

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Isaac Stephens

Graduation Semester & Year: Spring '26
Semester & Year of Internship: Spring '24

Major: Political Science

Minor: Spanish

Hometown: North Huntingdon, PA

Hobbies: Piano, singing, reading

Campus Activities: President of Student Government Association (SGA), Community Assistant (CA) for University Courts

Future Plans/Career Goals: I hope to have some type of government career, either in local government or as a lawyer.



- **Internship (company/your title):**

Borough of Swissvale/Budget & Finance Intern

- **How did you find your internship?**

I found this internship through a great company called the Local Government Academy. They help college students get connected with municipal internships and have connections with over 20 municipalities around western Pennsylvania.

- **What were your duties?**

My main focus in Swissvale was revamping their annual budget into a comprehensive, narrative budget that was easier for residents to understand. I spent time examining how the borough allocates funds, analyzing budgets from other municipalities, and brainstorming ways to help the general public understand how their tax dollars are spent.

- **How many hours per week were you at your internship site?**

I worked full-time, 8:30-4:30 Monday-Friday.

- **What did you enjoy most about your internship?**

I really enjoyed how down-to-earth it felt. My last internship was focused on looking at national trends and thinking in a broader scale. In contrast, local government is very people-focused and making sure your community is protected and cared for. Everyone in the office had a great sense of community and looked out for the residents of Swissvale.

- **What was the most difficult aspect of the internship?**

The most difficult aspect was how independent the internship was. Every internship supervisor is different; some will give daily or weekly tasks and check in often to see how your work is coming. In this position, I was given a large task and it was up to me to pace myself and make sure it got done on time. I learned so much from that but it took some getting used to.

- **How did your experience at UPG and in the Business Management department prepare you for your internship?**

I was connected with Local Government Academy because of the UPG Internship Coordinator Kristen Stratton. We met in January and she gave me tons of great options for places to look into. I settled on LGA and it's been a great experience.

(cont.)

- **How has your internship prepared you for a career?**

My internship in Swissvale has prepared me for a career by giving me a thorough look into local government. I got to experience all the little details of the work and came out knowing so much more about how it works. It also gave me career perspective and I could definitely see myself working in local government one day!

- **What recommendations do you have for other students about doing an internship?**

If you're interested in government work, Local Government Academy is a great resource. You can apply to their Municipal Intern Program like I did, or look at the other resources they have for learning about local government work. Also, start looking for internships earlier in the semester than you would think! Applications for more competitive positions close much earlier than you would assume, so be preemptive.

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