

Working at a Nonprofit and Working Virtually

What to expect at a small, mission-driven organization, and the habits that make remote interns successful.

1 What it is like to work at a nonprofit

- **The mission comes first.** Nonprofits exist to serve the public, not to generate profit for owners. Most rely on paid staff as well as volunteers, and they operate professionally [1].
- **At a small nonprofit, you wear many hats.** There is not a separate department for every task, so you see how communications, fundraising, programs, and operations connect. That variety means you need to prioritize carefully [2].
- **Resources are limited, and decisions move quickly.** Small teams have fewer layers of approval. That means less time for second chances, so check your own work before you submit it [3].
- **Accountability is public.** Nonprofits must continually earn the trust of the communities and donors they serve. As an intern, you represent NVEEE in every email, post, and meeting [4].
- **The work can be meaningful and demanding.** Mission-driven work can be rewarding and emotionally heavy, especially when it involves young people. Take care of yourself and ask for support when you need it [5].
- **It is strong career preparation.** You build the skills employers look for, including communication, teamwork, technology, and professionalism, which includes being dependable, prepared, and accountable [6]. Completing a project from start to finish is one of the best ways to prepare for any career [7].

At NVEEE

Interns help with real work across the organization and do so under the supervision of NVEEE staff and the Executive Director. You are expected to treat the internship as a professional commitment: meet deadlines, communicate early, and ask questions.

2 How to work virtually

Communicate more than you think you need to

- Confirm when you receive a message and share your progress without being asked [8]
- Be as reachable from home as you would be in an office [9]
- Use the team's tools: email for formal messages, Slack for quick questions, Asana for tasks [10]
- Write down decisions and next steps in one shared place [11]

Ask questions and get feedback

- Ask questions early and often; coworkers cannot see when you are stuck [11][13]
- Schedule regular check-ins and ask how you can improve [8]

Manage your time

- Keep consistent working hours and treat them as seriously as an office job [13]

Slack habits

- Do not send a message that only says “hi”; include your full question
- Reply in threads, and react to show you have seen a message
- Keep work conversations in channels when possible [12]

- Set goals with your supervisor and track what you complete [10]
- Record your hours accurately in Clockify [9]

Set up your workspace

- Use a quiet space reserved for work, with good light [11]
- Place your screen at or slightly below eye level [11]

3 Video meetings and virtual interviews

Every meeting

- Join on time with your camera on
- Stay muted unless you are speaking [14]
- Look into the camera, not at yourself [14]
- Use a clean background and silence notifications [14]
- Keep side conversations out of the chat [14]

Your interview setup

- Test the same device and platform you will use [15]
- Put soft light in front of you, not behind you [15][16]
- Frame your head and shoulders at eye level [16][17]
- Close extra tabs before sharing your screen [16]
- If your connection drops, rejoin and email internship@nveee.org right away [16][17]

4 Build relationships and protect your time

- Use video calls to get to know your teammates, not only to discuss tasks [11].
- Ask staff and other interns you can learn from for a short conversation, and thank people who help you [8].
- Log off when your shift ends, let the people you live with know your working hours, and prioritize your health [11][13][10].

Sources and further reading

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