

Tuesday, May 12th, 2026

This was orientation day and marked the start of my internship. I began the day by arriving at Open Hand Atlanta's office building and meeting my supervisor, Ciara Long, the Research and Evaluation Manager, Katie Leite, the SNAP-Ed program Manager, and five of my fellow interns. We started the day off with a full tour of the office, including the meal preparation and storage areas. It was interesting to learn that around a million meals were being stored on site in a giant freezer area. We then went to a conference room and began with individual introductions. We were then provided more information on the company, its history, and operations. Open Hand Atlanta began as a group of friends cooking meals for neighbors disenfranchised by HIV/Aids and has grown into an organization that serves the community and provides medically tailored meals directly to individuals who need them. Ciara and Katie provided us with copies of surveys used in Open Hands nutrition programs and instructed us to familiarize ourselves with the information within them. Many participants in these nutrition programs are older adults and may need assistance filling out the forms, which is why we need to review them. We then split off into groups to discuss our specific projects for the summer. Half of the interns went with Katie as they are Emory MPH students working on different projects, while the UGA students stayed with Ciara. We then logged into the various communication sites and accounts to share our progress and other important information. After finishing up our intern meeting and confirming a Friday check-in, we were invited to stay for a company lunch and learn titled "Budgeting Basics: Master Your Money". The presentation included a speaker from SouthState Bank sharing tips for financial wellness. After finishing up the meeting, it was time to leave for the day.

Wednesday, May 13th, 2026

On this day, I completed my assigned tasks from home. The week's tasks included familiarizing myself with the Intern folder shared by Ciara, containing an Internship Manual and other important documents. I also reviewed the copy of one of the surveys used by Open Hand for its nutrition programs, provided by Ciara and Katie on Tuesday. I practiced explaining the information on the sheet in preparation for attending one of the in-person programs in the coming weeks. Another task provided was to look through the Open Hand website and search for topics such as Food is Medicine, medically tailored meals, and produce prescription programs. Food is Medicine is an initiative to use diet to reduce food insecurity and nutrition-related diseases. Medically tailored meals are designed by Registered Dietitian Nutritionists to improve health outcomes and reduce the cost of care. Open Hand's produce prescription program partners with healthcare organizations to offer nutrition education classes and weekly produce deliveries for patients dealing with chronic diseases or food insecurity. After my review, I closed my computer for the day.

Thursday, May 14th, 2026

On this day, I attended a virtual nutrition class with Ciara, hosted as part of a 5-year program for a population of older adults. I enjoyed getting a look into how sessions like these are conducted and how barriers like familiarity with technology could impact some older adults when it comes to virtual programs. The class was an hour in length and led by a registered dietitian. The topic discussed was the use of herbs and spices instead of salt for improving flavor and reducing sodium intake. A five-question survey was provided to the participants before and after the meeting to track their progress. The participants learned the difference between salt levels and how to read the nutrition facts label for sodium. The dietitian presented a lot of helpful information, including that 48% of adults in the US have high blood pressure, and the recommended limit is 2,300 mg of sodium a day for adults. The class overall was very informative, interactive, and tailored to fit the participants accordingly. After the meeting, I spent the rest of my time familiarizing myself with the intern folder and Open Hand's website, then closed my computer for the day.

Friday, May 15th, 2026

Today was the first intern meeting on Teams with Ciara and my fellow UGA interns. We started the meeting with a brief discussion of the nutrition class from Thursday. Ciara then discussed our expectations for the summer. She also introduced us to a Canva page where we would complete some of our infographic/presentation deliverables. We also reviewed some research priorities of Open Hand, which, in short, include identifying barriers to a healthy diet, finding best practices for program delivery, and demonstrating the effectiveness of the programs. Ciara then provided us with tasks for next week, including researching possible individual and group research topics to get started on. We were also provided a few calendar dates, including future workshops and other meetings. After the meeting, I spent the rest of my time reviewing the information discussed, then closed my computer for the day.

Week 1 Summary matched with Competencies:

- 1.1 Plan assessment.
 - 1.1.1 Define the purpose and scope of the assessment.
 - 1.1.3 Identify existing and available resources, policies, programs, practices, and interventions.

Summary: This week, by listening to the information provided by Ciara and Katie, as well as my own research, I was able to better understand Open Hands' mission and a likely focus for my upcoming assessment. The scope of my assessment will likely fall within Open Hand's priorities, which include identifying barriers to a healthy diet, finding best practices for program delivery, and demonstrating the effectiveness of the programs. Through my research in the upcoming week, I will be able to narrow my focus on my own assessment project as well. A specific program I was able to identify was the produce prescription program by Open Hand, which partners with healthcare organizations to offer nutrition education classes and weekly produce

deliveries for patients dealing with chronic diseases or food insecurity. As I continue my research, I will be able to identify more existing programs and resources that fit the goals of Open Hand.

Reflection of Week 1:

Reflecting on my first week as an intern at Open Hand Atlanta, I am excited to see what the rest of my time has in store for me. This week, I learned a lot about Open Hand and its mission, but also got to witness firsthand a portion of the population it serves. Attending the virtual nutrition class opened my eyes further to the barriers of nutrition and diet, particularly in the older adult population. Many are eager to learn but are not provided the resources and information to do so. This is why the work done by organizations like Open Hand is so important. I am also excited to put some of my skills to use in making infographics and presentations on Canva to visually represent program data. I am also excited to learn to use the different coding and survey-making programs and to be able to conduct relevant literature reviews that contribute to the work already being done here at Open Hand.