



# ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

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| <b>Project Organization</b> | Enhancing Networks of Support for Jackson’s Youth with Faith Communities |
| <b>Location</b>             | Operation Shoestring<br>Jackson, MS                                      |
| <b>Stipend</b>              | \$15,400   |
| <b>Duration</b>             | 9 weeks, Summer 2026   |

## ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

[Operation Shoestring](#) invests directly in the children, families, and neighborhoods of Jackson, Mississippi, aspiring to transformative change by supporting student success, providing family-centered programming, and cultivating community.

We provide year-round academic, social and emotional support to children in central Jackson from pre-K through 8th grade through our Project Rise afterschool and summer program. Currently, we serve nearly 200 school-aged children from approximately 160 predominantly low-income households. Our program includes reading interventions with the Mississippi Reading Clinic, academic remediation with licensed teachers, and exposure to opportunities like visits to colleges and museums. Our work has taken many forms over the years, but one thing has remained constant—We provide safe spaces for kids and families and promote thriving communities.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Operation Shoestring’s summer camp provides academic, arts, and cultural enrichment and has many facets of its programming provided by volunteers, including at places of worship in Jackson. The internship project would be to support this programming, and to help them learn more about the program participants and the communities of faith who support Operation Shoestring’s summer camp. The intern would help coordinate and enrich the lesson plans and activities taking place at these places of worship and other civic organizational partners, while expanding the capacity of both Operation Shoestring staff and volunteer partners. The intern will help plan curriculum and activities for campers under the direction of the Programs team, and in conjunction with our faith-based partners to ensure community partnerships and lessons are high-quality and meaningful for both volunteer and student. They will also help design and implement advocacy workshops for our community with the intention of building greater community cohesion and understanding while also sharing findings from their own individual field of study.

The goal of this project is to add capacity to the summer camp and help align our programming for students to more closely mirror our mission, vision, and ethos, provide more service learning for students in partnership with our faith communities and help us enhance our experiential learning offerings. Working closely with teaching staff, the intern will help to ensure lesson plans and field trips are academically rigorous, high quality, and engaging. The intern will work with many different places of worship from diverse backgrounds, and should be able to intentionally include and expose students to a diversity of life experiences and faith traditions. Work prior to summer camp beginning will include supporting and providing resources for these academic and service-learning experiences, and work after summer camp will include surveying partners and assessing the effectiveness of our activities.

The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week. Hours are 9 am-5 pm Monday through Friday when summer camp is not in session. During summer camp weeks (roughly the first week of June to the second week of July) this position will take place from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Thursday. The internship will begin in the first week of June.

This position is *only* available through the ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future program. You may *not* contact the host institution to inquire about this position.



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## Key Responsibilities:

- Develop at least 5 lesson plans to be used with volunteers at Operation Shoestring's affiliated places of worship during summer camp.
- Support volunteers, K-8 participants, and faith leaders in executing these curriculum enhancements.
- Reflect on this experience to help generate some "best practices" around service-learning partnerships that Operation Shoestring can use in their future work through surveying participants, conducting focus groups, and assessing effectiveness of lesson plans.

## Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Experience or comfort in working with people from diverse faith traditions.
- Alignment with Operation Shoestring's mission.
- Must be able to pass a Mississippi Department of Health background check.

## *Preferred*

- Experience working with K-8 students or children in some capacity.

## APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future Program: <https://www.acls.org/competitions/acls-graduate-internships-on-the-spiritual-infrastructure-of-the-future/>
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System ([ofa.acls.org](https://ofa.acls.org)).
- Application deadline: **Wednesday, January 14, 2026, 9 PM EST.**