

The Extension Mentoring IN EvaluatION (MINION) Program

Project Leads:

Dr. Haley Rosson, Dr. Jessica Blythe, and Megan Kruger

This work is supported by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), Education and Workforce Development (EWD), Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates (REEU) Program, [Grant No. 2023-68018-40321/Project Accession No. 1030424], from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Design and WVU Extension is seeking applicants for undergraduate students to serve as paid fellows in the Extension Mentoring in Evaluation (MINION) program, beginning in Fall 2024. Students selected for participation in the program will serve in a cohort, consisting of approximately 10-15 fellows per year, and will be afforded the unique opportunity to serve both in the role of a student during the first year of their fellowship, as well as that of a mentor to the upcoming fellowship cohort during the second year of their fellowship. Fellows will complete two online courses, offered through WVU, focused on the basics of program evaluation and data collection. Fellows will then be assigned to one or more host sites at various locations throughout the state of West Virginia, where they will meet with local Extension agents/community stakeholders, form an evaluation plan, collect and analyze data, and prepare a final evaluation report.

Time: Fellows will serve in a one-year cohort, starting with recruitment at the beginning of the spring semester (February 2024) and continuing until the end of the summer semester the following year (August 2025). Fellows may also apply to serve a second year as a paid mentor to the next year's fellowship cohort. Fellowship recruitment will take place each spring semester. Applications will be released in January/February and will be followed by an interview and placement process. After fellows have been selected, they will be notified of their acceptance and advised on enrollment in the appropriate courses for fall semesters. Total employment time is August to August, with an opportunity to renew for a second year of fellowship.

Location: Fellows may work with one (or multiple) of the 55 county Extension offices in the State of West Virginia depending on the needs of the projects to be evaluated. Applicants may express a preference with regard to the county(ies) or projects they prefer, but the final assignment will depend upon best fit for the project evaluation needs and fellow availability.

Salary: Employment will begin with the fall semester and run through the following summer. Throughout the fall semester, the fellows can earn up to \$1,125; during the spring semester they can earn up to \$1,575; and up to \$2,400 over the summer. During the school year, the work expectations are 5-7 hours per week, while the summer expectation is 160 hours, to be scheduled based on the needs of the programs being evaluated. Fellows will also have a budget of \$600 per semester, to accommodate for the travel expenses related to the evaluation projects. Fellows will also have their

membership paid to join the Association of Extension Agents, or other applicable organization.

Targeted Participants: Undergraduate students (sophomores, juniors, and seniors) at WVU University, as well as all additional WVU campuses across the state, including WVU Beckley (WVU Tech), WVU Keyser (Potomac State), and WVU Parkersburg; West Virginia State University; and Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College are encouraged to apply. Undergraduate students at other West Virginia post-secondary educational institutions are also encouraged to apply.

Desirable attributes of applicants include the following:

- a) An ability to work with people;
- b) An ability to work as a team member;
- c) Strong verbal and written communication skills;
- d) Knowledge of agriculture and/or family and consumer sciences, community development, and/or 4-H Youth Development programs; and
- e) An interest in program evaluation and/or research.

Application Process: Applications should be submitted by **Friday, March 1st**. Applicants will be notified of a decision within two weeks of their application submission. Use the Qualtrics link below to complete the application:

Evaluation Host Site application:

https://wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5jo5aGVOp5CxNYi

Student application:

https://wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Wmhhp0XA9mTmRw

Please reach out to Extension_Minions@mail.wvu.edu for additional information or clarity.