
\$330K GRANT TO BOOST INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES



January 29, 2025

Student interns will help to meet workforce needs in Venango and Clarion counties thanks to a grant from the McElhattan Foundation.

Pennsylvania Western University has received a three-year, \$332,000 grant from the McElhattan Foundation to enhance student internship experiences and meet workforce needs in Clarion and Venango counties.

The three-year grant will provide stipends for PennWest students pursuing paid or unpaid internships in those counties. Additionally, it will fund a new internship program coordinator position in the [Career Center](#), based at the PennWest Clarion campus.

PennWest will partner with regional chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, non-profit organizations and businesses to place qualified students in positions that address workforce needs.

"Internships play a critical role in students' career readiness by providing skill development and networking opportunities. However, two common barriers are the lack of competitively paid internships and support for small businesses and organizations interested in hosting interns. This generous grant from the McElhattan Foundation helps PennWest address those barriers," said Rhonda Gifford, executive director of experiential learning and employer engagement.

The [McElhattan Foundation](#) has strong connections to Clarion and Venango counties, particularly the communities of Knox and Franklin. The foundation prioritizes initiatives to foster economic growth and enhance the local environment to ensure that both towns flourish.

"The McElhattan Foundation is proud to collaborate with PennWest University to create this initiative, which aligns with our mission to foster economic growth and provide meaningful opportunities for young professionals in Clarion and Venango counties," said Sarah Pistella, Program Officer at the McElhattan Foundation.

"By investing in students and equipping local organizations with the resources to host internships, we aim to strengthen the workforce and ensure these communities continue to thrive."