



# HIGHER GROUND

CTRS Internship Manual

## Welcome to Higher Ground!

Since our establishment in 1999, we have been an industry leading organization, using innovative and efficacious methods to effect positive, lasting change for our diverse participants. We are constantly striving to develop and maintain programs to help our participants shift perspective and achieve their highest possible quality of life. To reach these goals, we look to our interns to seek out effective models that are participant centered and evidence-based, driven by our core values.

### **Pre-Internship Responsibilities:**

- Respond to internship offer with acceptance letter acknowledging:
- Beginning and ending dates
- A statement of expectations (intern goals)
- Verify that your college/ university has a legal agreement with Higher Ground
- Complete all requirements for your college/ university
- You must pass a background check to be eligible to intern with Higher Ground. You will also need to participate in SafeSport training and provide a certificate of completion from the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

## Agency Information



At Higher Ground, we believe in the transformative power of recreational therapy to improve lives. Through carefully crafted activities and outdoor experiences we give people the tools to build skills for daily success, find strength in community, and reignite joy in life.

- Higher Ground began its journey in 1999 as Sun Valley Adaptive Sports. The winter brought the first season of ski lessons, and the summer brought the first season of camp, serving the local population with developmental disabilities.
- Currently, the **Veteran/First Responder Program** conducts 28 weeklong Therapeutic Recreation programs for Veterans/First Responders and their spouses. These programs are offered throughout the US. Additionally, CRU (Community Resiliency Unit) was instituted to provide Alumni and other Veterans/First Responders with recreation opportunities where they reside.
- The **Adaptive Sports Program** is based primarily in Sun Valley and the surrounding areas. These programs serve any person with a permanent disability. Activities include adaptive mountain biking, Healthy Lifestyles, golf, climbing, bocce ball, social outings, camping, and water sports. In the winter season, Higher Ground is the sole provider of adaptive snow sport lessons for Sun Valley Resort.

Higher Ground is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, funded by the generous monetary and in-kind donations of local and national sponsors.

## Internship Site Supervisors



Kayla Pedrolini, CTRS 64460  
Director of Adaptive Sports



Coty Clore, CTRS 85438  
Adaptive Program Manager



Brienne Costa, CTRS 46477  
Snr. Program Manager of Veteran/First Responder  
Programs



Sarah Butler, CTRS 86824  
Adaptive Program Manager

## Location Information

The Wood River Valley is a scenic region in south-central Idaho, known for outdoor recreation, tourism, and towns like Ketchum, Sun Valley, Hailey and Bellevue. Near the famous Sawtooth Mountains, year round recreation opportunities are easily accessible.

Higher Ground has a main office in Ketchum, with a warehouse located in Hailey. Most winter programs are based in Ketchum, while summer programs happen throughout the valley.

### **Important Addresses:**

**Higher Ground Main Office:** 100 Leadville Ave. Suite 100, Ketchum, ID 83340

**Higher Ground Warehouse:** 4131 Glenbrook Dr. Hailey, ID 83333

## Compensation & Housing

With lift passes in the winter, access to the YMCA, and a multitude of other adventures in the summer, there are certainly plenty of perks that come along with the hard work of an internship with HG!

HG offers a modest stipend of \$500 to interns that is distributed amongst pay checks received twice each month. While it is a small perk, it will not cover many of your expenses.

HG does not currently provide housing for interns but does provide a \$300/month stipend to assist in the cost. Some assistance and recommendations can be provided for those searching for housing from a distance.

## Internship Overview

Higher Ground's Recreational Therapy Internship program consists of a summer or winter 14–15-week session. You will primarily be assigned to a supervisor within our Adaptive Sports team, but you may be asked to facilitate or participate in other recreational therapy programs within Higher Ground overall.

In the summer, your schedule may include outdoor recreation programs such as hiking, biking, water sports, camping, climbing, golf, and fishing with our local populations and partners. These programs can include overnights and/or weekend activities.

In the winter, your schedule will include participating in and/or instructing snow sports lessons including but not limited to adaptive skiing, snowboarding, ski biking, Nordic, and snowshoeing.

Dependent upon timing and funding, there may also be an opportunity to assist with a week-long program within the Veteran/First Responder team. Regardless, you will be able to spend time with the Recreational Therapists in those programs to learn some of the job duties and skills necessary to operate within that realm.

### **Intern Job Description & Responsibilities:**

Under the supervision of a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS), the Recreational Therapy Intern will provide assistance to the HG Adaptive Team with potential opportunity to assist the

Veteran/First Responder team through all aspects of the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation (APIE) process.

HG Recreational Therapy Intern will be expected to: perform as an integral part of HG Adaptive team; form professional relationships with participants, staff, volunteers, and board members; track own hours for NCTRC (National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification) internship requirements; and complete midterm and final self-evaluations. Specific duties will be determined as appropriate, but may include the following: assessments; planning and implementation of lessons and programs; database operations; co- and lead facilitation of activities, adaptive sport lessons, and other therapeutic initiatives; documentation of client goals, interactions, and progress; contribution to, and composition of, post-program summaries and After Action Reviews; potential hands-on support with veteran/first responder program events; completion of a special project and case study.

## Intern Expectations

- Complete a minimum of 560-hour, 14-week internship with HG. In any case where program dates require an internship of a different length, this will be mutually agreed prior to the acceptance of the position.
- As an intern you are considered one of the staff, always remember that participants' positive experience comes first and foremost.
- Contribute to the cleanliness of the office, alternate workspaces, and warehouse.
- Help maintain the integrity and organization of all program equipment- always put back clean, intact and where you originally found it. Check out equipment according to Higher Ground policies as directed by the manager of Operations.
- Show up on time or early to all activities, meetings, and programs. You are allowed to take personal breaks, but please check in with your supervisor before taking these breaks to ensure that all other program responsibilities have been completed.
- Follow all HIPPA guidelines ensuring that the confidentiality of all HG participants is respected.
- Contact your supervisor if you are sick, going to be late, have an appointment, or need to arrange time off. Time off must be cleared with supervisor at least 2 weeks in advance.
- Be prepared for established weekly meetings with your supervisor.
- Do all school assignments in a timely manner and share them with your supervisor.
- Track all hours and be personally responsible for completing all NCTRC forms and university required forms.
- Provide open, honest, assertive, and constructive feedback to your supervisor; taking personal responsibility to ensure educational needs are met.
- Do all HG assignments in a timely manner and be responsible for showing your supervisor; if duties cannot be accomplished, you will inform your supervisor prior to deadline.
- Always maintain a professional appearance (see Employee Handbook) keeping in mind that even outside of Higher Ground, you represent Higher Ground within the community.
- Be kind and courteous, maintaining a professional relationship with all HG staff, participants, and stakeholders.

- Failure to do any of the above-mentioned tasks will be reflected on your pass or fail grade, or immediate termination of internship.

## Internship Goals & Outcomes

- Apply academic knowledge of therapeutic recreation in a practice setting.
- Develop clinical practice skills and abilities under the guidance of a professionally certified practitioner of therapeutic recreation.
- Assess and expand the students' competencies in therapeutic recreation.
- Acquire an in-depth understanding of how therapeutic recreation fits into health and human service delivery systems.
- Develop and practice ethical and professional behaviors in a work setting.
- Develop an understanding of critical issues related to the practice of therapeutic recreation

## Intern Qualifications

- Working toward undergraduate or graduate degree in Recreational Therapy or related field.
- Completion of Idaho State background check & valid driver's license
- Basic computer processing skills including MS office required
- Clear written and verbal communication skills
- Experience with recreation programming for people of all abilities
- Ability to give and receive feedback in a positive manner
- Commitment to all responsibilities and expectations
- Can-do attitude, willingness to step outside comfort zone, motivated, self-starting
- Experience with people with physical and/or cognitive disabilities is preferred
- Experience with seasonal recreational activities preferred

## Schedule & Weekly Overview

### Hours and Days:

In accordance with NCTRC standards, each recreational therapy intern will be scheduled for a minimum of 14 weeks, aligning with the season's program schedule. During that time, the recreational therapy intern will be expected to work 40-45 hours per week during normal office hours (8a-5p, Mon-Fri), with some evenings, weekends, and holidays. HG utilizes a hybrid working environment, which means that the location of work performed outside of direct programming can be flexible with supervisor approval. If you are selected to assist with Veteran/First Responder programming, these programs may be working hours up to 75hrs in one week and require travel. You will be allotted ample time off after the program to rest and recover.

## ATRA Intern Responsibilities

- NCTRC currently defines the minimum length of the internship as a full-time continuous, fourteen-week period of time of at least 560 hours of supervised practice. ATRA recommends that the internship be a fifteen week, 600 hour experience.

- During the internship:
  - Develop a professional relationship with the site supervisor, agency, staff and clients.
  - Follow the agency's performance schedule and complete all assignments of the agency and of the academic program in a timely manner.
  - Acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities for practicing therapeutic recreation as an entry-level therapist by following the agency's performance schedule with increasing autonomy.
  - Participate actively in clinical supervision.
  - Complete the self-assessment document provided by the agency.
  - Establish goals for the internship, referring to the agency and university requirements, self-assessment, and other sources.
  - Attend weekly supervisor sessions to discuss both intern and supervisor's concerns, frustrations, problems, highlights, and/or general exchange of ideas.
  - Evaluate one's own progress throughout the internship by keeping a log and discussing with staff. Participate in mid-term evaluation with site supervisor.
  - Students should not be left to administer programs on their own until they have acquired the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to succeed.
- At the end of the internship:
  - Complete a self-evaluation.
  - Evaluate the site supervisor's performance and the overall plan for internships at the agency.
  - Complete closure with clients and staff.
  - Return all agency property, including such items as keys, badges, books and other resources.
  - Complete final documentation of academic requirements (e.g. reports, and evaluations of the experience, the agency, the academic institution) for a final grade.
  - Complete again the self-assessment document in order to identify the progress made during the internship.
  - Demonstrate your appreciation to the site supervisor and agency personnel for your education and learning experience.

## ATRA Site Supervisor Responsibilities

- It is the agency site supervisor's responsibility to:
  - Be competent and ethical in therapeutic recreation practice.
  - Enter into the affiliation agreement with the academic program.
  - Have the time and ability to provide supervision and mentoring to the intern.
  - Provide a structured, sequential learning experience.
  - Fairly evaluate the intern's knowledge, competence and performance, and share this information with the intern as well as report it to the college or university.
  - Treat the intern with respect as a professional-in-training.
  - Communicate with the academic supervisor
  - Maintain a current credential as a CTRS from NCTRC for the length of the internship.
- Before the internship:
  - Develop a comprehensive plan for the internship that is consistent with the mission and goals of the agency's therapeutic recreation plan of operation, with the *ATRA Standards for the Practice of Therapeutic Recreation & Self-Assessment Guide* (2000), the *ATRA Code of Ethics* (2001), and the NCTRC field placement requirements in the *Certification Standards* (2002).
- During the internship:
  - Provide orientation to the intern, including a tour of the agency, introduction to the program, staff, agency and the community.

- Assist the student in setting internship goals and evaluating clinical competence.
- Provide clinical supervision, which includes giving the intern constructive criticism, feedback and evaluation, establishing professional boundaries, conducting hands-on demonstrations and observation, lecturing on topics relevant to the particular setting or client population, and providing opportunities for processing the intern's observations and learning.
- Conduct weekly intern sessions to discuss both intern and supervisor's concerns, frustrations, problems, highlights, and/or general exchange of ideas.
- Complete formal mid-term evaluations of the intern, using a formal competency-based or performance assessment, and forward to the academic setting.
- Introduce the intern to local professional therapeutic recreation organizations, and include the intern in agency continuing education opportunities, when appropriate and available.
- Consult with the academic supervisor to review the intern's performance, including both positive and negative outcomes. If the intern is having significant difficulties, the site supervisor and/or the academic supervisor will assist the intern in developing a plan for improvement. If acceptable improvements are not demonstrated, and the goals of the improvement plan are not achieved, the site supervisor may request termination of the intern from the agency. A student's poor performance will usually be evident throughout the internship. Care should be taken not to terminate the student near the end of the internship without adequate efforts to help the student improve. The agency must maintain documentation of the intern's failure to demonstrate acceptable performance.
- Students should not be left to administer programs on their own until they have acquired the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to succeed.
- At the end of the internship:
  - Review any formal projects, papers or presentations required of the intern by the academic institution of the agency.
  - Complete formal final evaluation of the intern, using a competency-based or performance assessment, and forward to the academic program.
  - At the intern's request, write a letter of recommendation.
  - Recover agency property.
  - Have the intern complete an evaluation of the internship and of the site supervisor at that agency.
  - Help the intern achieve closure with clients and staff.
  - Maintain a confidential file for the intern as a record of experience and a referral source for use when the intern requires a job referral or documentation of the internship for future certification.

## ATRA Academic Supervisor Responsibilities

- Establish an open line of communication between university and the agency.
- To supervise academic affairs of the student throughout the internship experience.
- Provide the university internship manual to the internship supervisor.
- Provide the agency with all performance and academic evaluation forms required to be completed on the student.
- Provide feedback to the agency upon completion of the internship.

