

An Employer's Guide to Successful Internships

How to Create Impact While Shaping Future Talent



**THE FLORIDA
TALENT CENTER**
Powered by the Florida Chamber Foundation

FUTURE OF WORK
FLORIDA

FLORIDA CHAMBER FOUNDATION OVERVIEW



The Florida Chamber Foundation is a leader in future-focused research, serving as a catalyst for positive change across the state. Its mission is to secure Florida's future by identifying key economic, workforce, and policy trends that shape the state's competitiveness. Central to these efforts is the [Florida 2030 Blueprint](#), a comprehensive strategy aimed at securing Florida's future by improving Florida's talent pipeline, fostering innovation to grow the economy, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. Guided by data-driven insights and collaborative efforts, the Foundation works to develop strategies that align with the state's growth goals, ensuring that businesses, communities, and individuals thrive in an increasingly competitive global economy.

A key component of these efforts is the [Future of Work Florida](#) initiative, which aims to create the nation's top workforce by 2030. This initiative is uniting the business community with workforce and education partners to address Florida's evolving talent needs. By aligning education, training, and career pathways with the demands of modern industries, Future of Work Florida is ensuring that the state's workforce remains competitive, adaptable, and future-ready. Through strategic partnerships between employers, educational institutions, and policymakers, the initiative plays a vital role in strengthening Florida's talent pipeline, driving economic growth, and positioning the state as a national leader in workforce development.

The Future of Work Florida initiative seeks to increase awareness and preparedness for high-demand careers. One avenue for increasing preparedness is amplifying the value of quality internship participation. Through this guide, you will gain a better understanding of how your organization can benefit from designing and deploying internships as a vital part of your talent pipeline strategy.

To learn more about internships or get involved in the Future of Work Florida initiative, contact Rachel Ludwig, Vice President of Talent Development for the Future of Work, rludwig@flchamber.com.



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“Talent is quickly replacing the tax incentive as the economic development tool of choice”

-Mark Wilson, President, Florida Chamber of Commerce and Foundation



WHY INTERNSHIPS?



Internships play a vital role in the development of a robust talent pipeline for many organizations. They offer a mutually beneficial arrangement where employers gain access to emerging talent, while interns receive invaluable real-world experience. The effectiveness of internships as a talent pipeline strategy is well-documented, with data demonstrating significant benefits for both employers and interns.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) released their “2021 Internship & Co-op Survey Report,” which found that 56.1% of interns received a full-time job offer from the company where they interned. Furthermore, the conversion rate of interns to full-time employees was significantly higher compared to external hires, indicating that internships serve as an effective screening and training tool for employers.

A study published in 2024 by Strada Education Foundation, “Talent Disrupted,” focused on underemployment figures across the country for individuals with bachelor’s degrees. This study showed:

- 52% of 4-year graduates are underemployed within a year of graduation, and after ten years, 45% remained underemployed.
- 79% of those who land a college-level job will remain in a college-level job after five years, showing the importance of graduates obtaining a college-level job upon degree completion.
- 48% lower underemployment was observed among individuals who completed an internship.

If businesses and educational institutions in Florida support internship participation for each student enrolled in postsecondary education, we can more effectively build our talent pipeline while simultaneously ensuring our graduates secure college-level employment upon completion of their studies.

*Strada Education Foundation and Burning Glass Institute



BENEFITS OF INTERNSHIPS FOR EMPLOYERS



Internships offer numerous advantages for organizations looking to strengthen their talent pipeline:



- **Access to Emerging Talent:** Internships provide employers with early access to young professionals who bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas.
- **Cost-Effective Recruitment:** Internships serve as an extended interview process, allowing employers to evaluate interns' skills, work ethic, and cultural fit before making a full-time job offer.
- **Increased Productivity:** Interns can bring new ideas and contribute to projects, increasing overall productivity.
- **Increased Retention Rates:** Employees who start as interns tend to have higher retention rates. NACE reports that 75.5% of former interns remained with their employer after one year, compared to 64.4% of those who were hired without internship experience.
- **Enhanced Employer Brand:** A well-structured internship program enhances a company's reputation among prospective employees and academic institutions, making it easier to attract top talent in the future.

BENEFITS OF INTERNSHIPS FOR INTERNS

Interns also reap significant rewards from their experiences:

- **Real-World Experience:** Internships provide students with hands-on experience in their field of study, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical application.
- **Professional Networking:** Internships offer opportunities to build professional networks, which can be invaluable for future job searches and career growth.
- **Skill Development:** Interns develop essential workplace skills, such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, which are essential for career success.
- **Increased Employability:** Having internship experience on a resume makes candidates more attractive to potential employers, increasing their chances of securing a job post-graduation.



DESIGNING A SUCCESSFUL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Defining Objectives and Goals

Start by defining what you want to achieve with your internship program. Consider the following questions:

- What skills or competencies are you looking to develop in your interns?
- How will the internship program support your long-term talent needs?
- What outcomes do you expect from the internship program?
- Could your internship program serve as an opportunity to enhance the leadership and management skills of your current managers?



Identifying Internship Roles and Responsibilities

Identify the roles and responsibilities for interns by:

- Conducting a needs assessment to determine areas where interns can add value.
- Defining clear job descriptions with specific tasks and projects.
- Ensuring that the roles provide meaningful learning experiences.

Structuring the Internship Program

Structure your program by considering:

- **Duration:** Decide on the length of the internship, typically ranging from 8 weeks to 6 months.
- **Schedule:** Determine whether the internship will be full-time or part-time.
- **Compensation:** Decide on the pay for your internship, ensuring compliance with labor laws.
- **Academic Credit:** If applicable, coordinate with educational institutions to offer academic credit.



DEVELOPING A SUCESSFUL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Recruitment Strategies

To attract top talent:

- Partner with universities, state colleges, and technical colleges.
- Attend career fairs and networking events.
- Utilize online job boards and social media platforms.
- Develop an engaging and informative internship webpage.
- Create an intern alumni referral program.

Selection Process

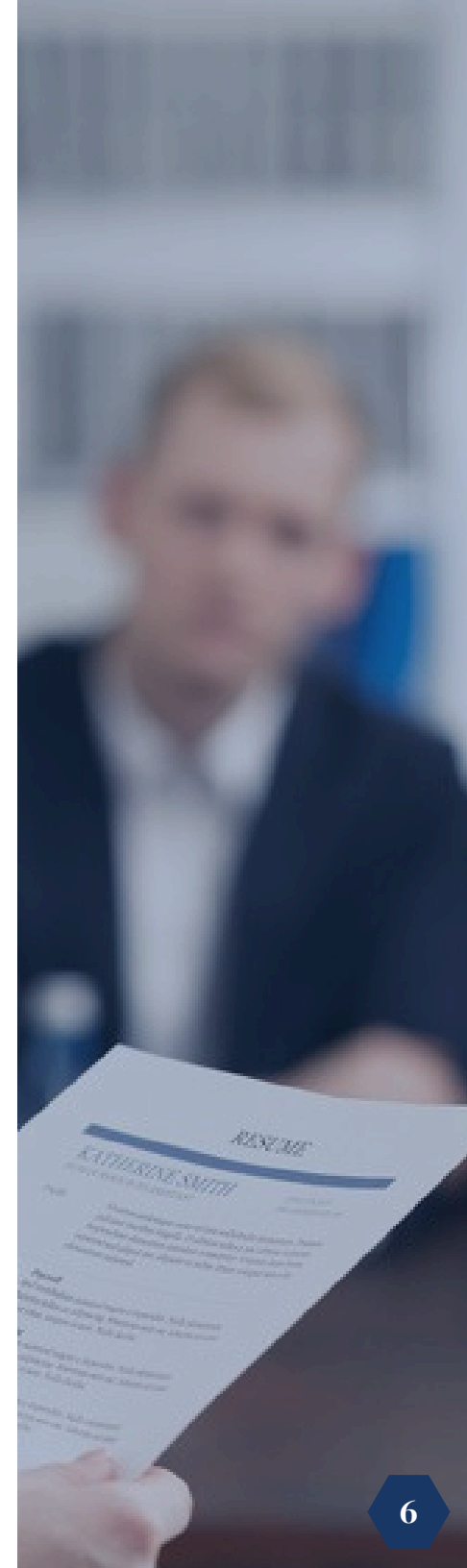
Implement a thorough selection process:

- Review resumes and cover letters to shortlist candidates.
- Conduct interviews to assess skills, fit, and enthusiasm.
- Consider including practical assessments or assignments.

Onboarding Interns

A smooth onboarding process includes:

- Providing an orientation session to introduce interns to the company culture and policies.
- Offering necessary training and resources.
- Assigning mentors or supervisors to guide interns.



IMPLEMENTING YOUR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Mentorship and Supervision

Effective mentorship and supervision are crucial:

- What skills or competencies are you looking to develop in your interns?
- How will the internship program support your long-term talent needs?
- What outcomes do you expect from the internship program?



Providing Learning Opportunities

Identify the roles and responsibilities for interns by:

- Conducting a needs assessment to determine areas where interns can add value.
- Defining clear job descriptions with specific tasks and projects.
- Ensuring that the roles provide meaningful learning experiences.

Performance Evaluation and Feedback

Regularly evaluate and provide feedback:

- Conduct mid-term and end-of-term evaluations.
- Provide constructive feedback and recognize achievements.
- Use evaluations to identify areas for improvement and future development.



RETAINING TALENT POST-INTERNSHIP

Transitioning Interns to Full-Time Roles

To retain top interns:

- Identify high-performing interns for potential full-time positions.
- Provide a clear pathway for transition from intern to employee.
- Offer career development and growth opportunities.



Building a Talent Pipeline

To maintain a connection with former interns:

- Create an alumni network to keep in touch with past interns.
- Invite former interns to company events and seminars.
- Consider offering return internships or part-time roles.

CONCLUSION



Designing, developing, and implementing an effective internship program is a strategic investment for any organization. This guide outlines the essential steps and best practices to create a successful internship program that aligns with your organization's goals and strengthens your future talent pipeline.

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RESOURCES AND TEMPLATES



Sample Needs Assessment for Internship Program

Conducting a needs assessment is a critical first step in designing an effective internship program. This process helps identify the specific areas within your organization where interns can add the most value. The following sample needs assessment template can be customized to fit your organization's unique requirements.

Objective: Identify departments and roles where interns can contribute meaningfully and gain valuable experience.

Needs Assessment Template

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Instructions: Distribute this assessment to department heads and team leaders. Collect and analyze responses to determine internship opportunities.

Department Information	
Department Name	
Department Head	
Assessment Completed By	
Date	

1. Current Workforce Analysis:

Current Staff Composition	
Number of full-time employees	
Number of part-time employees	
Number of contract workers	
Workload Analysis	
Are there projects or tasks currently under-resourced?	
Are there seasonal or cyclical workload fluctuations?	
Is there a need for additional support in any specific area?	

2. Potential Internship Roles:

List potential roles or tasks suitable for interns	
Role 1	
Role 2	
Role 3	
What specific skills or competencies would be beneficial for these roles?	
Skill 1	
Skill 2	
Skill 3	

How can interns contribute to your department's objectives?	
Contribution 1	
Contribution 2	
Contribution 3	

3. Project and Task Identification: Identify key projects where interns can be involved

Project 1	
Description	
Expected Duration	
Intern's Role	
Project 2	
Description	
Expected Duration	
Intern's Role	
List routine tasks that can be assigned to interns	
Task 1	
Task 2	
Task 3	

4. Training and Development Needs

What initial training will be required for interns to perform their roles effectively?	
Training 1	
Training 2	
Training 3	
What ongoing development opportunities can be provided	
Dev. Opportunity 1	
Dev. Opportunity 2	
Dev. Opportunity 3	

5. Supervisory and Mentorship Support

Who will be responsible for mentoring the interns?

What is the plan for regular check-ins and support?
Who will supervise the interns' day-to-day activities?
How will performance be monitored and evaluated?

6. Alignment with Organizational Goals

How do the identified internship roles align with your department's strategic goals?
How do they align with the overall organizational goals?
Are there opportunities for interns to transition into full-time roles?
What is the long-term potential for these roles within your department?

7. Please provide any additional comments or suggestions regarding the internship program.

[Download Template](#)

By completing this needs assessment, you can gather valuable insights into where interns can make significant contributions and how to structure roles that provide meaningful learning experiences. This information will be crucial in designing a tailored internship program that meets both organizational needs and the developmental goals of the interns.

RESOURCES AND TEMPLATES

Internship Program Planning Template & Sample Internship Job Description: Marketing & HR Intern

Sample Internship Job Description: Marketing Intern

Position Title: Marketing Intern

Department: Marketing

Location: [Company Headquarters]

Duration: 3 months (June - August)

Compensation: \$ Hourly

About Us: [Company Name] is a dynamic and innovative company in the [industry] sector, committed to delivering high-quality products/services and exceptional customer experiences. We are looking for a motivated Marketing Intern to join our team and gain hands-on experience in various aspects of marketing.

Position Overview: The Marketing Intern will support the marketing team in executing various marketing strategies and campaigns. This role provides an excellent opportunity to learn about digital marketing, content creation, social media management, and market research, offering a comprehensive learning experience in a fast-paced environment.

Key Responsibilities:

- Content Creation:**
 - Assist in creating engaging content for social media platforms, blogs, and newsletters.
 - Support the development of marketing materials, such as brochures, flyers, and presentations.
- Social Media Management:**
 - Help manage and grow our social media presence by scheduling posts and monitoring engagement.
 - Assist in developing and implementing social media campaigns.
- Market Research:**
 - Research industry trends, competitors, and target audiences.
 - Analyze data to support marketing strategies and decision-making.
- Event Support:**
 - Assist in the planning and execution of marketing events, webinars, and promotions.
 - Support logistical arrangements and coordinate event details.
- Administrative Tasks:**
 - Maintain marketing databases and ensure data accuracy.
 - Perform general office duties such as filing, scanning, and data entry.

[Download Template](#)

Internship Program Planning Template

Task	Description	Deadline	Responsible
Needs Assessment	Determine areas of need within the company where interns could contribute.		HR Department
Define Objectives	Establish goals for the program and specific positions.		Program Manager or HR Department
Identify Roles	Develop job descriptions based on objectives for internship positions.		HR Department
Develop Intern Recruitment Strategy	Partner with high schools or postsecondary institutions. Create & deploy job postings.		Recruitment Team
Select Candidates	Review applications & conduct interviews.		Hiring Committee
Onboard interns	Orientation & training plan.		HR Department
Mentorship	Assign mentors & schedule check-ins.		Department Supervisors
Performance Evaluations	Conduct mid-term & final reviews.		Department Supervisors
Transition & Talent Pipeline Planning	Identify potential hires for future full-time roles & create transition plans.		HR Department
Additional comments			

[Download Template](#)

Sample Internship Job Description: Human Resources Intern

Position Title: Human Resources Intern

Department: Human Resources

Location: [Company Headquarters]

Duration: 3 months (June - August)

Compensation: \$ Hourly

About Us: [Company Name] is a leading [industry] company dedicated to [brief description of the company's mission and values]. We are looking for a motivated Human Resources Intern to join our team and gain valuable experience in various aspects of HR operations.

Position Overview: The Human Resources Intern will support the HR department in various tasks related to recruitment, onboarding, employee relations, and administrative functions. This internship is designed to provide exposure to the fundamental aspects of human resources management and offer comprehensive learning experience.

Key Responsibilities:

- Assist with Recruitment:**
 - Post job openings on internal and external job boards.
 - Screen resumes and applications to identify qualified candidates.
 - Schedule interviews and assist in the interview process.
- Support Onboarding:**
 - Prepare new hire orientation materials.
 - Assist with new employee onboarding sessions.
 - Help ensure all onboarding paperwork is completed and filed.
- Employee Relations:**
 - Assist in organizing employee engagement activities.
 - Help address employee inquiries and provide general support.
- Administrative Tasks:**
 - Maintain employee records and ensure data accuracy.
 - Assist in preparing HR reports and presentations.
 - Perform general office duties such as filing, scanning, and data entry.

[Download Template](#)



TESTIMONIALS FROM TALENT DEVELOPMENT LEADERS



Marian Cacciatore
VP, Human Resources



"At Tampa Electric, we have a long history of providing undergraduate and graduate students opportunities to gain experience through internships and co-ops. For the students, these opportunities provide invaluable real-world experience and offer them the opportunity to expand their network and gain important skills. The company also benefits by a strong internship/co-op program. We find that these students bring fresh perspectives, easily embrace innovation and serve as a talent pipeline for future full-time employees."



Kara Marante
VP & Chief People Officer



"Our Administrative Graduate Internship Program has been instrumental in cultivating future healthcare leaders. By providing hands-on experience in diverse operational areas, interns gain valuable insights into the complexities of pediatric healthcare. Several of our program participants have gone on to secure roles within Nicklaus Children's Health System, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in bridging academic learning with real-world application."



Patty Keenan
Chief Talent Officer



"The success of both our high school and college internships comes from creating a welcoming environment and plenty of opportunities for personal connection. We hire interns from over 30 colleges and universities each year, and use technology (GroupMe) to begin fostering working relationships even before they arrive for their first day. At Miller Electric Company, we have cultivated a "learning organization" where everyone, including our office and trade professionals, has the opportunity to learn and grow both personally and professionally. Our efforts are paying off – we hire over 50% of our interns as full time professionals each year."



Sarah Marmion
Sr. Manager of Education & Outreach Centers



"Internships at Florida Power & Light Company play a crucial role in cultivating future talent and innovative ideas. Our NEXT summer intern program attracts nearly 200 college students and MBA interns, providing hands-on experience to shape the company's future. For over a decade, we have successfully transitioned many interns into full-time roles, advancing our hiring pipeline and developing future leaders."

THANK YOU TO THE FUTURE OF WORK ADVISORY BOARD



Ralph Aiello



Erica Averion



Marian Cacciatore



Andrea Cichon



David Cross



CT Hemingway-Turner



Patty Keenan



Dr. Robert Liddell



Kara Marante



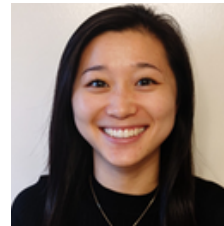
Sarah Marmion



Mistie Palmer



Dr. Prashanth Pilly



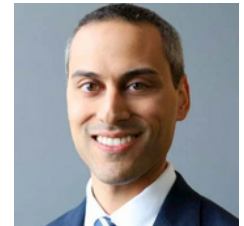
Victoria Pu



Charlene Savidge



Kristen Vanselow



Sam Verghese



Contact Rachel Ludwig, Vice President of Talent Development for the Future of Work
at rludwig@flchamber.com to inquire about Board seat availability

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