



**Major/Degree Program:**  
Criminal Justice major; English  
minor

**Year of Study during the  
Internship:** Junior

**Name of the  
Company/Organization:**  
Shelby County Health  
Department

**Duration of the Internship:**  
May 2025-August 2025

## LLP INTERNSHIP **SPOTLIGHT**

FEATURING FILMORE VARNER III  
INTERVIEWED BY DR. ZEBA SHAHBAAZ

Filmore had the pleasure of interning with the Shelby County Health Department this past summer 2025. As a Criminal Justice major and English minor, Filmore reflects candidly in this interview on how this internship has ignited his passion for Human Resource Management and Compliance Policy as a graduating Senior at Tennessee State University.



**Dr. Shahbaaz:** Hi Filmore. It's nice to be able to meet again to discuss your internship experience after you wrapped up my Critical Approaches course last semester. Can you briefly describe the responsibilities and tasks you were assigned to do during your recent internship?

**Filmore:** So the majority of the tasks were sorting out paperwork, filing, and preparing research for job searches. I helped my immediate supervisor with locating websites to upload job postings. And besides doing that, I was sorting on Excel. I was inputting onboarding information for employees and contracts on Excel as well. Another miscellaneous role was me shadowing in a different building within an HR role.

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** It sounds like you were managing quite a few administrative tasks alongside interpersonal communication with different employees that served in various functions in your internship. How did this internship align with your current academic or career goals?

**Filmore:** It didn't necessarily align. It sparked an interest for me to do work in HR. I really appreciated working in HR because it was mentally stimulating. I also appreciate that I could use my degree towards my renewed career path. I could understand the labor laws and policies within a work environment. The policies are similar to general state laws and makes it easier for me to understand.

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** That's amazing. There are so many great careers within the HR field to pursue. I can totally see aligning with you.



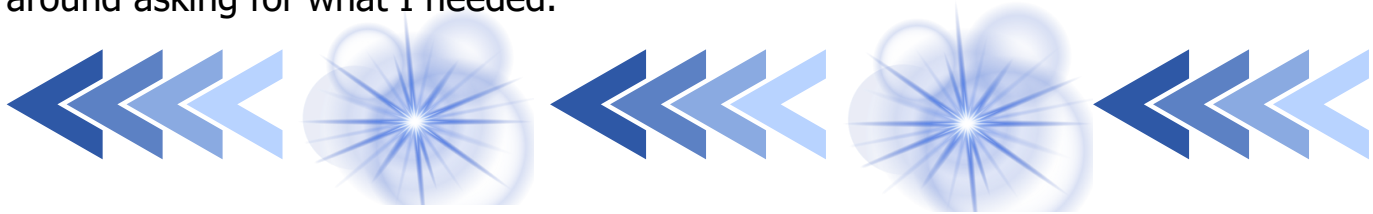
## **Skill Building and Balancing Academics:**

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** In your previous response, you mentioned that interning within an HR Department was "mentally stimulating" for you, and that it "sparked an interest" within you. Could you talk about any new skills that you acquired or enhanced during this internship in connection with your current major/minor or the HR field generally?

**Filmore:** Critical thinking skills, being able to have casual conversations with people and then working with them. My exposure and experience in Excel improved. Being able to talk to people. It helped my social anxiety just a tad bit.

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** Critical thinking skills never go out of style. With that, were there any challenges you faced during the internship? How did you overcome them, if any?

**Filmore:** Yes, there were all types of challenges. Getting my ID activated was a hassle. I contacted my manager, and had to wait a few days to resolve it. Another problem that I overcame was trying to figure out or learn the organization. Talking to attorneys, directors, and me being an intern and learning how to talk to them like people versus their title. A lot of the ways that I overcame my challenges day to day was to ask questions. I kept a journal and kept my thoughts documented to be able to ask follow-up questions later. I have a whole journal with sticky notes and questions that I asked, and I would just go around asking for what I needed.



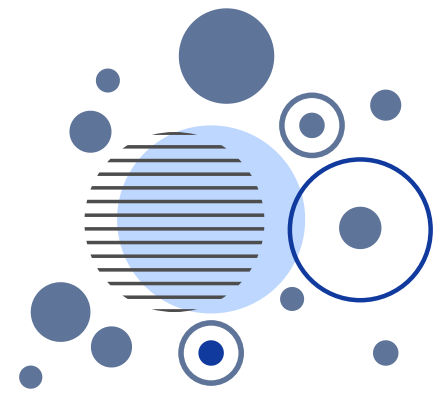
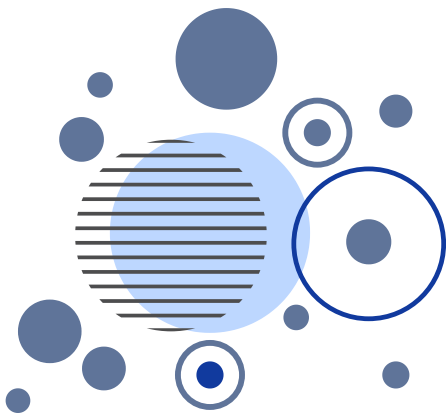
## Professional Culture and Environment:

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** Can you describe the professional culture and working environment of your internship?

**Filmore:** I felt that the working environment was very peaceful and progressive. They were very kind to me, even though I came in without HR knowledge. Whenever I came in, people had a smile on their faces. And it made me feel comfortable working there with them.

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** Were there any networking opportunities or mentorship programs available to you?

**Filmore:** Yes, I got some opportunities to network and gained some mentorship from one of the attorneys that worked for the county. I encountered three attorneys that I was able to make contact with. I was curious about how it was to be an attorney in the City of Memphis. Another person that I received mentorship from was my immediate manager Mrs. Crutchfield who allowed me to make all of the connections with the attorney's and Director Thornton who runs HR. He allowed me to shadow the different facets of HR.



## Internship Achievements and Future Career Implications:

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** Can you share any significant achievements from your internship experience?

**Filmore:** A specific achievement that I got was successfully networking with other people that I encountered. I am still in contact with my manager, immediate supervisors and others. I really appreciate the opportunities that I received and what I learned from them.

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** How do you believe this internship has influenced your career trajectory or future aspirations? Did this internship confirm or change your career interests in any way?

**Filmore:** Yes, this internship and experience did influence my projected career path because initially it was going to be the FBI or law enforcement, especially living in the City of Memphis. After careful consideration, I realize that I really want to pursue HR, and there are investigations and other forms that are needed within the field. I am mentally stimulated from the different aspects of HR because it can still tie back into Criminal Justice.



## Advice to Peers and Networking for Internships:

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** Now that you have had this internship experience, what advice would you give to students considering a similar internship opportunity?

**Filmore:** Some advice that I would give students is to come with an open mind. Be willing to ask questions. To not be afraid to learn more about the field that you are in at the moment. Don't come in with any prejudices and biases. You may be able to build on a career that you are interested in.

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** This internship was a tremendous opportunity to serve your hometown government. I am proud of you for pursuing it and for paying it forward through knowledge acquisition, professional development experience, and public service. How did you secure this internship? Any tips for the application process?

**Filmore:** There was an application process. In all honesty, I have no idea how I got this internship. I prayed about it. Show your personality based on your resume experience and use it as an asset and not a crutch.

**Dr. Shahbaaz:** More power to that! You have to be willing to put yourself in a position to learn and gain the professional experience first, which is what you did. And you kept your faith intact during the process, which is awesome, too. With that, can you tell me about the most valuable aspect of this internship experience for you?

**Filmore:** Once again, the most valuable aspect was expanding my network and connecting with people who actually want to see me do better in life. And them being able to pass on the knowledge and wisdom to me for future career application.

**This interview was completed and transcribed via Zoom with Dr. Shahbaaz and Filmore Varner III on March 13th, 2026 during the Spring 2026 term.**



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