



CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health

Student Intern Job Description

Posting Date: *May 8, 2026*

Position Title: Community Food Access Research Intern

Center: Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health, Case Western Reserve University, School of Medicine **Location:** Cuyahoga County, Ohio (*Field-based, five zip codes: 44102, 44104, 44105, 44109, 44111*) **Duration:** June – July 2026 **Hours:** Minimum 10 hours/week (*additional hours may be available*) **Compensation:** *Voluntary* **Number of Positions:** 8–10 students (*deployed in pairs*)

About the Center

The Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health at Case Western Reserve University accelerates pathways to vibrant and healthy environments through collaborative research, immersive training, and authentic community engagement. This internship is part of the Center's engagement with the **Cuyahoga County Hunger Response Team**, formed in response to federal legislative changes affecting food access across the county.

Background & Context

The passage of **House Resolution 1 (the "One Big Beautiful Bill")** has introduced significant new SNAP eligibility, reporting, and administrative requirements that are expected to affect thousands of families across Cuyahoga County. In response, a county-wide Hunger Response Team was convened to assess community impact and develop actionable policy recommendations.

This internship places students at the center of that response effort, conducting direct field research with food retailers in the five Cuyahoga County zip codes with the highest SNAP utilization trends.

Position Overview

Interns will work in **pairs** to conduct in-person outreach and data collection at grocery stores, corner stores, farmers markets, and other food retail establishments. The goal is twofold:

1. **Raise awareness** among food retailers about changes to SNAP eligibility so they can better educate and support their customers
2. **Gather retailer feedback** on the supports and resources they need to remain financially viable as SNAP enrollment is expected to decline

Interns will be trained before entering the field and will contribute to a final summary of findings that will directly inform county-level policy recommendations.

Key Responsibilities

- Attend required pre-field training on SNAP policy changes, data collection protocols, and community engagement best practices
 - Conduct in-store visits with food retailers across the five target zip codes
 - Facilitate structured conversations and/or surveys with store owners, managers, and staff
 - Document retailer feedback, concerns, and resource needs accurately and consistently
 - Participate in regular team check-ins to share field observations and troubleshoot challenges
 - Contribute to the synthesis and summary of findings to support policy recommendations for Cuyahoga County
 - Maintain professionalism, cultural sensitivity, and confidentiality throughout all community interactions
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Qualifications

Required:

- Must be 18 years old or older
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively in a field-based environment
- Reliable transportation or ability to travel within Cuyahoga County zip codes
- Availability for a minimum of **10 hours per week**, June through July 2026. This work will occur on Tuesdays and Wednesday from 9am – 1pm each day.

Preferred:

- Background or coursework in public health, social work, urban studies, nutrition, sociology, political science, or a related field
 - Experience with community outreach, qualitative research, or data collection
 - Familiarity with SNAP or federal food assistance programs
 - Bilingual or multilingual skills (*especially Spanish*) are a plus given the communities served
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Learning Outcomes

By the end of this internship, students will be able to:

- Describe the policy implications of HR1 on food access and SNAP participation in urban communities
 - Apply field research and community engagement methods in real-world settings
 - Analyze qualitative data to identify themes and inform actionable recommendations
 - Communicate findings to stakeholders in written and verbal formats
 - Demonstrate professional skills in cross-sector collaboration and community-centered research
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How to Apply

Interested students should submit the following to **Dr. Darcy Freedman** at daf96@case.edu:

- A brief statement of interest (*no more than one page*) describing your background and why you are interested in this role.
- A current resume or CV.
- Availability for June–July 2026.
- Statement that you understand this is a voluntary position.
- Statement about your access to a vehicle that could be used to could field visits. Mileage will be reimbursed.

Please include the following in the subject line for your application: First Name Last Name Application (e.g., Darcy Freedman Application)/

*Review of applications will begin May 22, 2026. We encourage early submissions as positions are limited. Incomplete applications will **not** be considered.*