

Executive Summary

Stipend vs applicant volume (all programs):

Across all internship programs, applicant volume does not appear to be strongly correlated with stipend level. Programs offering similar stipends show wide variation in applicant counts, suggesting compensation alone is not a primary driver of applicant interest.

Stipend vs applicant volume (Central/Southern Illinois focus):

When isolating Central and Southern Illinois programs, the relationship between stipend level and applicant volume appears even weaker. Applicant counts remain relatively low across these programs despite variation in stipends, indicating that additional factors beyond compensation are likely influencing application behavior.

Applicant origin and location factors:

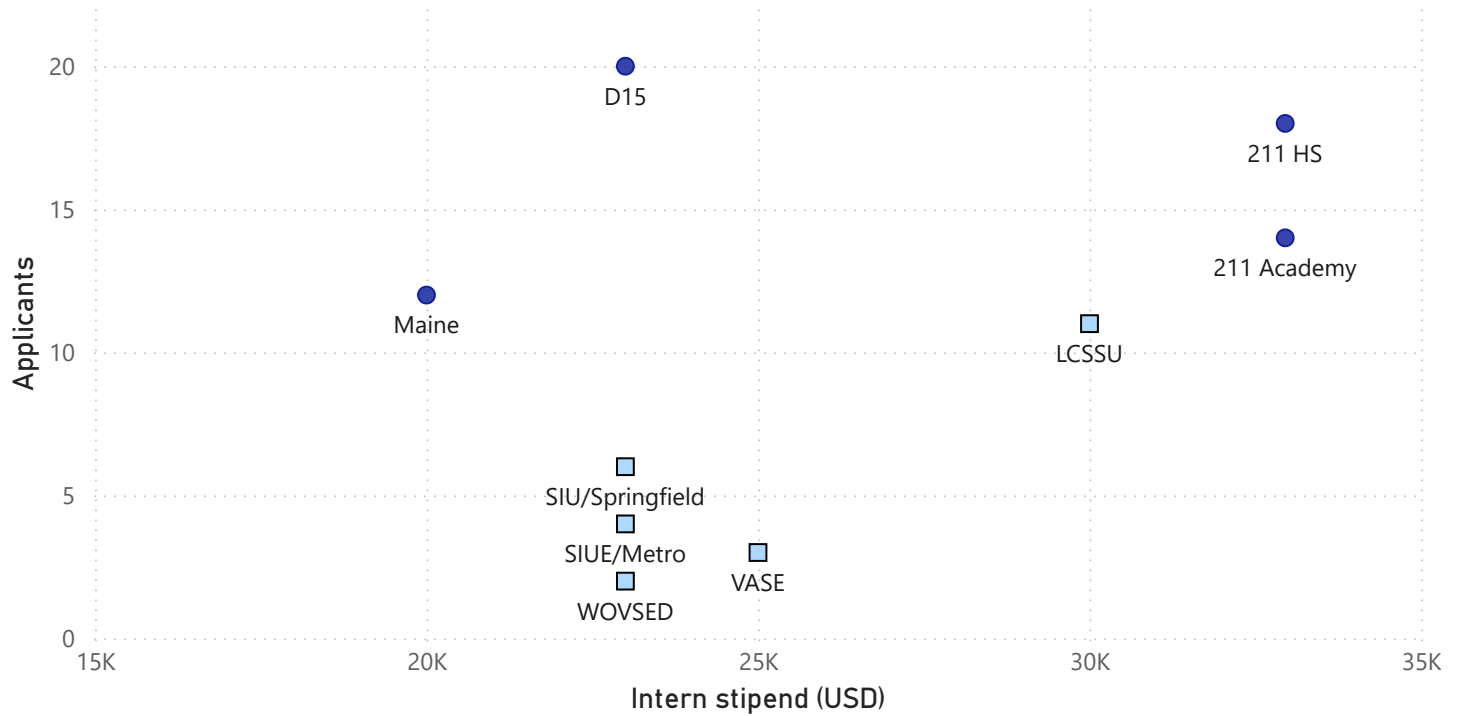
Applicants from in-state, nearby, and far-flung states are disproportionately concentrated in Chicagoland programs compared to Central/Southern Illinois programs. While airport proximity was explored as a potential explanation, applicant volume does not appear to consistently increase with proximity to the nearest airport alone. Instead, application patterns align more strongly with proximity and access to the Chicago metropolitan area itself, which is explored further in the final section of this report.

Applicant volume does not show a strong relationship with stipend level across programs

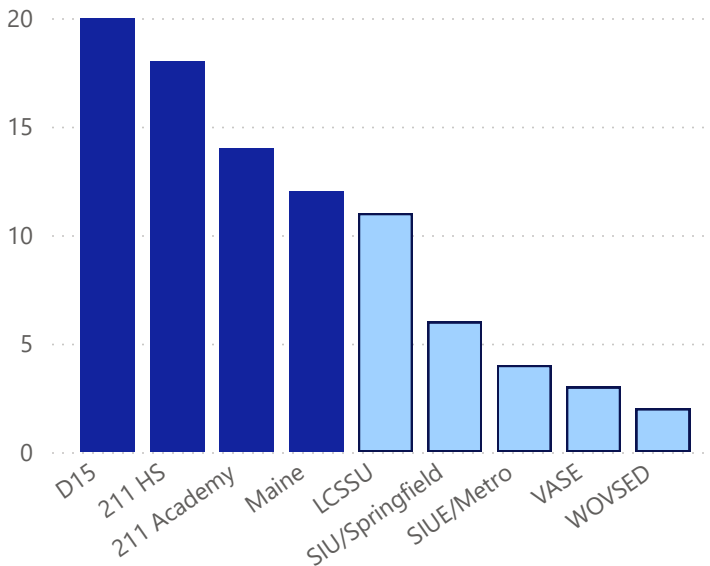
Across all programs, applicant volume varies widely at similar stipend levels, indicating that stipend amount alone does not explain differences in applicant interest and that compensation, by itself, may not be a sufficient lever for increasing applicant volume in the Central/Southern Illinois subset.

Each point represents one internship program

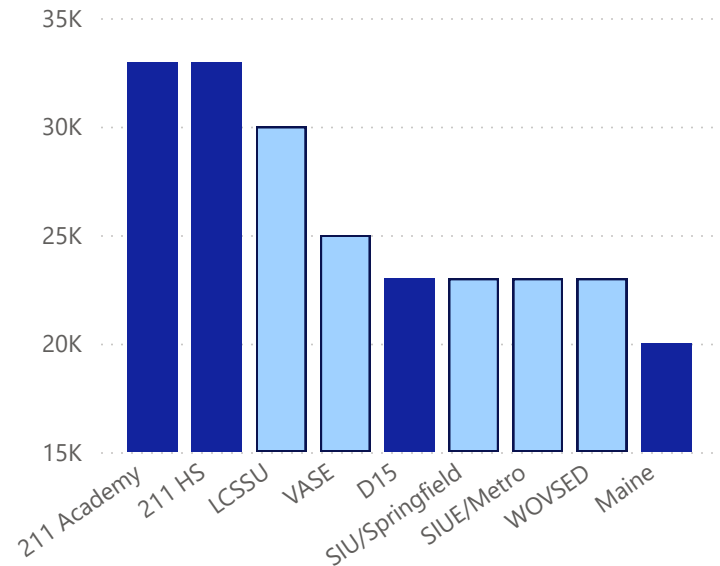
Region ■ Central/Southern Illinois ● Chicagoland



Applicants



Intern stipend (USD)

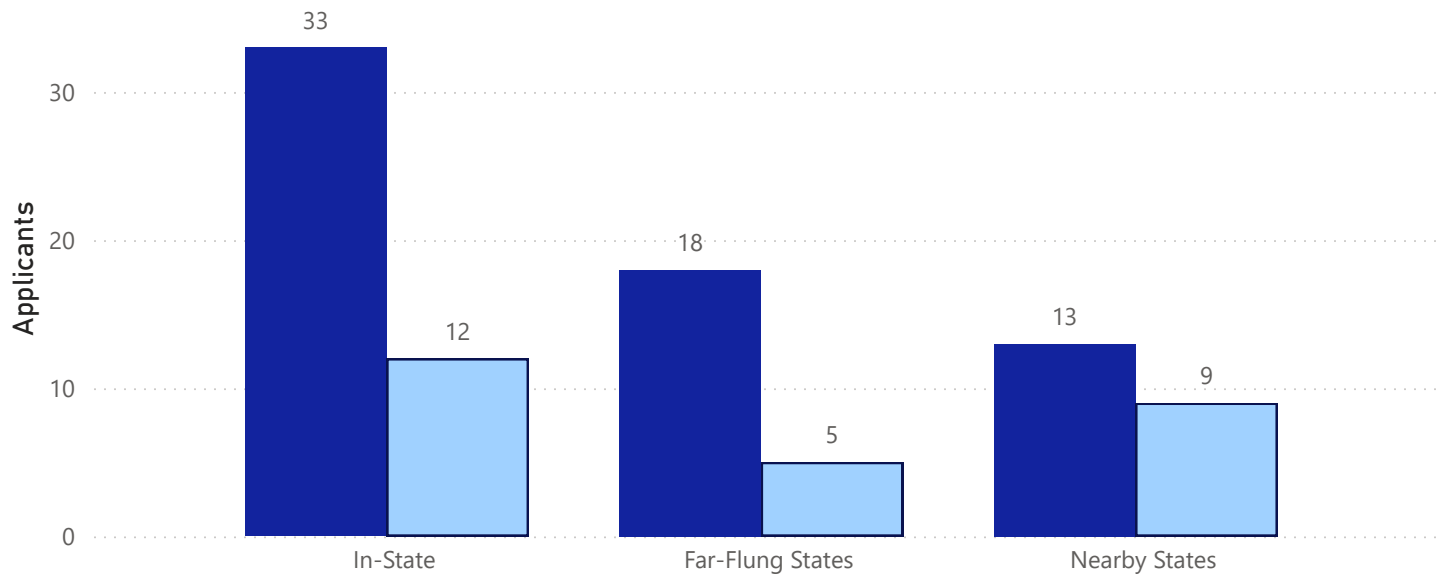


Applicant distribution across travel groups

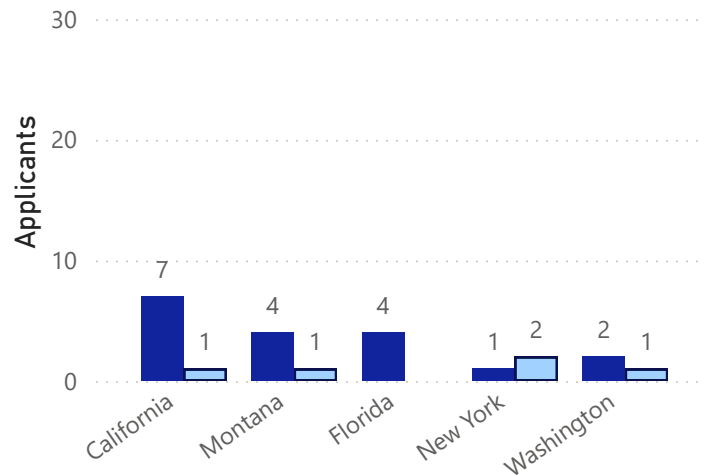
Applicants from in-state, nearby, and far-flung states are more concentrated in Chicagoland programs than in Central/Southern Illinois programs. The consistent preference across travel groups suggests factors beyond airport proximity alone.

Applicants across travel groups are disproportionately concentrated in Chicagoland programs

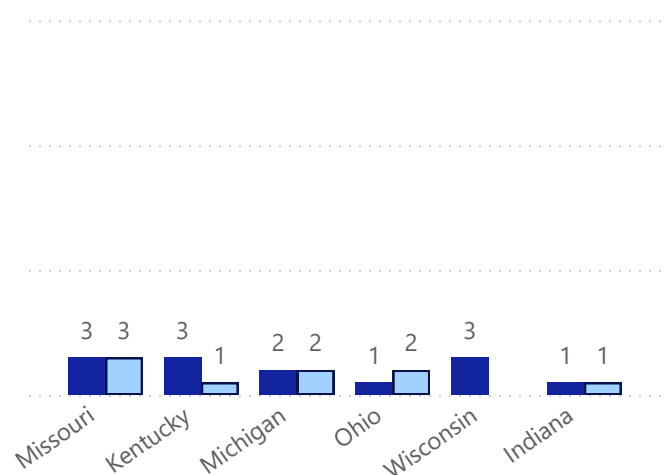
Program Region ● Chicagoland Area ● Central/Southern Illinois



Far-Flung States



Nearby States



Interpretation and implications (exploratory)

Initial hypothesis (client):

Out-of-state applicants may disproportionately apply to Chicagoland-area internship programs due to easier access to major airports, making travel to and from internships more convenient.

To explore this, I reviewed applicant origin patterns alongside proximity to major and regional airports as a contextual factor.

What the data shows:

Based on the available data, applicant volume does not appear to be strongly correlated with proximity to the nearest airport alone. Central/Southern programs located near both major and regional airports show a wide range of applicant counts, including some with relatively low application volume.

For example, SIUE/Metro is located relatively close to a major airport (St. Louis) but still shows one of the lower applicant counts.

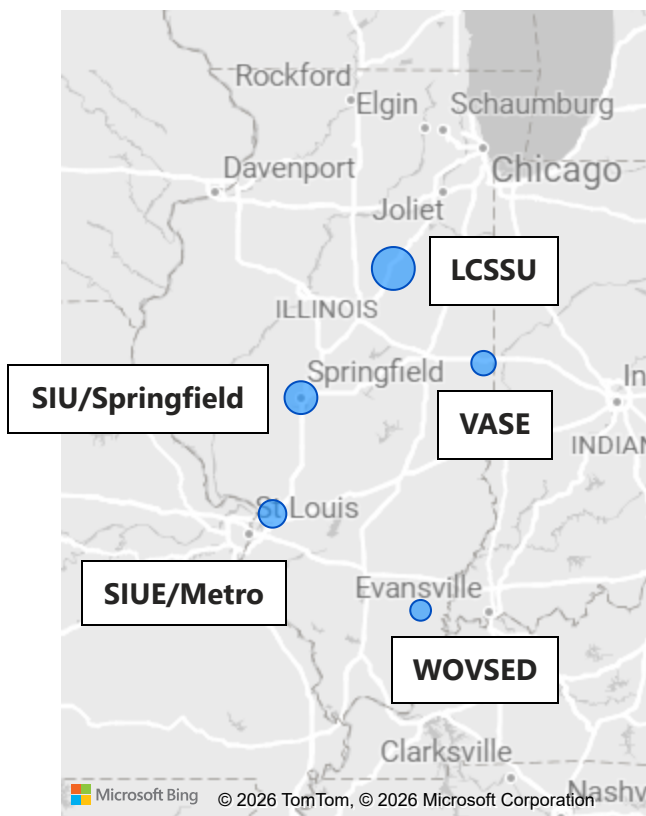
Alternative hypothesis (exploratory):

While airport access alone does not appear to explain application patterns, applicant volume aligns more strongly with proximity to the Chicago metropolitan area itself.

One possible explanation is that these internships primarily serve graduate-level psychology students, many of whom are likely in their 20s and actively preparing for post-internship employment. Proximity to Chicago may offer perceived advantages such as:

- Greater access to professional networks in psychology and mental health
- More opportunities to interview for post-internship roles during the training period
- Higher concentration of mental health organizations, clinics, and institutions
- Lifestyle and social factors that may be more attractive to younger applicants

Geographic context of Central/Southern Illinois program



In contrast, non-Chicagoland internship locations may be perceived as offering fewer immediate networking opportunities and fewer post-graduation employment options, even if the clinical training itself is strong.

Implications for future consideration:

If increasing applicant volume at non-Chicagoland internship sites is a goal, the data suggests that compensation and airport proximity alone may not be sufficient levers. Instead, these programs may benefit from more targeted positioning that clearly articulates:

- What makes the training experience unique
- How the program supports career development and post-internship placement
- Who the program is best suited for, and why
- The professional connections and opportunities students will gain through participation

These interpretations are exploratory and based on observed patterns rather than causal analysis, and would benefit from additional qualitative or survey-based research to validate applicant motivations.