



# NEW EMPLOYER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT TOOL KIT BY UNITED WAY OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA

Preparing Teens for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce



## About United Way of Northeast Florida

With a rich 90-year history, United Way has earned a reputation as a respected and efficient philanthropic organization. Our long tradition of addressing the human service needs in Duval, Baker, Clay, Nassau and Northern St. Johns counties is made possible through the commitment of thousands of volunteers, contributors and community partners.

We actively engage with people and organizations from all across the community who bring the passion, expertise and resources needed to get things done. Our mission is to advance the common good by creating sustainable improvements in education, income and health throughout Northeast Florida. We accomplish this through a volunteer-driven Community Impact Model.

## About the Jessie Ball duPont Fund

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund is the primary initiative funder for United Way of Northeast Florida's Youth Employment Program. The Jessie Ball duPont Fund works to expand access and create opportunity by investing in people, organizations and communities that were important to Jessie Ball duPont.

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund is a national foundation that makes grants to a defined universe of organizations whose eligibility is determined exclusively by Mrs. duPont's personal philanthropic decisions. An organization is eligible if it received a gift from Mrs. duPont between January 1, 1960, and December 31, 1964. Today, there are 330 eligible organizations.

The Fund organizes its resources around the following focus areas:

- Strengthening the Independent Sector
- Building the Assets of People, Families and Communities
- Building the Capacity of Eligible Organizations

For any questions regarding United Way of Northeast Florida's Youth Employment Program, contact Lorna West at [lornaw@uwnefl.org](mailto:lornaw@uwnefl.org) or 904-390-3261.

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## INTRODUCTION

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There is an article written by Steven Mufson of The Washington Post about a federal proposal to create summer and first-time jobs for youth. A federal proposal addressing youth employment would be welcomed, but the youth unemployment statistics shared in the article are alarming.<sup>1</sup> According to Jeff Zients, director of the White House National Economic Council, one in seven young people ages 16 to 24 are neither in school nor in the workforce. He said people “who endure a spell of unemployment between the ages of 16 and 24 earn \$400,000 less over their careers than those who do not. Having a first job is not just about the paycheck; it’s about pride, confidence and self-esteem.” Those working in the trenches with our young people know the great impact summer jobs have on youth. It can serve as a deterrent from criminal activity and help youth prepare for the workforce by gaining critical work experience job-readiness training.

“There has been a 40 percent decline in summer jobs for youth in the past 12 years. Estimates show that 46 percent of young people who applied for summer jobs were turned down,” said U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King.

Since 2012, United Way of Northeast Florida has engaged in youth employment work by administering a pilot summer Youth Employment Program that served more than 400 underserved youth between the ages 16 and 19. The initiative is a collaborative endeavor between program funders, youth-serving organizations, nonprofit and corporate internship sites, and local education institutions. The program was developed to provide students with a chance to receive on-the-job training, financial literacy exposure, critical job-readiness training, individual mentoring and, of course, pay. For more than 76 participating employers, the program allowed them to support a community-wide effort to develop the collective workforce needed by our local economy.

United Way is exceedingly appreciative for the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the program’s primary funder, for having the vision to convene a small group of nonprofit CEOs and United Way to begin the important work of providing youth with foundational skills and on-the-job training needed to be successful in the workforce. We are also thankful for JP Morgan Chase Foundation, Bank of America Charitable Foundation and The Wilson Family Foundation for joining the duPont Fund in supporting this critical work.

Because of their generosity and commitment to youth in our community, we were able to learn about youth employment, including challenges; successes; lessons learned through program administration; and working in tandem with employers, youth and our partners. As a result of our work, United Way has developed this toolkit for community- and youth-serving agencies looking to glean lessons learned, best practices or perhaps use as a framework to develop or enhance a work-based learning program targeting teens. Maybe your organization is simply doing research to learn how other agencies, like United Way, navigated the world of youth employment. The information contained in this toolkit is based upon United Way’s four years of experience administering a youth employment initiative.

**“First jobs have the incredible power to set young people on a path to productivity and success and away from bad outcomes in their lives.”**

– John B. King

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<sup>1</sup> Mufson, Steven. “Federal proposal seeks to create summer and youth jobs.” *The Washington Post*, February 4, 2016  
[www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/federal-proposal-seeks-to-create-summer-and-youth-jobs/2016/02/03/20068afe-cab7-11e5-88ff-e2d1b4289c2f\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/federal-proposal-seeks-to-create-summer-and-youth-jobs/2016/02/03/20068afe-cab7-11e5-88ff-e2d1b4289c2f_story.html)



## OUR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT WORK LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

Since 2012, United Way of Northeast Florida's Youth Employment Program has helped students acquire on-the-job training and individual coaching. This collaborative venture includes youth-serving agencies: Baptist Health Tipping the Scale Mentoring Program, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Florida, Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida, Florida State College at Jacksonville, Fresh Ministries Fresh Futures Youth Program, Teen Leaders of America, The Bridge of Northeast Florida and the City of Jacksonville Mayor's Summer Jobs Program. Over the course of its work in youth employment, United Way has observed and learned invaluable lessons.

### 1. Program funding and implementation

Prospective funders' application period may not always complement the Youth Employment Program timeline and implementation plan. Yet, our funders understand the sense of urgency for communicated grant outcomes and funding release dates in a timely manner. Program staff can take a proactive stance through developing a few program timelines and scenarios and tentatively onboard employers and internship sites.

Each year the program has been successful meeting youth-recruitment goals and providing paid internships for all enrolled students, but planning a program within a two- to three-month period presented some challenges in coordinating various initiative components. Allow seven months to a year to effectively and strategically plan and implement a youth employment initiative, especially with limited staff. Planning allows staff to modify the existing program by reviewing the impact of current activities and tactics and making modifications as needed.

### 2. Program staffing

Each year, the initiative grew, which is a testimony to the quality of the program, its collaborators and staff, and the confidence funders have in United Way and its programmatic outcomes. Yet, with growth comes growing pains, and the program manager is increasingly tasked with ensuring the quality of the program does not diminish and continues to meet its goals.

The <sup>2</sup>2014 Youth Employment Program evaluation report by Pratt Richards Group (PRG) includes a youth employment model that includes future program staff. The model includes a minimum of two staff members, a program coordinator (manager) and an assistant coordinator. The program manager focuses on high-level items as well as corporate engagement and another staff member focuses on enrichment programming and youth communication. A third full- or part-time staff member could be administrative. Such a role could be a role for an intern or permanent position filled by a former program participant.



<sup>2</sup> Pratt Richards Group (PRG). *The Summer Youth Employment Initiative 2014 Evaluation Report* for 2013, 37.

### 3. Factors to consider when establishing goals

United Way and program funders established the goals for the number of students to participate in the program per year; however, other programmatic costs could impact the goal. Factors affecting the number of participants include the annual increase of Florida minimum wage and staffing-agency fees.

Also, when the goal for number of participants increases, so does the challenge of finding viable internship placements for students. The program manager has observed in previous years once the program secured 80 internships, it became a challenge to attain additional internships to meet the goal for number of participants. Starting recruitment efforts earlier will help address this challenge.

### 4. Begin employer recruitment at least six months in advance

Employers need time to internally vet and plan for participation. United Way received feedback from a few participating and prospective employers that they would like to interact with students prior to the internships, to help them with intern selection and to begin the mentoring relationship process. Activities could range from “lunch and learns,” customer-service training, and field trips to companies representing STEM and Jacksonville’s target growth industries.

Early recruitment also will allow program staff to focus on final preparations and urgent matters instead of employer recruitment.

### 5. Clarify the youth development specialist role for students and employers

The Youth Employment Program offers a case management component, where youth development specialists (YDS), who serve as case managers, monitor students throughout the program via weekly phone calls and site visits. They are also a resource for employer coaches and connect to address issues such as attendance, tardiness and personal issues affecting a student’s work.

The program deployed two case-management models. In the first model, each agency determined the number of individuals to serve in the youth development specialist capacity and case managers were provided by United Way partner agencies through a request for proposal (RFP). The agencies recruited students from their own program for participation and were paid an administrative fee to administer payroll and provide case management to their students. Some agencies managed 10 to 15 students, while others managed 25 to 30 students located throughout the city. It was determined the higher the case load, the less consistent the YDS role was performed across the board. The specialists had to juggle a variety of administrative tasks for the program in addition to performing their regular job. This model was used for three years and while youth development specialists received favorable reviews from students in the annual program evaluation report, some employers didn’t know the role existed.

For the fourth year of the program, United Way, with assistance from Duval County Public Schools Career and Technical Education (CTE) department, recruited four CTE instructors to serve as youth development specialists. A best practice was assigning the four specialists an area of town, such as Downtown, Northside, Westside and Southside. Each specialist was assigned 20-25 students. The Downtown youth development specialist had six internship sites assigned to her, with most sites having three to six students. In this model, less time was spent traveling to different sites and more time was allowed for extended visits and case management.

However, despite the model change, the program's annual report conveyed the same challenges with the YDS role as in years past and students found the employer coach role to be of more value. If United Way continues to use this model, the program will have to further integrate the YDS role into job readiness training, so students better understand the role of the youth development specialist.

Finally, whether the role was executed by youth agencies or CTE instructors, the difficulty in scheduling site visits and phone calls with a few employer coaches remained a challenge. At least 10 percent of employers opted to not communicate with youth development specialists. A couple of employers commented they were off-site, preferred visits be scheduled, and have less frequent contact. The program worked with them. One employer commented the youth-employment manager should contact employer coaches weekly to address intern issues.

## 6. Form a Youth-Employment Advisory Committee

A best practice is forming a Youth Employment Advisory Committee. During the third year of the program, United Way convened a committee of employers to provide a strong connection to nonprofits and corporate and small business sectors. Having employers share their insight helped the program develop a business case and establish skills students should be exposed to through job-readiness training and summer work or internships. The committee also identified barriers that may hinder prospective employers from taking part in the initiative, such as lack of funding, risk and liability for youth under age 18, limited time to train students, concern for confidential and proprietary information, and not having enough work for students. Also, committee members supported employer recruitment efforts by contacting their vast networks. As a result, the program garnered participation from at least two of Jacksonville's target growth industries: finance and logistics. An added bonus was most committee members hosted at least one intern at their job site and had positive experiences.

## 7. Align internships with the city's growth industries

Targeting employers whose industries align with your city's growth industries is another best practice. The first two years of the program, more than 54 percent of the internships were with nonprofits, but with the help of the advisory committee the program began to target specific corporate and government employers. Although the program still has a high percentage of nonprofit placements, 32 percent of placements are now with corporate partners. United Way believes the program appeals to employers not only because of the opportunity for employers to engage young people in the community, but to also forge a pipeline to tomorrow's workforce.

While the program continues to make progress, it has yet to secure internships in aviation and advanced manufacturing industries due to the hazardous work environments for students under the age of 18.



### **8. Background screen results can be a barrier to employment**

With the exception of violent and sex crimes, there are instances where youth, especially males, have misdemeanors and felony offenses on their records and some youth participate in rehabilitative programs. Many realize that they've made mistakes and desire an opportunity to be gainfully employed. They understand that gainful employment will help keep them focused and allow them to take care of themselves and/or family. Our young men and women deserve a chance to acquire job skills, be mentored, gain confidence, be an asset to their employer and earn income.

When background screening results prevented five to six young men from receiving internship placements, United Way convened Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA) along with other youth partner agencies to discuss the issue and potential collaborative solutions. As a result, impacted youth were referred to JALA on a case-by-case basis.

Operation New Hope is doing great work in this area, helping ex-felons become work ready through its Ready4Work Program, as well as work through Operation Reform. They have had success securing employers willing to provide opportunities to ex-felons. Lesson learned is to connect with organizations like Operation New Hope, JALA, interested employers to strategize on solutions for young people with background screen results that may hinder them from being employed. The goal is to overcome barriers to employment and help impacted youth gain independence and become responsible citizens.

### **9. Encourage coaches to give youth honest feedback about their performance**

Program staff strongly encourages employer coaches to give honest feedback to students about their performance and areas for improvement. The following scenario is a teachable moment. A youth development specialist called and visited a student and employer coach weekly. Every other week the student and employer coach submitted their evaluations. The program manager reviewed and found no areas of concerns listed. The evaluations were positive. When the post program evaluation was sent to the employer, the program manager was surprised to read the negative responses. The student was always late to work and at times did not show up. She barely finished her work assignments. The manager discussed with the youth development specialist to determine if she was aware of the issue, but the YDS had only received positive reports and was stunned by the evaluation.

Unfortunately, because the student was not reprimanded for constant tardiness, lack of attendance and poor job performance, they may think that their behavior was acceptable. This was a missed opportunity to not only coach the student but work as a team to correct the issue. It's better for students to receive the feedback now in a nurturing learning work environment than in the real work world where they risk being fired.

### **10. When feasible, encourage employers to host a minimum of two interns**

Over the course of the pilot, United Way noticed that an increasing number of employers opted to host at least two interns. The logic behind this decision was the interns would be able to work collaboratively on projects, encourage each other, and help each other adapt to the new office environment. If employers have a good experience and have the capacity, they tend to host additional students the following year. We had one employer take six interns the first year and 10 students the following year. Students recognize that their behavior and work performance may pave the way for more youth to enjoy such an experience in the future.



## 11. Anticipate and resolve pay issues

When placing students at different job sites, make sure that payment method and pay wage are consistent across the board. For a couple of years, students were paid an hourly wage or daily stipend. This created a challenge because a few youth agencies used payroll systems that were set up for hourly wages, not necessarily stipends.

The initiative also experienced challenges with pay inequities. Although students were instructed to not discuss pay with their peers, conversations were had. Without the funds to equalize pay for all of the interns, the program managers and youth development specialists worked together to address the issue. As a result, the discussion amongst students ceased.

## 12. Job Readiness- Offer early training and hold smaller sessions

Ideally, employers should provide training between the months of January to March and April at the very latest. After mid-April, trainings usually conflict with end-of-school-year activities and family trips. Also, consider the pros and cons of holding trainings during the week versus on Friday or Saturday. The program experienced good attendance for weekend sessions, barring no conflict with school activities.

Because of limited time we only offered two training sessions for 100 to 140 youth, but we recommend sessions with 25 to 30 students. Smaller sessions allow for more individualized attention from facilitators and helps increase student participation.

Also, consider training at a local college or an employer's campus. When United Way held trainings at a local college, students were excited about the thought of attending college.

## 13. Liability, risk and youth under age 18

If your organization needs to gain a better understanding of the risk and liability associated with youth under age 18, take the time to conduct thorough research. Contact subject matter experts in the areas of HR, risk, liability and legal to help clarify questions and conduct research.

United Way's youth employment program encountered some difficulties with placing 16-year-olds in corporate internships or worksites. Some of the reasons employers shared for not accepting 16-year-olds include:

- Liability—one employer recommended discussing with an attorney
- Confidentiality and HIPPA (when working in a health care environment)
- Their company policy requires that they pay students not an external program
- Maturity level of 16-year-olds

For 2015, United Way contracted with a staffing agency to help address liability requirements and administer payroll, which worked well. However, quite a few staffing agencies declined participation due to the risk involved. Or if they agreed to participate, their agency fee was increased due to the age of the students.



2014-2015, employers felt increasingly confident in having 16-year-olds as interns. In fact, a couple of the program's major success stories were of 16-year-old students.

## 14. Worksite Agreement

The program provides a worksite agreement that requires signature by both the worksite and United Way. One requirement is that participating employers provide a certificate of insurance. It was a challenge for some small businesses to meet the worksite agreement requirements as they couldn't provide the insurance amount stipulated in the agreement. Two employers could not participate because they could not meet the insurance requirements. Large scale employers were apprehensive in signing and made changes to the agreement to meet their company policies. There is value in convening program administrators, staffing agency, if applicable, and subject matter experts in liability, legal, HR and risk to discuss the worksite agreement template to see if there is an opportunity to reach a consensus on basic content.

## 15. Certifications/Badge Credentials

Although United Way didn't incorporate industry specific certifications and badges into its program, the practice adds value to youth employment initiatives and helps youth become marketable. Certification was a part of our conversations with workforce development professionals. A lesson learned is to gather input from employers, youth employment advisory committee and local colleges on universal certifications and credentials recognized by employers. Explore certifications such as Florida Work Keys, Microsoft Office, social media as well as online badges and consider the time needed to earn credentials.

## 16. Offer in-depth financial literacy education.

Students from the program have responded positively to financial literacy activities. In the initiative's 2014 evaluation program report by PRG, students expressed interest in having more exposure to financial literacy. United Way selected an interactive activity to educate and engage students. The four-hour long exercise exposed youth to basic information about filing taxes, basic IRS tax forms, good credit vs bad credit, and calculating pay deductions. The activity culminated with an interactive activity, "On My Own reality simulation, facilitated by the University of Florida IFAS/Duval County Extension Office and VyStar Credit Union. Students took the financial decisions they made during the simulation seriously and gained an understanding of budgeting and prioritizing needs versus wants.

Another financial literacy best practice is to partner with a financial institution able to offer students an opportunity to open a savings account. Select an institution that has locations and ATMS throughout the city. To remove barriers from opening an account, an institution may opt to waive membership fees. If they don't already, students will have a bank or credit union to deposit their pay and can sign up for direct deposit. This practice will help prevent youth from patronizing a check cashing facility to cash their checks or leaving their checks at home in a drawer.



## **17. Shift employer perception from corporate social responsibility to workforce pipeline**

From United Way's experience, employers participated in the youth employment initiative for corporate responsibility, a chance to mentor youth and to connect with the community. Over the course of the four-year pilot, five companies offered students employment post internships.

<sup>3</sup>According to recent news reports and studies, more employers are challenged with recruiting young people with soft skills, industry specific training and professional work behavior. Employers in collaboration with summer youth employment programs, community agencies and other like-minded entities could partner to develop a strategy in building a diverse and inclusive workforce that includes youth. Offering or participating in a youth employment program could be a part of a company's workforce strategy.

## **18. Consider offering transportation assistance**

Initially, the program set aside funds to help those in need of transportation for the first two weeks prior to youths receiving their first check. After the students received their first check, they were responsible for budgeting for bus passes. However, because Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) offered a summer promotion, the program provided those who needed assistance with a bus pass for the entire summer experience. At least 55 percent of students used the STAR Cards (bus pass).

One outstanding lesson that the program didn't anticipate was that students who never rode public transportation, felt a sense of accomplishment and independence in navigating the system. With support from their parents and guardians, they went online to research bus connections and Skyway. One mother commented that she offered to take her daughter different places, but all she wanted to do is ride the bus. Employers also made sure that students got to their bus stops in time to make it home.

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<sup>3</sup> Hrywna, Mark. "Youth Not Getting Job Opportunities They Need." *The Nonprofit Times* May 27, 2015  
Accessed January 2016, <http://www.thenonproffitimes.com/news-articles/youth-not-getting-job-opportunities-they-need/>

## WHAT IS WORK-BASED LEARNING AND ITS BENEFITS

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Work-based learning helps students apply the knowledge gained in their classes to the work place. They also receive additional insight into the business world that they won't necessarily gain in an academic environment. Work-based learning includes:

- Apprenticeships
- Cooperative Education, Co-op
- Externships
- Guest Speakers
- Internships
- Job Shadow
- School Based Enterprises
- Structured Field Trips
- Summer Employment

<sup>4</sup>The National Association for Colleges and Employers (NACE) defines an internship as a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. The internship usually involves students working in professional settings under the supervision and monitoring of practicing professionals. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths, and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

Internships provide high school and college students with on-the-job training. The experience sets education goals for the intern as well as the internship being closely monitored by you, the employer. An internship can range from one month to three months, a semester or even one year. Internships can be part-time or full-time depending on organizational needs and intern class requirements. Internship status of part-time or full-time should be clearly communicated to interns.

According to National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) and U.S Department of Labor, internships are legally defined as an extension of learning outside the classroom. Consider using this definition to develop your program.

Work-based learning benefits employers and students in several meaningful ways. Benefits of work-based learning include:

### *Employer Benefits*

- Exposure to a pool of applicants for future company positions. Internships can serve as an inexpensive recruitment tool for potential diverse talent. Interns will have an understanding of an organization's needs, work environment, and culture. Plus, they can be trained on company protocols.
- Creates professional development opportunities for a staff member.
- Interns can help complete projects that have not been finished due to lack of resources and time.
- Youth bring fresh ideas to their work and utilize today's technology.
- Allows companies to make a difference in the lives of youth in the community.

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<sup>4</sup> National Association of Colleges and Employers. Position Statement: U.S. Internships, Definition of "Internship" and Consistent Criteria, <http://www.naceweb.org/advocacy/position-statements/united-states-internships.aspx>



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## Youth Benefits

- Active participation may satisfy class or credit requirements for high school and college.
- Exposure to career paths that may pique their interest.
- Cultivate relationships with employees, who can mentor and help orient them to being in professional work environment. Also, building their network which could help lead to future job opportunities.
- Complete projects highlighting their growth throughout their internship. Furthermore, projects and assignments serve as resume content as well as items for discussion during a job interview.
- Develop or increase self-confidence.

**“The only way to do great work is to love what you do.”**

– Steve Jobs

## PROGRAM GOALS AND TARGET AUDIENCE

To ensure that your company’s work-based learning program is beneficial both to your organization, staff and youth, take the time to assess your resources, identify program objectives, goals and your target audience. Assess your internal, financial and external resources.

1. INTERNAL RESOURCES	2. FINANCIAL RESOURCES	3. EXTERNAL RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are there employees available to mentor and interact with students?</li><li>▪ Are there subject matter experts available to support soft skills training?</li><li>▪ What other roles are needed for various program components?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are there financial resources in place to fund a program? - <i>Youth compensation</i> - <i>Staff dedicated to managing the program</i></li><li>▪ Are there internal sources that can provide support such as Finance, Human Resources and Operations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are there resources to offer services like training, certifications and financial literacy?</li><li>▪ Will you use a staffing agency to manage payroll and carry the necessary insurance?</li><li>▪ Are there existing relationships with local agencies to join efforts? For example, recruit youth, and other services?</li></ul>

Once you’ve thoroughly considered available resources, you can move forward with setting goals for participation. What are the company’s goals for hosting interns? What does your organization hope to gain from the experience? Is the goal to invest in the future of your industry through recruiting youth for summer employment and or internships? Is the goal to help youth gain soft skills and on-the-job experience?

### Company/Organization Goals for Hosting Youth

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Youth Goals

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Employee/Staff Goals

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Target Audience

You may have identified your target audience while developing your program goals. If the target audience for youth participation is high school aged youth between the ages of 16-18, and/or college and college technical education students, there are items to take into consideration, specifically for ages 16-17. Your program could be the first work or training experience for them, and they may require more attention, nurturing and time throughout their internship. Liability is a concern for most employers. United Way has had a positive history with 16-year-olds performing well at their internship sites; however, there is always the concern of risk and ensuring that youth don't perform specific jobs. Explore liability with your human resources, legal, operations and risk management, as research outcomes and company policy may determine youth age requirements. Every organization's policy differs, but it's always best to err on the side of caution.

### Youth 18 and over

One point to be mindful of are over age high school students, who are over the traditional age for his or her grade level. They need opportunities, too. For example, you may attract 18-year-olds who may be a junior or senior in high school. We encountered some issues in placing them in corporate environments, as most required that 18-year-olds have a minimum of a high school diploma or GED. Be specific in your criteria so that there are no misunderstandings.

### Youth Under 18

As an employer, you must be cognizant of federal laws pertaining to youth under the age of 18. Your human resources department can be of support and guide you on appropriate practices based on laws and criteria set by the <sup>5</sup>U.S. Department of Labor. Also research your <sup>6</sup>State Child Labor laws for minors under the age of 18.

**“Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.”**

– Tony Robbins

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## LEADERSHIP BUY IN

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In order for such an initiative to be successful, messaging in support of a program comes from the top and is communicated to all staff levels. Such messaging conveys that offering deserving youth summer employment or internships is an important company initiative as it could expose a potential pool of future applicants to your industry. Other key stakeholders to engage are:

- **Human Resources or Internal Staffing Agency** – Intern job descriptions, recruitment support, application procedures, liability requirements, labor laws for under age 18, confidentiality agreements, Workforce Income Tax Credits and pay/stipends, if internships will be paid.
- **Legal** – To address liability issues with interns between the ages of 16-19.

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<sup>5</sup> United States Department of Labor. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.dol.gov/general/topic/youthlabor/agerequirements>

<sup>6</sup> United States Department of Labor. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.dol.gov/whd/state/nonfarm.htm#Florida>

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- **Department Directors or Managers** – Contact them to identify departments interested in participating. They will identify projects, where an intern will be stationed and assign an individual to manage an intern.
- **Intern Supervisor** - Responsible for managing intern, on-the-job training to provide constructive feedback.

**“People buy into the leadership before they buy into the vision.”**

– *John C. Maxwell*

## COMPENSATION

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Internships can either be paid or nonpaid with summer employment as paid. The business must determine if funding is available for compensation. Summer employment pay may take the form of an hourly wage, while an internship can be either a hourly wage or stipend. If your organization elects to offer unpaid internships, then be mindful that your program must meet criteria set by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) of unpaid internships. <sup>7</sup>Per the USDOE, the Fair Labor Standards Act, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, provides criteria for what is and is not legal regarding payment for internships. The six criteria that can be applied to determine if an intern will be a trainee and if an internship can be unpaid:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern, and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

Your budget will help determine the number of weeks the program will run and the amount of part-time and full-time placements. For summer months, program length ranges from six to eight weeks. Also do research to determine if your company is eligible to receive tax credits through programs like the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Program, offered through the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. <sup>8</sup>The WOTC is a federal income tax credit that provides incentives to private for-profit employers to encourage the hiring of individuals from certain targeted groups of jobseekers who traditionally have difficulty finding employment. For example, according to their website, summer youths (residing in an Empowerment Zone) qualify as a target group. For current legislation and information about the program in the State of Florida, visit the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity online.

**“Be so good they can’t ignore you.”**

– *Steve Martin*

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<sup>7</sup> **Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act** <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.floridajobs.org/business-growth-and-partnerships/for-employers/find-tax-credit-and-incentive-programs/work-opportunity-tax-credit-program>

## INTERN RECRUITMENT AND PREPARATION

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There is no shortage of teens seeking paid summer employment or internships. Therefore, when you begin the recruitment process, make sure that the marketing tools reflect your set program criteria, so that you have a good pool of eligible and qualified applicants.

### *Criteria and requirement examples*

- Must be between the ages of 16-18.
- Write a 500-word essay (organization determines the essay topic).
- Must have six months of work experience.
- Must be enrolled in a school career academy. Provide proof of enrollment.
- Must undergo a background check.

Internal staff may help you set criteria. Please keep in mind if you receive funding from external sources, they may have specific grant requirements.

### *Helpful tips to get you started*

1. Begin recruitment three to four months in advance. This will allow time to interview, screen and vet candidates along with cultivating relationships with students prior to employment.
2. Develop marketing materials. Your marketing materials should reflect program criteria, key messages and a call to action. Work with your communications and or marketing department to develop effective collateral materials to help you market your program to the appropriate audiences. Tools may vary and include:
  - Webpage on company website with online application and program information
  - Promotional flier that can be distributed as hard copies or electronically via email
  - Promotional email with key program messages, a call to action, a quote or testimonial and links to your webpage
  - Digital media – Vine, Snapchat, Facebook, to name a few
  - Ads for student online or newspapers
3. Most companies recruit college students to fill summer job and intern positions. However, school districts across the country offer career and technical education or career academies focused on technology, media, finance, business and other industries. Students are in need of internship opportunities to bridge classroom knowledge with work experience. Summer employment and internships provide such opportunities. Youth not enrolled in a career academy may also be seeking insight into potential careers through an internship. There are a variety of sources that have access to the audience you desire to target.
  - **High Schools** – Most districts offer Career and Technical Education (CTE) or Career Academies focusing on high-growth industries for your city. Work with CTE lead personnel to help disseminate your message to instructors and students. Diverse pool candidates.  
  
Other high school resources are guidance counselors and social workers. They've established a rapport with students throughout the year and can also be of help in recruiting motivated and dedicated youth for your initiative.
  - **Colleges and Universities** – Recruitment can be targeted to students majoring in areas of study related to your industry. You can also target students participating in industry specific professional organizations for example Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), the college student chapter for PRSA. Career Services is also an invaluable resource to recruit a diverse pool of potential candidates.



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- **Digital Media** – Free and minimal cost tools are available for your use like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Email newsletters with a link to your online application can also be developed and sent your target audience. Internet can be used by posting internships on company career page and job boards.
- **Local Youth Agencies or Adopted School** – If your organization partners with a youth-serving agency or an education institution through adopt-a-high-school-program, consider recruiting their students. Your organization may have internal staff, who mentor students throughout the academic year and could host mentees as interns during the summer. Youth agencies can help screen their students since they have a pre-existing relationship with applicants and could identify those who meet your criteria and can be successful in your program. Furthermore, agencies could consider providing case managers to support recruitment efforts as well as work with you and their students throughout the course of the program. This is a proactive measure to address concerns, if any.
- **Government and Community Agencies** – Contact your local city government to inquire about the city’s summer jobs program. They’re always in need of employers looking to host interns, especially employers that are able to underwrite student compensation. They, in turn, can help identify students and with some programs provide additional services that benefit both you and youth. CareerSource of Northeast Florida is also a knowledgeable source to link with as well.

Once the recruitment process is complete, you should have plenty of candidates to interview and select from. Even if you’re partnering with an agency and accepting their students, it is still recommended to conduct interviews. An interview is a learning and growth experience for students. After screening and selecting candidates, extend an offer letter, so that they have in writing the terms of the program, compensation and important dates.

**“I’ve always believed you hire character and train skill.”**

*– Lori Greiner*

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### ROLES FOR EXTERNAL COLLABORATORS

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Your work-based learning program can be strictly a company venture or one that includes partnering with nonprofits, schools, community groups and youth-serving agencies. United Way found that components such as case management, job readiness training and financial literacy proved beneficial for students. You don’t have to include this as a part of your work-based learning initiative; however, if you’re looking for ways to further enrich the experience then you may want to consider incorporating.

1. **Financial Literacy Activity** – Youth should begin developing healthy financial practices at a young age. To help prepare students for managing their pay checks, considering offering a financial literacy activity that teaches them about pay deductions, budgeting, how to save money and tax preparation. A financial institution hosting interns could easily incorporate it into the student orientation. For other industries, perhaps there is a financial institution that your company patronizes that you can partner with. Some have financial literacy curriculums and activities geared towards high school students. Plus, those who don’t have a checking or savings account could open one. For example, the first year of our program, we found out that at least two students patronized check cashing facilities to cash their checks. A takeaway for us was to incorporate financial literacy and provide them with opportunities to open an account with a bank or credit union.

Other financial literacy experts to partner with may include United Way RealSense and the University of Florida IFAS/Duval County Extension Office. They have interactive activities to keep students' attention. There are other nonprofits and companies offering financial literacy for students as well. By including a financial literacy exercise, students can prepare for receipt of pay checks and learn the basics of budgeting and saving their earned funds.

- 2. Work Readiness Training** In addition to a project-based internship, you may consider offering work readiness training or lunch-and-learns during the program period. Sessions can address soft skills, work etiquette, customer service as well as topics relative to your industry.

Your organization is not limited to the above suggestions. Perhaps you have some ideas from an employer's perspective or industry specific that may further refine your work. Let your creativity flow. Just keep in mind resources, available funding, time and company procedures.

**“Working together is success.”**

– Henry Ford

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## PROGRAM PREPARATIONS

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### **1. Survey and Evaluation Tools**

Evaluation is a critical piece for your initiative as you measure your goals against outcomes. Is the program meeting its objectives? What are the new learnings? Is the student acquiring new skills and demonstrating growth? How is the program progressing from a supervisor/mentor and business perspectives? To ensure the organization is meeting internship and company objectives, develop an evaluation tool for both students and job coach use. The survey can align with program objectives and include soft skills. Both coaches and students can provide feedback on their experiences such as areas for growth, accomplishments and miscellaneous comments. The survey can also be used as a tool to identify and resolve arising issues. The program coordinator can determine frequency of surveys. Three options are:

- Two surveys with one at the beginning of initiative for baseline and a post internship survey
- Three surveys with one at the beginning of initiative, midpoint and post.
- Biweekly surveys

Surveys can be sent for completion via online survey companies or your company may handle internally. The tool should have no more than three to five questions and space for miscellaneous comments.

### **2. Workstation and Equipment**

Make sure to provide youth with the basic tools necessary for them to be successful in their role. Provide a workstation, one that is preferably close to the individual who will manage and mentor them. Allow time to request and set-up telephone, voice mail as well as computer and email access. Ensure that they have basic supplies such as writing instruments and a notepad. Some organizations provide interns with a simple company branded promotional item, to make them feel like a part of the team. These items may be small to employers, but they are meaningful to students.

### **3. Soft Skills**

One item that you may want to cover during the program is soft skills. United Way convened a youth employment advisory committee comprised of employers representing various industries. One

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message that was communicated to us was that students needed exposure and training on soft skills. They must learn the basics. The group brainstormed on basic soft skills that were addressed by our program. Your program coordinator in collaboration with human resources and participating departments may identify soft skills for youth and onsite supervisors/employer coaches to focus on. Below is the list of soft skills.

*Taking Initiative • Business Culture • Confidentiality • Conflict Resolution • Critical Thinking  
• Interpersonal • Listening Communication • Networking • Personal Responsibility  
• Research • Trust • Verbal Communication • Written Communication*

## 4. Onsite Supervisor/Employer Coach Orientation

If multiple departments are hosting students, then the individual coordinating the program may want to plan an onsite supervisor/employer coach orientation. Participants can come together to learn and prepare for their students.

*Introduction  
Purpose for work-based learning program  
Goals  
Onsite Supervisor description of duties  
Program Processes and Procedures  
Risk and Liability – including offsite lunch  
How to develop departmental and intern goals  
Developing youth work plans and projects  
Soft skills*

*Job shadow and youth rotation between departments  
Lessons learned – shared by those who have hosted students before  
Support System - Coaches serving as an internal support system for each other  
Role of external partners  
Survey and evaluations*

The orientation can be two to two and half hours, depending on content.

## 5. Youth Program Orientation

To maximize resources, the program coordinator and coaches may agree to offer one company orientation for all youth and address department specific information separately. For many students, an internship will be their first opportunity to work in a corporate environment or a professional setting. Set the tone for the internship by offering an orientation, where interns will be acclimated with company policies, procedures, performance and internship expectations, introductions to those managing and work with interns and a tour. The amount of content you have to share will help determine the time allotted for the activity. A suggestion is to have your intern sign an Orientation Acknowledge form. Here are examples of orientation topics to address.

- *Introductions*
- *Company overview and how their role aligns with organization goals*
- *Mission, Vision and Core Values*
- *Organizational chart*
- *Internship Goals*
- *Intern job description review, expectations and primary projects*
- *Training*
- *Workplace policies – Such as Internet and phone usage, sexual harassment, conduct*
- *Safety procedures*
- *Dress code*
- *Timesheets*
- *Photo release*
- *Compensation – Note: communicate to youth that compensation is a private matter that should not be discussed with other students and employees. Explain why.*
- *Work/Internship Schedule*
- *Breaks, lunch breaks, and procedure for communicating sick or will be late*
- *Company badge*
- *Company tour*
- *Brief instructions on use of office equipment*
- *Forms – confidentiality, parking, emergency contacts, etc.*
- *Phone list of important numbers*
- *Meeting schedule*
- *Liability and going off campus*

**“Align yourself with the right people, forget the right relationships,  
and you’ll set yourself up for the long run.”**

– *Daymond John*

## THE ONSITE SUPERVISOR EMPLOYER COACH

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Supervising and mentoring youth can be a meaningful experience. However, the role requires patience, planning and time. The rewards are great. The employer coach should work your program coordinator to ensure alignment and to help you develop objectives or goals for their role as well as the student. The coach’s supervisor may also have thoughts on their participation goals. For example, the program may serve as a professional development opportunity to help an individual develop or refine specific skills. Preparation is critical and will help you and your student be successful in your roles.

### *Helpful tips for Job Coaches/Employer Coaches*

- **Host two students** – If in the budget, consider hosting more than one intern. A lesson learned from United Way’s Youth Employment Program is a few employers opted to host two students, so that they would have a teammate they could relate to and work with. Youth have motivated each other to work hard, learn and put their best foot forward.
- **Develop department objectives for your students** – Objectives should be specific, measurable and describe what the student will do and achieve. You may develop your own objectives. However, if the youth is interning with your company through a high school or college, their education institution may have specific objectives as well.

### *Examples of Objectives*

1. Intern will develop event planning skills by attending event meetings, job shadow the events manager and plan event registration and reporting.
  2. Intern will become proficient in Microsoft PowerPoint by creating assigned presentations that presenters will use at company meetings.
- **Project Ideas** – Today’s youth, also referred to as millennials, are accustomed to social media and digital communication. It’s critical to develop projects that will not only expose them to your industry, but allow them to develop soft skills including communication. Students are accustomed to looking down from texting and communicating electronically. As a result, some students find looking up and giving eye contact to be a challenge. Here are few project examples and purpose for each project.
    - **Presentation to management team** – To develop public speaking, eye contact and presentation skills
    - **Job shadow CEO or staff member in their career of interest** – Experience a day in the life. Learn decision making process and interacting with all levels of staff. Ask questions. Learn the steps the staff member took to get to where they are today in their career.
    - **Rotate to different departments** – To expose youth to different aspects of business and how departments work collaboratively to support company goals and provide services.
    - **Develop or support social media strategy and updates** – Learn there is a strategy behind company social media efforts, use writing skills and develop content that engages readers and viewers.



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- **Take time off before program starts** – Sometimes it's difficult to take a few days off when hosting students. Many employers that have participated in United Way's program shared that they took time off a couple of weeks before the program and, of course, after the program. They found the time away helpful to rest and to mentally prepare for the work-based learning experience.
- **Remember your first job experience** – Put yourself in the place of the student. On your first job you were maybe nervous, didn't know what to expect and simply didn't know the basics of working. Someone had to show you the ropes and took the time to train you on clocking in and out, how to perform certain tasks and finally allowed you to work on your own or as a part of a team. Most students will be excited, nervous, and at times, too nervous or scared to ask questions. Not only do they want to do a good job, but they want to please their supervisor through their work. Praise and words of encouragement will build their confidence. However, constructive feedback is always valuable too, but be aware of the words you use, tone of voice and how comments are shared.

At times, coaches may become impatient or time is limited but a supervisor is helping youth build a work foundation. Years from now, when a student recollects their first job or real work experience, not only will they remember where they worked but the supervisor who made an impact on them. Efforts may help a student gain employment with your company or another organization.

- **Build a rapport with students** – Build a rapport by having lunch with youth the first day or week of the program. Learn about their interests or areas they want to improve upon, which will help in further identifying other potential projects or opportunities for them. Discuss your leadership style and expectations. Encourage students to ask questions.
- **Planning brief meetings when needed** – Schedule a time to provide constructive feedback to students. Encourage two-way communication and how both of your experiences are progressing. Your feedback can lead to further development of intern confidence and skills. Address areas for improvement and their strengths. Keep the tone positive. Employees appreciate being recognized for their work and students do, too.
- **Have a Plan B** – From our experience, a number of students are adept and complete work assignments in a quick fashion. Encourage them to proofread, check their work and to pace themselves. It's good to be prepared for such occasions. Otherwise, a student who is not accustomed to taking initiative to ask for more work may surf the Internet and use their cell phones, while waiting for their next assignment.

**"The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."**

*– Steven Spielberg*

## EXIT INTERVIEW

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At the conclusion of the program, your student should have an exit interview. The interview is yet another tool to use to measure objectives, outcomes and learn how the program can be refined, based on their responses. The final evaluation can be distributed during the exit interview. It should include a human resources representative and possibly the student onsite supervisor/coach. Schedule the interview in advance, to allow time for students to prepare thoughts about their experience, as well as to develop and ask questions. Students can also reflect on the role of the job coach. Plus, the final day of the program is usually busy with last day luncheon.

If there are positions open and the student may qualify, consider encouraging them to apply. There have been cases where companies have hired their students as part-time or full-time employees. Such an outcome supports quantitative measures.

And finally, if the student has done a great job over the course of the program, the onsite supervisor/coach can provide the student with a letter of reference. The student may ask if the coach could be a reference as they search for employment.

**“The secret to success is good leadership, and good leadership is all about making the lives of your team members or workers better.”**

– Tony Dungy

## OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

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All participating staff should be commended for their commitment to the program and the students they trained and mentored. Once the program has concluded, the final step is to determine outcomes and evaluate the initiative. Revisit your program goals and objectives to analyze results to determine if goals met. Review evaluations to gather data. Take feedback received from participants to identify areas for improvement, lessons learned, best practices and success stories.

A report can be compiled and shared with the appropriate leadership team to share results. Gather testimonials for report inclusion as well as to support future recruitment efforts.

**“One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.”**

– Milton Friedman

## APPENDIX

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### Employer Resources

<http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>

<http://www.naceweb.org/advocacy/position-statements/united-states-internships.aspx?land-intern-lp-3-postint-09062013#sthash.scidt0OP.dpuf>

*Soft Skill Development: A Critical Review, prepared by the Pratt Richards Group, May 2014*

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/3/urlt/steps-manual.pdf>

### Financial Literacy

<http://www.unitedwaynefl.org/realsense/>