

# SCIPP SUMMER INTERNSHIP 2025

The Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program (SCIPP) hosted a ten-week summer internship from May to July 2025. Seven undergraduate students from the University of Oklahoma (OU) participated. This document briefly highlights some elements of the endeavor.

## **Purpose:**

The purpose of the internship was to strengthen the capacity of local decision makers and community partners to address weather-related challenges, while also building the next generation workforce by providing sophomore and junior students at the University of Oklahoma with valuable professional experience. SCIPP provided hourly pay to support each student intern.



Figure 1. Pictures of some student interns at their respective project sites.

## **Organizations Involved**

Organizations across the SCIPP region (see Figure 2) submitted their applications to host a summer intern. Submissions included a brief summary of the primary projects for the student. Once the host organizations were vetted and selected, the projects were advertised to undergraduate students at OU, who then ranked their preferred organizations, and submitted their applications. After the students were selected for the opportunity (via formal interview and hiring process), each intern was paired with a host organization for the duration of the internship. A total of seven interns completed the program across the four-state region.

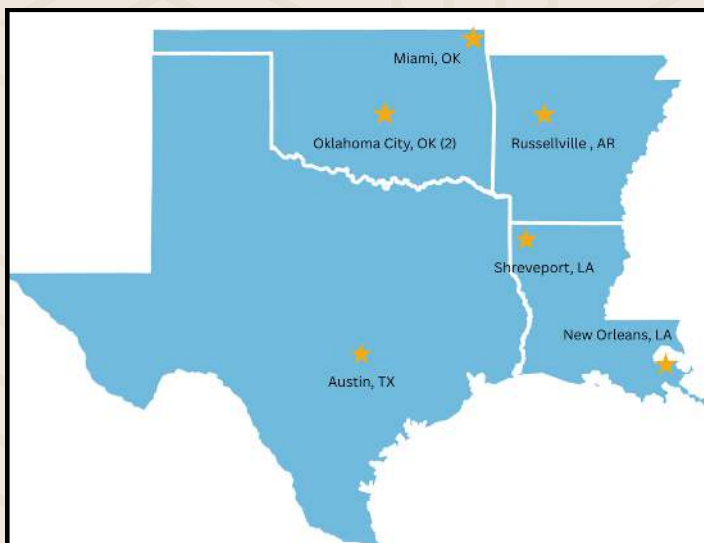


Figure 2. Map of the host organization locations across the SCIPP region.

## **Host Organizations:**

- Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development (New Orleans, LA)
- City of Oklahoma City Office of Sustainability (Oklahoma City, OK)
- City of Shreveport (Shreveport, LA)
- LEAD Agency (Miami, OK)
- Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (Oklahoma City, OK)
- Pope County Office of Emergency Management (Russellville, AR)
- Texas Impact (Austin, TX)

## Some Projects & Skills Learned

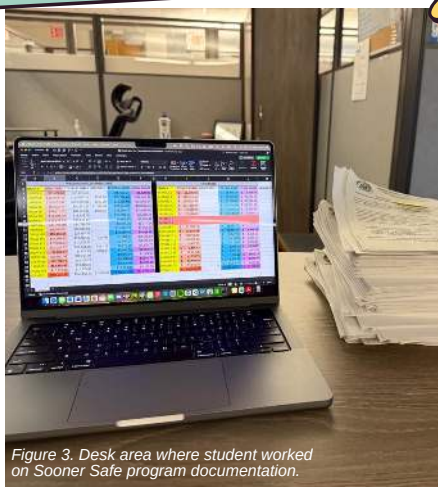


Figure 3. Desk area where student worked on Sooner Safe program documentation.

### Oklahoma City Department of Emergency Management

Work with the hazard mitigation saferoom team involved various tasks such as **data entry** to track applicants and verify program eligibility, utilizing **GIS mapping** to confirm home locations, assessing whether homes are in floodplains, **addressing inquiries** through the program's website, and handling phone calls related to the program. This internship opportunity offered valuable hands-on experience in **public safety, data management, and program administration.**



Figure 4. Intern leading a fieldwork activity in New Orleans, LA.

### New Orleans Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development

The Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development's major project involved supporting the development of their science education program for high schoolers. Projects involved weather and climate research, particularly in underserved and coastal communities around New Orleans, LA, with a focus on flood management and air and soil quality.

This also provided hands-on opportunities to contribute to disaster preparedness efforts in the city. Skills gained included **fieldwork, teaching, and community outreach.**

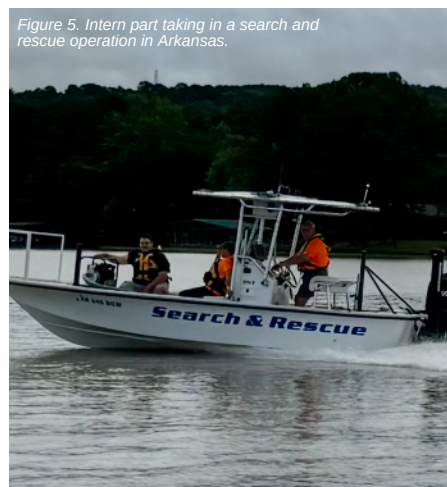


Figure 5. Intern part taking in a search and rescue operation in Arkansas.

### Pope County Office of Emergency Management

During the summer of 2025, Pope County was in the second year of their five-year hazard mitigation plan. The intern was tasked with **gathering, analyzing and documenting crucial weather and climate data** for the plan update. The intern helped Pope County **review and implement effective mitigation strategies**, and also assisted in **search and rescue missions** to help community members facing weather-related emergencies.

## More About Our Interns

### Academic Disciplines Represented:

#### Majors

- Meteorology (5)
- Environmental Sustainability (2)

#### Minors

- Geographic Information Systems (2)
- Environmental Science (1)
- Pre-Law Studies/Constitutional Studies (1)
- Math (1)
- Psychology (1)

### Academic Classification:

- Sophomores (3)
- Juniors (4)

*"The work that I have done will help the public become more resilient to climate impacts, in particular, flooding events, and heat events as well. The abstract that I am working on will contribute to that...This internship has been great! Thank you so much!"*

-Magdalene Gossard, Intern

*"My favorite thing about this internship was the ability to learn more about environmental policy and how a legislative session actually works...My experience significantly influenced my consideration of a career in politics—an area I had not previously envisioned for myself. Observing committee hearings and legislative votes at the Capitol sparked a deep interest in the political process."*

-Ava Marie Burkhalter, Intern

*"...[the internship] also opened up my interest in other areas like urban planning, energy systems, and the utility industry...I grew so much throughout the internship, gaining plenty of knowledge and valuable skills, however I consider communication to be the skill I developed the most."*

- Mariela Hernandez Toba, Intern



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Contact SCIPP Program Manager, Caylah Cruickshank (caylahc@ou.edu), for details.

