



BOOKLET DESIGN BY

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Project ION

|internship opportunity network|

Creating a Successful Internship Program

with support from

KeyBank 

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CENTERSTATE
CORPORATION FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

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WELCOME TO PROJECT-ION!

On behalf Key Bank and CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEO), thank you for your support and for helping our region attract and retain its best and brightest.

Project-ION, the Internship Opportunity Network, was created to help keep the talent generated each year by the colleges and universities right here in our own CenterState New York region.

Key Bank is committed to helping businesses in the area develop quality internship programs. These programs not only provide interns with real-life work experience and help them explore potential careers, but also provide businesses with a qualified entry-level workforce.

According to the national Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 60 percent of employers offer full-time positions to students who intern with them, and 85 percent of employers who hire a former intern find that these employees have a higher retention rate than other employees.

This handbook will help your company develop a custom internship program to meet the unique needs of your business. The worksheets at the end of each section will help you create a tangible plan from start to finish.

Once your program is complete, remember to tell us about it at the Project-ION website: www.project-ion.com. The site will help you to recruit internship candidates from all over the CenterState region. Detailed information on how to post to Project-ION can be found in Chapter five.

Steve Fournier
Central NY District President
Key Bank

WHAT IS PROJECT-ION?

Project-ION is the Region's premier internship opportunity website. ION lists internships from all over the region and gives employers access to a database of talented interns. It reaches 21 counties, 48 colleges and universities and more than 200,000 regional college students across CenterState New York. The site lists more than 500 internships each year and supports more than 200 employers and 2,500 registered students.

WHAT'S AN INTERN?

“An intern is a person who participates in a program of temporary supervised work in a particular field in order to gain practical experience.”

(<http://www.entrepreneur.com/encyclopedia/term/82308.html>)

But Who Are They Really?

Interns may be college undergrads, graduate students, or even high school students. Sometimes they're not students at all. Interns might be fresh out of school and looking for a job, or well into the job world but searching for a new career. The most important thing that they have in common: Interns want to learn, and they need your support to teach them!

What Are the Benefits of an Internship?

For Employers:

1. Every company has a project that their full-time staff just doesn't have time to get to. You can use this project as a starting point for developing your internship program.
2. Think of an internship as an extended job interview. You have the opportunity to assess the intern's work before making a long-term commitment.
3. Internship programs are cost-effective. We encourage paying your interns! But the payroll is still significantly less than hiring an additional full-time employee to do the same job.
4. Interns are tech-savvy. Not only can they provide your business with the latest cutting-edge technology, they can also teach you how to use it!
5. Interns need mentors. This gives your mid-level employees an opportunity to gain supervisory experience.

For Interns:

1. Interns can earn academic credit or even receive a stipend for completing an internship. Plus, this experience will ultimately help jumpstart their career.
2. Interns have the opportunity to gain industry knowledge without committing to a full-time career. This allows them to “try on” a few different jobs before deciding what they want to pursue.
3. Interns can acquire a better understanding of what their dream job actually entails. They have the opportunity to see the industry and learn skills they don't have access to in school.

4. Internships establish a network of industry contacts and references for future use. Interns will be able to keep in touch with supervisors and co-workers for job opportunities or work recommendations.

5. Completing an internship increases the possibility of landing a full-time job! Not only is an intern better suited to work for the company they interned for, but they'll have a better shot at all jobs in the industry from their experience!

6. Internships are a major resume builder! Employers like to see that you've done something outside of coursework, and that you've taken the time to develop important skills that you'll need later in the job world.

For the Region:

1. Internships provide the region with a more educated and prepared labor force.

2. Internships increase cooperation between businesses and higher education communities.

3. Offering internships increases the likelihood that interns will stay in the region after their experience is over.

4. Successful internship programs often attract new businesses to the area where they can draw from the new pool of talent.

5. Internships lead to more engaged citizens and greater economic growth for the region.

6. Students may be more likely to attend college in places that offer successful internship opportunities. This is mutually beneficial for the colleges and the region.



At Liggett Stashower, a midsize advertising and public relations firm based in Cleveland, interns are advised to treat their summer internship as a two-month job interview.

"It's an opportunity for them to showcase their talent, and for us to assess their skills to see if they would make a good future employee," says CEO Mark Nylander.

Liggett currently has 11 full-time staff members who were former interns, and has a track record for hiring new interns each year.



WHAT DOES MY ORGANIZATION NEED?

Preparing to Host an Intern

The first step to developing an internship program is to determine your business needs and evaluate whether or not your company is prepared to host an intern.

1. Do we have time to support an intern?

Everyone in the office needs to be on board for an internship program to be successful. While only one official intern supervisor is necessary, an intern should be familiar with all employees during his/her experience. Talk to your employees about hosting an intern. Explain the significance of being a patient and conscientious mentor.

2. Who will train and supervise the interns? Who will be their mentor?

Establishing an official supervisor for your intern may be the most important aspect of creating an internship program. This person should be familiar with the company, but most importantly, should be willing to teach. Interns will NOT benefit from being asked to make copies or retrieve coffee. Choose someone with a real interest in being a mentor to your new intern.

Job Duties of an Internship Supervisor:

- Act as a mentor
- Share the pros and cons of your career
- Meet with the intern on a regular basis
- Provide background information about the company
- Complete training and orientation
- Introduce intern to staff members
- Evaluate intern work and provide constructive criticism
- Develop objectives for internship position
- Complete mid-point and end evaluations
- Provide opportunities for more work, if necessary

3. Do we have the resources to support an intern?

Interns need a workspace, too! It doesn't have to be anything fancy, but a computer and a desk with their name on it will go a long way. Make sure they're set-up with appropriate computer access and office supplies. Use the check-list below to help:

- Computer access
- Telephone/fax
- Parking
- Housing and/or assistance in locating housing, if applicable
- Office supplies

4. What can an intern do for us?

Interns are competent and capable. Analyze what your business needs are and how an intern can help. Sometimes all it takes is a few training sessions and your intern will be ready for action.

5. Are there special technical skills we need in an intern?

Interns aren't just competent and capable; they're also totally tech savvy! Can you think of some skills your business would like to learn? Do you need an intern with prior qualifications or do you have time to teach them? Use the checklist below to help.

- Software or hardware skills
- Communication skills
- Business writing
- Research skills
- Client or customer interaction
- Networking
- Social media skills

6. When do we need an intern?

Since interns are typically college students, it's important to schedule around their classes and breaks. Internships are usually 16 hours per week and to get the best experience we encourage two full days rather than sporadic hours. The semesters are split into the following:

- fall semester (August through December)
- spring semester (January through May)
- summer break (May through August)

“By deciding where an intern can be put to the best use, an employer is forced to analyze their business very closely and find new ways of streamlining operations. In that way, it can help them be more efficient and really improve their business, rather than merely save on labor costs.”

-Irene de Gasparis, Founder of Interns For You

Internship Description Template

Internship Title: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Company Website: _____

Internship Overview: _____

Company Background/Mission:

Supervisor Information:

How to apply:

Timeline:

1. When does my organization want to host interns?

- Fall (Aug-Dec)
- Spring (Jan-May)
- Winter (Dec-Jan)
- Summer (June-Aug)
- On-going

2. How many hours will the intern work?

- Part-Time
- Full-Time
- By Semester

“

“There should be an understanding that the intern brings some skills to the situation and can perform work right off the bat. The intern is there to contribute to the organization but also to enhance his or her professional skills as well.”

-Susan Walker, associate director of internships at Middlebury College in Vermont

”

Requirements:

1. What majors/disciplines would be most appropriate? Are they offered at the colleges/universities in the area?

Qualifications:

1. What kinds of courses and skills should an intern have prior to working with your organization?

Description:

1. What are some of the intern's roles/responsibilities?

Benefits and Compensation:

1. What are some of the important skills an intern will learn from your organization?

2. What compensation will be offered? Hourly pay? Semester stipend? Academic credit?

Sample Internship Description

Internship Title: 40 Below Marketing Intern

Organization Info: 40 Below
572 S. Salina Street
Syracuse, NY 13202
www.40belowsummit.com

Internship Overview:

40 Below’s “It’s All Here” task force is in search of someone eager, motivated and dependable to serve as an intern on the “Syracuse: Live It. Love It. It’s All Here” Campaign. The candidate will gain valuable communications, marketing, design and sales experience.

Company Background/Mission:

40 Below was created to connect, engage, and empower young adults in Central Upstate New York:

- To harness the collective strength of our communities to make positive change;
- To build pride and hope in our communities;
- To spark a cultural renaissance that will put us on the “creative” map;
- To make Central Upstate New York a more vibrant place to live, work and play.

The “It’s All Here” task force is a retention campaign aimed at local young professionals with the goals of instilling a sense of pride in current residents and creating a unified identity for the region.

Supervisor Information:

This intern will work out of three different locations, and be supervised by:

- Heather Durant, graphic designer at Le Moyne College
- Stephanie Crockett, management supervisor at Eric Mower & Associates
- Adrea Bianchi, programming coordinator for 40 Below

How to apply: To apply, please submit the following:

- Resume that includes coursework completed, applicable work or volunteer experience, extracurricular activities, and contact information
- Cover letter that includes available dates & times, reason you’re interested in this internship, and what you hope to gain from it.

Email submissions to info@itsallheresyracuse.com

Timeline:

Hours per week are negotiable and customizable but must add up to 140 hours for the semester.

Requirements:

- Enrollment in a degree program in any of these areas: marketing, public relations, communications, advertising, graphic design, web design, electronic marketing
- Completion of at least one year of secondary school (Sophomore or above)
- Access to transportation since this internship would require some travel to different locations

Qualifications: The ideal candidate should have:

- Excellent writing and editing skills
- Ability to work independently and unsupervised
- Knowledge of electronic media, internet, and social networking
- Experience with web content management systems (CMS) a plus, but not required
- Design skills and knowledge of Adobe products a plus, but not required (Photoshop, Indesign, etc)

Description: The internship includes:

- Writing feature stories about local attractions, restaurants, workplaces and initiatives in the Syracuse area
- Maintaining content on the campaign's website:
www.itsallheresyracuse.com
- Developing multi-media ad campaigns for college students
- Using social media and other web tools to further the campaign's reach
- Reaching out to local businesses to secure support and sponsorship
- Guerilla marketing projects and events

Benefits and Compensation: The intern will receive:

- An opportunity to work with and learn from a variety of local young professionals in marketing, design and communications
- Hands-on experience working on a real marketing campaign with tangible results
- Ability to explore and learn more about the Syracuse area
- Professional experience in a flexible environment

WHAT TYPES OF INTERNSHIPS ARE THERE

Understanding Internship Labor Laws and Terms

Internship is a very commonly used term in experiential education. The form that an internship takes, though, is anything but standard. Some internships are summer long and fulltime. Others are during the fall, winter or spring and at those times, are usually parttime. Part-time internships can be anywhere from 8 to 30 hours per week. Ten to 15 hours a week is pretty typical.

Coops vs. Internships

Some colleges and universities use the term Co-Op or Cooperative Education for a certain type of workplace position that is experiential (i.e., experience-based) education. In this way co-ops are fundamentally similar to internships; students learn while applying knowledge and skills from the academic setting to a work setting.

Connotations of these two terms (internships and co-ops) are often unique to the persons or organizations using them. What an organization may call 'internship' may be referred to by a college or university as a 'co-op'. The different uses of these terms sometimes cause confusion between the university, the employer and the student. Generally speaking, co-ops or cooperative education programs involve paid positions. They sometimes entail two six-month assignments, with an academic semester or year in between rotations, but they are not always structured on this timetable. Co-op programs are often, though not always, run at engineering schools.

Paid vs. Unpaid

Internships are sometimes paid and sometimes unpaid. Ultimately, this is a decision of the employer. Some schools may have a policy on paying interns from their institution, but most will facilitate both types of internships for employers. The "market" will typically drive the issue of paid vs. unpaid interns. For example, in the fields of accounting and engineering where students provide very tangible benefits to employers and competition for interns is keen, most internships positions are paid. On the otherhand, internships in human services and advertising are most often unpaid. Human Resources, which sometimes pays interns and sometimes doesn't, falls somewhere in between these other fields.

One of the common questions about interns asked by employers is whether employers NEED TO pay interns. It is IMPORTANT to note that the Fair Labor Standards Act, which requires employers to pay at least minimum wage to employees, comes into play with the issue of paying or not paying interns. For profit companies can be in violation of labor law if certain conditions or criteria regarding an internship are not met.

Authoritative guidance on this and other legal issues surrounding internships is provided by NACE – the National Association of Colleges and Employers. According to NACE, the U.S. Department of Labor has developed criteria to determine when a learner/trainee (in other words, intern) can be unpaid. Ultimately for an unpaid experience to be a true internship, it should look more like a training / learning experience than a job. Several DOL rulings suggest that as long as an internship is a prescribed part of a curriculum and is predominately for the benefit of the student, a company may engage an intern without pay.

Listed below are other factors that need to hold true for a legitimate internship where a company is not paying the student.

- The work of the intern is an integral part of the student's course of study.
- The student will receive credit for the work, or the work is a requirement of graduation.
- The student must prepare a report of his/her experience and submit it to a faculty supervisor.
- The employer receives a letter or some other form of documentation from the school indicating that it approves of the internship and it's educationally relevant.
- Learning objectives are clearly defined.

One simple strategy for companies, to avoid labor law issues with unpaid interns, is to require that any unpaid intern be registered through a formal college or university internship program. Again more detailed information on the paid vs. unpaid intern subject may be obtained through NACE.

Independent vs. School-Sponsored

It is possible for students to engage in internships experiences either through the school, college or university that they attend or independent of them. Schools can have both loose and close relationships with various employers. Most will advertise internship opportunities to students. How closely they monitor internship programs varies. Most colleges and universities will allow students to earn academic credits for participating in internships.

It is also entirely possible for students and employers to arrange internships independent of schools. This approach is better suited for situations where internships are paid and learning objectives are secondary to performing a job.

“Employers Internship Toolkit”

Mark Schappert, Associate Director of Career Services

LeMoyne College

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AN INTERN TO DO?

Developing Expectations

Interns come from a variety of backgrounds and skill sets. Think about what type of intern will mesh with your team. The projects you assign can be big or small, but the best project outline is one with extensive learning at its core— the more hands-on, the better.

Start by asking your intern what they hope to learn from your organization. Have them create a list of goals that they'd like to accomplish by the end of their time with you. You should also come up with a list of goals that you'd like your intern to accomplish before he/she leaves. Use the worksheets we created to help you.

Compare your lists. Are there goals that overlap? Use these as a jumping point to create your internship project outline. Make sure your expectations are clear. You should be as detailed as possible to prevent questions from coming up later.

Most importantly, the better you treat your intern, the better the outcome of your program will be. Gen Y's thrive on praise, don't be afraid to tell them when they're doing a good job!



Internship Agreement

1. The Intern will work under the direct supervision of _____, an employee of _____.
2. The Internship will begin on _____ and end on _____.
3. The Intern will work a minimum of _____ hours per week and a maximum of _____ hours per week.
4. The scheduled hours of employment will be as follows: _____.
5. The Student WILL / WILL NOT be paid during the period of the internship. If the intern is paid, pay will be made at the rate of _____ per _____ for the duration of the internship.
6. It is understood that The Internship is temporary and The Employer is under no obligation to continue The Internship or make any offer of permanent employment following the last day of employment indicated above.

The intern would like to achieve the following goals through this internship experience:

The employer would like the intern to achieve the following goals through this internship experience:

The agreed upon internship job duties are:

Internship Contract Agreed Upon by:

The Employer

Name (print name)

Signature

Date

“My public relations internship with a fashion designer in Manhattan somehow turned into a packing and shipping internship. I spent my days in the back room with the other interns, sending stuff to upscale stores. There were about 15 interns and 10 full-time employees, so they really took advantage. There was no compensation and I worked there from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and sometimes on weekends. Once, at a fashion shoot, I was asked to go to CVS and buy makeup and brushes for the models with my own money. I refused. I think some grunt work is expected in an internship, but if you’re looking for insight into the industry, it’s just not fair to sit in the back and not learn.”

-Complete Ship, 20

“When I worked for a PR firm in New York, all I did was stuff envelopes and go to the company’s events. At one of these, I had to wear skin tight, bright green, ‘70s peace-sign print PJ bottoms, hoola hoop by the door, and play Twister with other interns as guys watched. Note: it was unpaid.”

-Totally Twisted, 24

“Interning at a major New York City magazine, my duties were entirely administrative -- and by administrative, I mean manual labor. Hauling box after box of heavy magazines not only taught me nothing, but it also made me break my heels twice! (Yes, heels were required for the job.) I was also asked to clean out a supply closet that hadn’t been touched in many years, which was filled with dust and mold that made me feel sick. On another day, I was asked to fill in for the receptionist/assistant and to do my regular intern duties -- with no help. That meant I was not allowed to leave my seat, and therefore was not allowed to eat for a solid 10 hours. When I finally asked another intern to hold my seat for five minutes while I ran to make photocopies, she berated me for bothering her. I gave notice the next day.”

- Heel Broken in NYC, 23

Internship horror stories

WHERE CAN I FIND AN INTERN?

Recruiting Prospective Interns

Using Project-ION

Project-ION allows employers to hand-pick interns from the Central Upstate New York area. By signing up for an account, you can post your internship program and direct interns to apply any way you'd like. What's even better is our database system! You can now search through every student resume listed on ION to find exactly what you're looking for. The best part is, IT'S FREE! Sign up at www.project-ion.com today!

Other Resources

Cater to the new generation! Post your available internship on other online job boards like careerbuilder.com or monster.com. Make sure your program is also clearly listed on your company website.

Consider increasing your social media presence! List your internship on your company Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter pages: quite simply, be where the interns are.

Team up with high school counselors or college career centers! When students go to these professionals, your company should be available as an option.

Word of mouth isn't dead! Talk up your new internship program! Ask your current employees if they know of someone who would be a good fit.

Advertise! Advertise! Advertise! Work with your marketing team to make your internship program known. See what works best for your company.

HOW DO I SELECT THE RIGHT CANDIDATE?

Understanding the Selection Process

Finding an intern can be like searching for a diamond in the rough. Though most students don't seem like they have a ton of experience—don't forget to ask the right questions! Campus leadership roles can often be just as beneficial as work experience, and even being on a sports team develops leadership skills.

You will need to ask yourself a few questions to help evaluate the candidates:

1. Does the intern possess the required skills?
2. Has the intern completed relevant coursework?
3. What is the intern's prior work experience?
4. What extracurricular activities is the intern involved with?
5. Does the intern have honors or awards?
6. What makes him/her a good candidate for this position?



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Top Behavior-Based Interview Questions

Questions to Establish an Intern's Leadership Potential:

1. Tell me about a time when you set and accomplished a significant goal.
2. Tell me about a time when you led a project or a situation, engaged others to support your ideas and achieved results.

Questions to Establish an Intern's Ability to Take Initiative and to Follow-through:

1. Describe for me a situation where you established a goal but then faced challenges to completing that goal and how you responded to those challenges.
2. Tell me about a time when you set a goal and that goal either took a different direction or took more time than you anticipated to achieve.

Questions to Establish an Intern's Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:

1. Describe for me a situation where you created a significant solution to an ongoing problem.
2. Tell me about an experience where you were able to anticipate a problem and how you developed a solution to prevent that problem.

Questions to Establish an Intern's Ability to Communicate Effectively:

1. Describe for me a situation where your ability to be persuasive enabled you to achieve a goal or drive an outcome.
2. Tell me how you would approach a situation where others on your team are expressing opinions that are drastically different from yours.

"It's just like any job interview. You're looking for personality fit. Did we connect? Did they have the skills we were looking for? That's how you get the best of the best."

- Cary Catalano
Founder of Catalano Fenske & Associates (marketing firm)



Intern Evaluation Form

Candidate Name: _____

Position applying for: _____

Personality	Please rate 1-10. 1=Strongly Disagree 10=Agree
Self-Confidence	
Articulate	
Has interest in the company	
Would fit well with the company	
Other:	

Comments: _____

Recommendation for hiring:

- Should hire immediately
- Clearly meets standards and should be offered an interview
- Meets standards and should be considered, after interviewing other candidates
- May meet our standards but should not be considered further
- Does not meet our standards

WHAT DOES MY INTERN NEED TO SUCCEED?

Managing Your New Intern

A formal orientation process is the first step in managing your new intern. This is a great opportunity for you (the employer) to re-establish expectations and for your intern to ask questions. Make sure that the goals of the program are set in stone and reiterate what company policies your intern will be expected to follow.

Don't forget to introduce your new intern to everyone at the office! Consider sending out a company-wide e-mail to let your employees know a little more about who your intern is and what they'll be doing while they're there.

Have your mentor spend at least 15 minutes every week with your intern to talk about any problems that may come up. Schedule a time so that your intern knows he or she can always reach his/her mentor during this weekly meeting.

Encourage your intern to fill-out a weekly timesheet. Plan to go over it at your meeting each week so that you know where your intern is struggling and where you can help out. Plus, it keeps you both on the same page! See 7.1 for a sample.

“Keep an open mind about an intern’s talents and abilities,” recommends Cari Sommer, the co-founder of Urban Interns, a website that matches small businesses with interns and other part-time assistants. “You may have hired them for a specific function and be pleasantly surprised to learn that your intern actually has a great passion and ability in another area of your business.”

Intern Weekly Timesheet

Date	Day	Time-In	Time-Out	Total Hours
	Monday			
	Tuesday			
	Wednesday			
	Thursday			
	Friday			
	Saturday			
	Sunday			
			Weekly Total:	

Reasons for absences: _____

What did you accomplish this week? _____

What did you learn this week? _____

Is there anything you hope to learn next week? _____

How can your mentor help you reach this goal? _____

Intern Signature: _____ Date: _____

Employer Signature: _____ Date: _____

HOW DO I IMPROVE MY PROGRAM?

Evaluating Your New Program

Using an exit evaluation program provides feedback for both employers and interns. Use the worksheets provided to evaluate your program and make changes for the next intern!



Intern Evaluation Form

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
SKILLS			
Written communication			
Oral communication			
MOTIVATION			
Motivated and interested in assignments			
Worked independently			
JUDGMENT			
Followed instructions			
Exercised sound judgment			
PERSONALITY			
Worked well with others			
Flexible			
Professional appearance			
Articulate and thoughtful			
ATTENDANCE			
Outstanding record of attendance and punctuality			

Additional Comments: _____

Intern Signature: _____ Date: _____

Employer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Employer Evaluation Form

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The facility was adequate				
The company was ready to have interns				
The atmosphere was professional				
I would consider employment at this company				
I would recommend this internship program to others				
The internship supervisor was accessible				
Interns were encouraged to ask questions				
I would consider working for this supervisor again				

Additional Comments: _____

Intern Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Employer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Now WHAT?

Just because the internship is over, doesn't mean you have to let your intern go forever. If you stumbled on a great candidate, don't forget to keep in contact with him/her in case that perfect position opens up. You never know who you might meet, and for most interns, graduation is right around the corner. Wouldn't it be great to hire someone who already knows about your company? Consider it!

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What types of skills can I expect from my intern?

The best way to determine the intern's skill level is by asking them during the interview process whether they are familiar with specific programs or concepts or with using routine office equipment, like the copier or fax machine. You should also ask about their "soft" skills, such as ethics, teamwork, and time management. In general, the student should bring advanced analytical, research or writing skills to the internship.

What types of tasks should I give my intern?

The tasks or projects assigned will depend on each individual company. Try to give the intern projects that will tie in previous coursework or will give them something physical to show at the end of their tenure with your company. The intern is working with you to advance their professional skills and is capable of contributing innovative thinking based on college courses that they have taken.

How can I make my program exciting and productive?

The intern will need to have a well rounded experience, with exposure to a number of different areas within the organization. Most importantly, there must be an organized plan. There should be an orientation process during which the intern will learn how their department fits within the structure of the entire organization. The best way to stay organized is to develop a plan before the intern arrives and outline the projects and goals ahead of time. A different assignment could be assigned each week, or the intern could rotate to different departments within the organization, developing different skills.

What are the legal issues associated with hiring an intern?

Some possible legal issues include compensation, confidentiality, equal opportunity employment, discrimination, and harassment. Please check with your organization's Human Resources Department for assistance. If you do not have an HR department, please email ehanna@centerstateceo.com for further assistance.

Do I need to pay interns?

It depends on the circumstances of their activities. According to the Fair Labor Standards Act, companies need to meet the following activities to not pay interns:

1. The training, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to that which would be given in a vocational school;
2. The training is for the benefit of the trainee;

3. The trainees do not displace regular employees, but work under close observation;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the trainees and on occasion the employer's operations may actually be impeded;
5. The trainees are not necessarily entitled to a job at the completion of the training period; and
6. The employer and the trainee understand that the trainees are not entitled to wages for the time spent in training.

What are my responsibilities as an internship employer?

As an employer, it is up to you to provide an open line of communication, a safe work environment, challenging and meaningful work, supervision, and feedback regarding the intern's performance.

Are interns eligible for workers' compensation benefits?

State workers' compensation laws do not distinguish between employees and paid interns. They are considered employees for this purpose. Your premiums should not increase by much because the interns will have little effect on your payroll and experience rating, two of the factors on which premiums are based.

Are interns eligible for unemployment compensation at the end of the internship?

Generally, the answer is no. Unemployment eligibility is based on a person's availability for work, thus excluding interns who currently are in school or will return to school after a summer internship. Ask the student if he/she intends to return to school. If the answer is no, you can prevent misunderstandings by explaining that the intern position is just for the summer and you can't promise regular full-time work when it's over.

What do I do if there is a problem with my intern?

Your organization is offering the intern an opportunity to gain hands-on, "real world," experience. As this may be the intern's first professional experience, it is recommended that you constructively approach this subject. Just like any other employee of the company, there are specific rules to follow and appropriate behavior to be demonstrated. Hopefully, as a result, your intern may learn something that will help him/her in the future.

Can I discharge an intern?

Yes. If you need to discharge an intern for poor performance or another reason during the course of the program, you're not obligated to follow your usual termination procedures, such as formally notifying the student, providing severance pay or holding a grievance hearing. All you need to do is tell the student why and notify the school, when appropriate.

Do equal employment opportunity laws apply to interns?

Federal laws, such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) do not define who qualifies as employees and who does not. They prohibit discrimination in recruiting, hiring and employment practices. Therefore, you should treat intern candidates the same as all other applicants and base your hiring decisions on their qualifications, rather than on gender, race, color, age, national origin, religion or disability.

Are you liable if an intern experiences or instigates harassment (sexual, racial or ethnic) while on the job?

Yes. If an intern is harassed at your worksite and you do nothing about it, your company is exposed to the risk of lawsuits. Therefore, take time to advise new interns on your guidelines regarding appropriate workplace behavior, your company's harassment policy and its complaint procedures. To fend off any problems, let your regular employees know that the policy applies to interns as well and that you expect students to be treated appropriately.

How do I sign up?

All you will need to do is fill out the Project ION Internship Form at www.project-ion.com and click on the employer section.

If you have any questions, please email ehanna@centerstateceo.com or call Elle Hanna at (315) 470-1800.

THANK YOU SPONSORS!

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