

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.