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Put Yourself Out There

A Student's Reflections from Semester in the City

MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2023

Anna Madden '24 | English:Text, Business

Writing and Digital Studies



Giana Lopez '25

What does a
[Semester in the City](#)
internship look like?

For Giana Lopez '25
([Health Management](#)

[and Public Policy](#)), her time spent at
Immigrant Family Services Institute was a
valuable experience towards building real-
world skills while pursuing a degree and
career in public health. During the 15 week

UNH-affiliated program, she earned a semester's worth of academic
credit, and had the opportunity to further her personal and professional

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development. In a recent interview, she shares about the experience and insights she gained from her role.

What was your SITC internship about and what did your role look like there?

“During my internship, I was matched with Immigrant Family Services Institute and my role was a Mass Health Application Assistant. My tasks looked like filling out applications for healthcare for low-income families and getting them benefits through the state. The goal was to send applications over to Mass Health and have them approved as quickly as possible.”

One of the challenges you shared in your SITC presentation included working with clients who spoke a different language. What were some of the difficulties that arose from that, and how were you able to overcome them?

“Most of clients who go to Immigrant Family Services (IPSI) are from Haiti, so they speak Haitian creole. A lot of individuals who come didn’t have opportunities to access education and learn English before immigrating here. Since most of them spoke Creole and I only spoke English, it could be tricky to get into the details about laws and healthcare. I had an interpreter nearby though, so while communication could sometimes definitely be difficult, it also made it a little fun because it was challenging.”

Reflecting on the internship, what was the highlight for you?

I would say the highlight was seeing direct results. I enjoy doing work where I get to see how I was able to help impact people right then and there. I’d have people come in and show me their health card and how it was approved and that was really exciting for me. Being a Health and Public Policy Management major, I am very passionate about public health and being able to get access to healthcare for everyone. Seeing that direct change in people’s lives was definitely the most exciting part for me.

Moving forward, how is that going to tie into your future endeavors, or your personal experience?

“I want to do pharmaceutical sales. I feel like wanting to do that and seeing how certain low-income communities are affected by not getting access to certain drugs or medicine, or even the right doctors, would tie into my interests by showing how I can change that by helping more people be able to get access to the healthcare or the medicine they need.”

For future SITC students, is there any advice you'd want to give them based off your experience?

“Give it a chance. I first got there feeling very nervous having a language barrier, feeling like the job and the tasks I was given were super important, and almost too big for me, but once you're doing it, it feels good. Give it a shot, don't be intimidated by it, and actually go for it!”

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