

Interns make it happen!

Helix Water District presents programs, tours, and provides materials for teachers and students free of charge within the District's boundaries. Additionally, it also provides access to historical records to student and adult researchers.

The education program serves between 8,000 – 10,000 students every year. It isn't magic that makes this happen, but dedicated, hardworking Helix staff members—particularly the professionally trained Public Affairs Interns.

Helix' Public Affairs intern program is really three-fold. First, it allows the District to expand educational offerings to classrooms, researchers, and tour groups. Secondly, it provides opportunities for university students to experience teaching in a classroom environment and on tours. Finally, Helix interns leave the District well grounded in water history, conservation, water quality, watershed protection, and the political issues surrounding the water industry in California. The education *they* experience as interns gives them the background and information to assist them in whatever their chosen field—teaching, research, environmental studies, public affairs within/outside government, etc.

Over the past five years the Public Affairs Department has had a combination of paid and unpaid interns who have taken on responsibilities in a variety of ways within the department and preformed outstanding service to the District and its ratepayers.

Unpaid Interns Inventory the Historical Collection

Leah Kuntz and Amy Suelzle, both students in the University of San Diego's Department of History, provided an invaluable service to the District by assisting the Public Affairs Department with its ongoing efforts to inventory, catalog, and archivally store the District's immense collection of historical documents, maps, and photos. Because of their untiring efforts, eighteen shelves of documents have been properly housed and inventoried in a searchable database, and fourteen flat file drawers have been inventoried, put into a database, and the most durable of the District's historical maps and charts have been scanned and are available to researchers in an electronic format.



Paid Interns Deliver Educational Services to Classrooms and Give Tours

Helix Water District extensive in-class water education program depends on highly trained staff members. The intern-training program prepares upper level and graduate students to go into classrooms, K – 8, where they give students age-appropriate, State Content Standard-correlated, hands-on water education programs. Additionally, interns deliver the water quality program housed in the 5th Grade tour of the R.M. Levy Water Treatment Plant.



For the past five years, Helix' hardworking interns have delivered materials to teachers, prepared classroom materials, and represented the District at community events.

Each year, Helix hires two or three upper division or graduate students to fill these positions. Working around school schedules is sometimes a challenge, but flexibility in scheduling program presentations has allowed Helix to maximize the interns' potential. Helix' program has been so successful that a number of interns have determined they will become teachers. One has taken a Masters Degree in Environmental Planning, and several others have found that Public Affairs is their real calling.



Helix is proud to have had the following interns and looks forward to the new ones that will train here over the coming years: Meghan Streeter, Korie Norris, Brianna Randall, Carla Firato, Sara Heintzelman, Vanessa Roland, Cinnamon McIntosh, Gaylynn Slaughter, Lindsay Record, Jen Barno, Katie Hayford, and Ken Colburn.