



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Office of the Deputy Director for Management and Administration
1849 C Street NW
MS-2713-MIB
Washington, DC 20240

BUSINESS PLAN INTERNSHIP 2021

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SUMMARY

The Business Management Group (BMG) is seeking project proposals for its Business Plan Internship (BPI) program during the summer of 2021. Through this highly competitive program, the BMG matches top graduate school students in business, public policy, and environmental management programs with NPS leaders seeking to strategically address some of their most pressing organizational and operational challenges within parks and programs. Upon successfully completing the internship and their graduate school program, participants earn direct hire authority eligibility for positions within the National Park Service.

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The National Parks Business Plan Internship (BPI) is designed to promote the long-term health of national parks through the development of improved financial planning and analytical management tools.

Over the past 20 years, graduate students from leading business, public policy, and environmental management schools have served as management consultants in select national park units, regional offices, and Washington program offices during an 11-week summer period. The NPS Business Management Group (BMG) manages the program in conjunction with Inspiring Capital, an organization dedicated to connecting talented business professional degree students and high-potential, purpose driven organizations.

Over the course of 11 weeks, consultant teams (typically teams of two or three) work with a BMG project manager and NPS staff to complete business analysis and planning in order to develop strategies that address a park's most pressing business or operational challenges. Parks and programs with which they have worked attest that BPI consultants are highly capable, provide insightful analysis, and bring energy and a valuable outside perspective to their projects.

BPI summer consultants are available to work on several different types of projects. While park-wide business plans were traditionally the core offering, recently BPI projects have comprised of targeted financial and operational analyses, commercial service strategies, fleet studies, etc. Projects may focus on a single division or program area and need not be parkwide. The BMG also accepts proposals that combine a traditional business plan with discrete management analysis modules.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Since the program's inception, BPI teams have completed over 200 projects across the country. Parks and program offices that have hosted BPI teams express a high degree of satisfaction with the program and the project outcomes. According to exit surveys conducted in recent years, respondents overwhelmingly recommend that other parks or program offices participate in the BPI program.

In 2020, BPI consultants worked to,

- Develop a marketing and operations plan for Scotty's Castle (DEVA)
- Reevaluate reimbursable water utility charges and expenses (GRCA)
- Optimize entrance fee and permitting operations (GRTE)
- Identify areas where resource sharing would address park needs at three units (JECA/MORU/WICA)
- Develop a sustainable asset investment plan and leasing plan (MIMA)

- Align park and partner operations with budgets, reducing expenses and increasing revenue (PERL)
- Identify region-wide bandwidth needs and develop a connectivity playbook (Region 6,7,8)

As evidenced above, project topics go far beyond traditional business plans. Past projects have also included market/financial analysis, new lands operational and cost impact forecasting, deferred maintenance strategies, funding strategy development for parks with multiple revenue sources, and financial modeling projects.

Example BPI products can be provided by contacting the program lead, Stephen Thompson (stephen_r_thompson@nps.gov) for more information.

PROGRAM COSTS

The Business Management Group, in conjunction with its partner Inspiring Capital, will provide for:

- Summer consultants’ salary, travel to and from the park, and training expenses
- Graphic design for public documents resulting from summer projects

The host park or program office commits to providing:

- Park staff travel to training in early June, location TBD
- Housing, office space, vehicle access for work-related travel, and IT support. If park housing is not available, the park, program, or regional office may provide funds directly to our partner through our cooperative agreement to rent suitable housing in the nearby community. Access to a GSA/pool vehicle for work purposes is critical, especially in remote areas
- Printing of the final business plan or other public documents, if necessary. Costs typically range from \$1,000 to \$3,500, depending on the number of copies printed

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

We welcome project proposals from parks, as well as from regional and Washington program offices. **Please review key dates and requirements for participation on the [BPI Logistical Requirements](#) document and then complete the [BMG Project Proposal Form](#).** For reference, we have provided [sample BPI project proposals](#) to assist parks or programs to draft compelling project submissions. The parks and programs we select for summer projects generally have base budgets greater than \$1.5 million. However, we are able to work directly with a limited number of smaller parks outside of the summer season and we encourage parks with budgets under \$1.5 million to submit project proposals at this time as well.

Project requests are due to the BMG no later than Monday, January 11, 2021. Parks and programs should consult with their regional contact(s) for the BPI program before submitting a proposal. Regional offices and Washington program offices should submit project requests directly to the BMG through the [BMG Project Proposal Form](#). The BMG will finalize the list of projects by late February, following a vetting period.

REGIONAL CONTACTS

Region	Contact	Region	Contact
Region 1	Alexa Molnar	Regions 6, 7, & 8	Robin Martin Nicole Koehlinger
Region 1 - NCA	Dawn O’Sickey	Regions 9, 10, & 12	Katariina Tuovinen
Region 2	Ed Buskirk	Region 11	Christina Caswell Joel Hard
Regions 3, 4, & 5	Connie Dworak		

PROJECT SELECTION

Project selection is competitive; we routinely receive twice as many proposals as we have the capacity to accept. BPI project proposals will be evaluated based on the ability of the park or program to meet the BPI logistical requirements; ability of the park or program management team to support the project team and implement its recommendations;

alignment of the project content with Deputy Director for Management and Administration and regional leadership priorities; and fit into a topically and geographically balanced summer project portfolio.

Off-season BMG project proposals will be evaluated based on the ability of the park or program management team to support the project team and implement its recommendations; alignment of the project content with Deputy Director for Management and Administration and regional leadership priorities; and BMG staff capacity.

MORE INFORMATION

Link to the BMG Project Proposal Form [HERE](#). (This is the same link as above.)

We will be hosting a webinar for interested parks and programs to learn more about the program and what makes a good project proposal. The webinar is scheduled for Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 1pm EST / 10:00am PST. [Register here](#) to receive more details and a calendar invitation.

Please contact Stephen Thompson, BPI Program Lead (email: stephen_r_thompson@nps.gov; mobile: 202-821-3318), if you have any questions.