sharing clear, detailed information with students who are exploring internship opportunities with IDB during **Summer 2026** and beyond.

IDB offers a unique, immersive training environment that blends structured instruction, real-world application, and philosophy-driven practice across youth services, independent living, and an adjustment-to-blindness training center.

## Overview of IDB Programs Supporting Internships

Internship and job shadow experiences may be structured across the following functional areas:

- **Orientation Center for the Blind (OCB)** – Adult adjustment-to-blindness training
- **Pre-ETS Programs (LEAP)** – Residential summer programming for blind youth
- **Independent Living (IL) Program** – Community- and home-based instruction for blind adults

Internships may be customized to meet certification, academic, and professional requirements, with flexibility in scheduling, duration, and focus area.

## Summer 2026 Youth Programming Overview (LEAP)

**Leadership Education and Advocacy Program (LEAP)** is IDB's flagship Pre-ETS **8-week residential summer program** for blind youth. College interns gain extensive exposure to real-world instruction, incidental learning, and student-centered skill development.

## Key Program Details

- **Program Start Date:** June 7, 2026
- **Staff Training & Onboarding:** Begins approximately **May 17, 2026**
- **Student Participation:** Approximately **15–25 youth** throughout the summer



- **Intern Level:** Undergraduate and graduate students with an interest in blindness services
- **Length of Participation:** Students may attend **one session or multiple sessions**, depending on interest and availability

## **Summer 2026 Program Structure**

### **June 8 – June 21 | “Sky’s The Limit”**

- Facilitated by Sky’s The Limit Communications
- Focus on confidence building, blindness skills, self-advocacy, and workforce readiness
- High level of movement and travel—particularly valuable for O&M interns

### **June 22 – June 26 | “Forensic Science: An Accessible Murder Mystery”**

- Facilitated by Independence Science
- Students use forensics science to investigate and solve a CSI-style crime!
- Hands-on STEM instruction

### **June 28 – July 2 | “Health, Nutrition, and Science: Using Knowledge for a Healthier Life”**

- Facilitated by Independence Science
- Students learn about the science behind and the importance of nutrition and physical fitness.
- Hands-on STEM instruction

### **July 5 – July 11 | Program Break**

### **July 13 – July 26 | Music Performance & Production Camp**

- Facilitated by the Filomen M. D’Agostino Greenberg Music School (NYC)
- Focus on composition, production, music theory, and career exploration
- Field experiences include recording studios and civic venues

### **July 27 – August 8 | “Together, We LEAP Higher!”**

- Application of skills learned throughout the summer
- Increased focus on direct instruction and independent skill practice

### **August 8 | Student Awards & Celebration**

## **Residential Experience**



- Dorm-style housing with shared bathrooms
- Emphasis on rapport building, incidental learning, and independent living skills
- Evening and weekend recreation provides prime opportunities for 1:1 interaction between interns and students

## **Internship Opportunities Within Youth Programming**

### **Role of O&M and Rehabilitation Teaching Interns**

Interns may:

- Provide direct 1:1 or small-group instruction
- Offer in-the-moment O&M coaching during daily activities
- Support travel training (bus use, community navigation, campus tours)
- Assist with evening/weekend activities and individualized projects
- Collaborate with youth on side projects aligned with student interests and goals

Interns gain exposure to both structured instruction and organic, real-time teaching moments that mirror professional practice.

### **Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)**

IDB's youth programming aligns with Pre-ETS requirements, serving clients ages 14–21.

- Pre-ETS funding represents approximately 15% of Vocational Rehabilitation budgets
- Intern time and services are already tracked in Workday by division
- Funding and payroll coordination are supported by IDB leadership
- Compensation Range: Approximately \$20–\$21 per hour, depending on role and qualifications

### **Orientation & Mobility Internship Proposal (Independent Living Program)**

The IDB Independent Living (IL) Program serves approximately 239 clients in Polk and Dallas Counties. IL Case Managers / Rehabilitation Teachers actively support O&M interns seeking certification hours and applied field experience.

### **Proposed Internship Structure**

- **Total Weekly Hours:** 25 hours
  - **13 hours:** Orientation Center for the Blind (OCB)



- **12 hours:** Independent Living (IL) Program
- **Primary Supervisors:**
  - Mark Edge
  - Alyssa Munstermann
  - Veronica Gillmore

### **Independent Living (IL) Component**

- Intern assigned approximately 18 IL clients over time
- Typical schedule: Monday–Wednesday, 12:30–4:30 PM (flexible)

### **Sample Daily Schedule (12 hours/week):**

- 12:30–1:00 PM – Travel to client
- 1:00–2:00 PM – Client training
- 2:00–2:30 PM – Travel
- 2:30–3:30 PM – Client training
- 3:30–4:00 PM – Return travel
- 4:00–4:30 PM – Case notes/documentation

Additional client hours may be added if certification requirements require more time.

### **Instructional Focus Areas**

Interns may support instruction in:

- Basic cane travel skills
- Use of local and public transportation
- Navigating public spaces (malls, government buildings, campuses)
- Controlled and uncontrolled street crossings
- Reinforcing and supplementing individualized O&M plans

Interns collaborate closely with IL Case Managers to understand each client's individualized plan, prior training, and instructional goals.

### **Documentation Expectations**

- Training and case notes are expected for all client interactions
- Daily completion is best practice
- Notes must be submitted within 10 business days of each session

### **Orientation Center for the Blind (OCB)**



The Orientation Center provides intensive adjustment-to-blindness training for adults. An O&M intern may spend half or full days providing direct 1-on-1 cane travel instruction to adult clients in a structured center-based environment.

This setting allows interns to:

- Deepen instructional skills
- Apply structured teaching methodologies
- Gain experience with adult learners adjusting to blindness

### **Integrated Internship Model**

IDB proposes a blended internship experience, allowing students to:

- Spend half of each day providing instruction at the Orientation Center for the Blind
- Spend the remaining time supporting Youth Programs (LEAP) and/or the Independent Living Program

This integrated model offers:

- Exposure to multiple service populations
- Balanced structure and flexibility
- Robust preparation for professional practice in blindness services

Internships and job shadow experiences at the Iowa Department for the Blind are designed to be immersive, philosophy-driven, and deeply practical. Students leave with hands-on experience, strong professional mentorship, and a comprehensive understanding of blindness training across the lifespan.

Faculty are encouraged to share this opportunity with students pursuing careers in Orientation & Mobility and Rehabilitation Teaching who are seeking meaningful, high-impact field experiences.

For additional information or to discuss internship alignment with academic programs, please contact the Iowa Department for the Blind.