

A young woman with dark braided hair is looking down at a laptop. She is wearing a black lace top and a skirt with a red floral pattern. In the background, other people are seated at desks in a classroom or office environment.

THE SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

# INTERNSHIP DESIGN KIT

YOUR GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING  
HIGH QUALITY INTERNSHIP  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

**NYC**  
Department of  
Youth & Community  
Development

  
**WORKFORCE  
CONNECT**

grant **A**ssociates



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW



## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

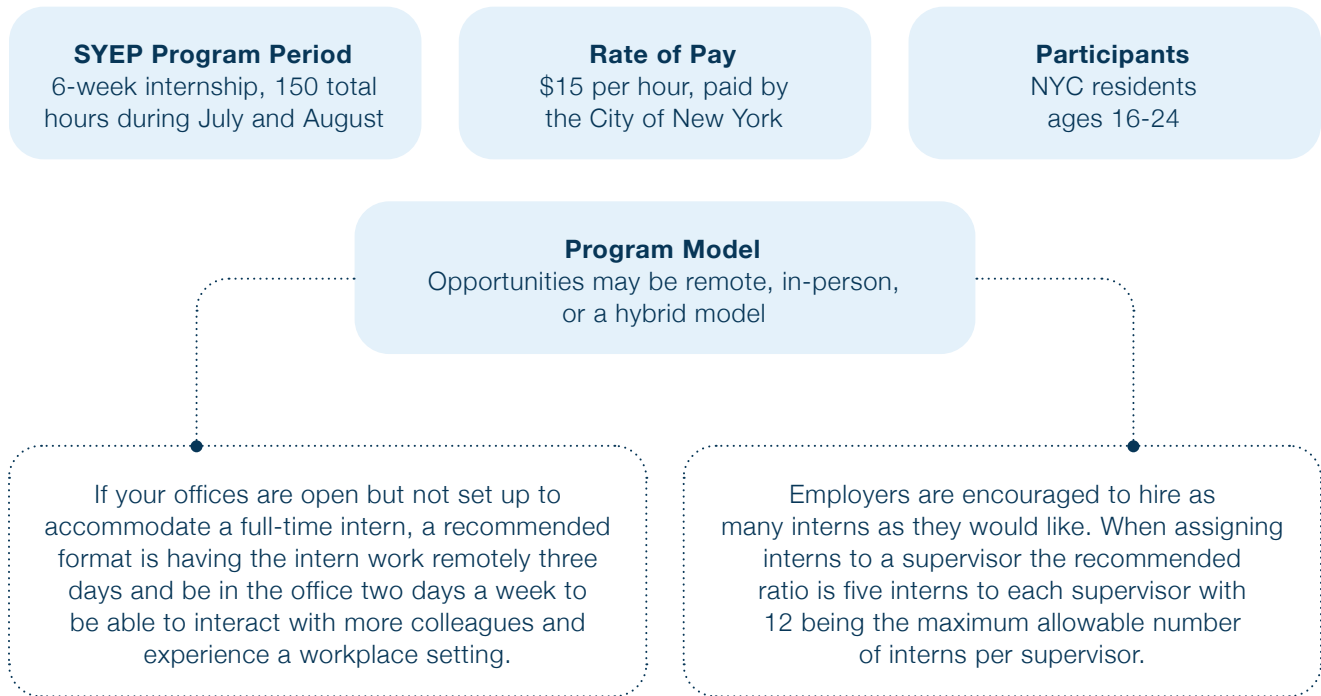
The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is the nation's largest youth employment program, connecting NYC youth between the ages of 14 and 24 with career exploration opportunities and paid work experiences each summer. Through SYEP, youth participants can explore their interests and potential career pathways, build general workplace competencies, and develop their social, civic, and leadership skills. SYEP helps prepare NYC youth for future career success.

SYEP participants engage in highly structured, time-limited work experiences in which they are placed with an industry partner to participate in and observe work, either on-site or virtually. Internships provide youth with opportunities to learn by doing real work and productively engaging in the workplace. Participants may work on their own or in teams and focus on a single project or rotate through several departments and job functions.

This guide, in conjunction with support from your SYEP Provider, will assist you in developing high-quality internships that are designed and structured to enhance workplace knowledge and career awareness for participants. These experiences are intended to do two things: help youth identify potential career directions and build skills to achieve their goals, and deliver a value-add to your company through the addition of a helpful new team member who brings energy and a fresh perspective.

## PROGRAM BASICS

Some of the basic program features for SYEP youth include:



## CREATING AN INTERNSHIP (IN-PERSON OR REMOTE)

To design an effective and meaningful internship (whether in-person or remote), the first step is to identify projects that are appropriate for interns and that require minimal oversight. Considering the age, academic status, and skill set of your interns, you should identify projects that are meaningful for you and achievable for them, with clear and attainable goals. Projects that are wide in scope and important to your organization create opportunities for your colleagues to provide additional guidance and mentorship. Informing interns of the connections between their projects and how they contribute to the organization can give them an invaluable perspective.

## SAMPLE PROJECTS

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| Area of Focus           | Primary Task  | Proposed Outcome   |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Customer Service</b> | Identify service support efforts based on customer needs  | Documented logs of all customer questions and the identified solutions                                     |
| <b>Record Keeping</b>   | Help maintain company records, accurately documenting and archiving key operating and policy procedures             | Accurate records and updated company operating procedures and policies                                     |
| <b>IT Support</b>       | Desktop troubleshooting of Microsoft products and operating systems   | Successful installation and setup of Microsoft products and operating systems                              |
| <b>Data Entry</b>       | Enter purchase requests, sales information, and new orders into the company database                                | Accurate inventory records and work orders are updated into the company database                           |
| <b>Scheduling</b>       | Maintain a calendar of meetings, plan and organize other staff engagement activities                                | An organized and clear calendar of activities for all company employees                                    |
| <b>Social Media</b>     | Use various social media platforms to promote products, connect with customers, and increase the company's exposure | Lead digital marketing efforts that increase followers on social media and increase bookmarks on Instagram |
| <b>Web Design</b>       | Help edit and improve website content, create concept sketches and digital layouts                                  | Develop websites that improve the company's digital presence   |
| <b>Marketing</b>        | Create sales and marketing materials for print and online advertising   | Create useful marketing material to promote the company's service offerings                                |



## PROGRAM BASICS

**To start planning your internship experience, consider the following questions:**

- What are your company's needs and how can interns support them?
- Outside of the project(s), what additional opportunities can I share with interns?
- What project(s) will the interns work on?
- Which staff will supervise the interns?
- How will project feedback be shared and how often will there be check-ins?

**Next, develop a job description for your intern(s) (see sample below). Remember to include the following in your internship description:**

- Information about your organization
  - Mission, values, and strengths of your organization
  - Why participants should be interested in working with you
- Information about the in-person, hybrid, or remote internship experience
  - Projects and tasks interns will be assigned
  - Weekly schedule and location
- Basic skills and experience required to be successful in the internship
- Familiarity with remote technology platforms
- Benefits of interning with your business/organization
  - Clear description of skills interns will gain
  - Learning opportunities available to interns outside of their projects

As you design your internships, build flexibility into your project and communication structures. A note on remote internships: communication structures are even more important here than in in-person experiences and if something is not working, make the appropriate changes. If you need assistance, your DYCD facilitator is an excellent resource!

## INTERNSHIP DESIGN BEST PRACTICES



Select projects that are wide in scope and important to your organization so your colleagues can provide additional guidance and mentorship.



Assign projects to interns that have clear and attainable goals. Develop project plans that can be completed in six weeks with specific business outcomes.



At the end of the internship, have interns present his/her project and what they learned to management.

## **SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT INTERN\***

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### **Responsibilities:**

- Answer phones and give information to callers or route call to appropriate person, take complete and detailed messages
- Greet visitors, ascertain nature of business, and conduct visitors to appropriate person
- Compose letters, emails, and presentation materials from verbal direction
- Organize paperwork and files, maintain correspondence and other records
- Make copies of correspondence or other printed matter
- Maintain calendar and contact list
- Schedule appointments for conference room
- Support in arranging travel schedules and reservations
- Prepare expense reports, maintain office files, and order supplies as needed
- Perform other related duties and responsibilities as required
- Support with special projects and initiatives

### **Qualifications:**

- Ability to multi-task
- Ability to work independently
- Strong verbal and written skills
- Organizational and interpersonal service skills
- Demonstrate cultural competence with diverse clients, staff, and visitors
- Ability to take initiative, prioritize, and follow through on different tasks
- Professionalism and tact, consistently positive
- Computer and software skills including Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, Word, and Outlook

\*Feel free to use this sample job description to customize and create job descriptions for your intern(s).

# HOSTING INTERNS



## IN-PERSON ONBOARDING

An organized onboarding process will help interns transition with ease to their new roles. The term “onboarding” describes the process of integrating your interns with both your current employees and the company culture. Additionally, onboarding gives the message that support is available to interns, conveys messages that help orient and welcome the student, and can increase productivity via reinforcement of the company’s mission, culture, and core values.

## REMOTE ONBOARDING

A structured onboarding process becomes even more important when introducing youth participants to remote work. Although interns will not be in a physical space with employees, onboarding is still a vital component of communicating support, welcome, and community values to interns. An onboarding checklist should be used to promote learning in a structured remote environment as well.



## ONBOARDING CHECKLIST: (IN PERSON AND REMOTE OPPORTUNITIES)



Use the checklist below as a guide to ensure your interns understand their responsibilities, the organization, policies, and expectations.

- Introduce intern to your policies, company culture, their role, expectations for their behavior, and dress guidelines.
- Confirm intern's IT equipment and capabilities.
- Ensure that intern understands how to use chosen communication tools such as MS Teams, Zoom, G Suite or MS Office; provide training as needed.
- Set clear communication expectations:
  - How often do you expect to be in contact with the youth participant?
  - What timeframe is acceptable for responses to emails?
- Are there any recurring meetings or deliverables participants should be aware of?
- Set up introductory meetings with other key team members and choose a daily or weekly meeting time.
- Provide the weekly schedule – ensure the intern is clear on start/end times, lunch time, etc.
- Review the timesheet submission process; contact your provider if you or the participants have any questions.
- Review expectations for the rest of the week.

## SAMPLE INTERNSHIP SCHEDULE AND TASKS: FIRST 3 WEEKS

| Weeks         | Task  | Deliverable(s)  | Time             |
|---------------|---|---|------------------|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Review employer policies  | Sign the required paperwork; discuss any questions with the supervisor    | <b>1 hour</b>    |
|               | Review work schedule with the supervisor  | Add schedule hours to appropriate calendars                               | <b>1 hour</b>    |
|               | Review DYCD timesheet submission process  | Discuss any questions with supervisor; contact DYCD provider if necessary | <b>1 hour</b>    |
| <b>Week 2</b> | Set up accounts necessary for communication (Email, Zoom/Webex/Google, Slack, etc.) | Discuss any questions with the supervisor                                 | <b>1 hour</b>    |
|               | Email key team members and schedule introductory meetings                           | Add meetings and links to appropriate calendars                           | <b>1-2 hours</b> |
|               | Review the company website  | Produce brief writeup with findings                                       | <b>1-2 hours</b> |
|               | Review the company's annual report  | Produce brief writeup with findings                                       | <b>1-2 hours</b> |
|               | Research the company's social media presence  | Produce brief writeup with findings                                       | <b>1-2 hours</b> |
|               | Research company's leadership and organizational structure                          | Produce brief writeup with findings                                       | <b>1-2 hours</b> |
|               | Update resume and LinkedIn Profile to reflect internship                            | Share document and link with supervisor for feedback                      | <b>1 hour</b>    |
|               | Weekly check-in meeting with supervisor   | Discuss the findings of onboarding research                               | <b>1 hour</b>    |
| <b>Week 3</b> | Introductory e-meetings with key team members                                       | Meet with team members  | <b>1-5 hours</b> |
|               | Regular internship duties   | To be determined by the supervisor  | <b>1-5 hours</b> |
|               | Weekly check-in meeting with supervisor   | Reflect on the first week and discuss any questions with the supervisor   | <b>1 hour</b>    |

# SUPERVISION OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

Youth participants need guidance from their supervisors to know what is expected of them. Your ongoing, honest, supportive feedback is critical for them to continue building their professional identities and reaching their full potential.

Start by determining what the best method of communication is – a weekly in-person touch base for live internships, or email, phone, and/or one-on-one video meetings for remote opportunities. Routine check-ins are a good method for staying in touch with participants during their experience. Some key supervisor responsibilities are:

- Review norms and rules of the workplace
- Give feedback and set limits during the internship
- Evaluate and assess intern performance
- Meet each intern regularly to review progress, highlight what is going well, and define areas for improvement
- Sign weekly timesheets, complete any required paperwork such as training plans or evaluations



## Supervision Tips & Best Practices

- Golden rule: Keep interns busy
- Offer a variety of experiences with enough time to develop proficiency in each task
- Identify developmental opportunities to strengthen and enhance the intern's knowledge, skills, and performance
- Ensure a clear channel of communication between the intern and supervisor through regular contact and monitoring the intern's fulfillment of their responsibilities
- Help the intern to establish a comfort level in the work environment
- Include the intern in meetings with internal and external stakeholders (i.e., staff meetings, project/program meetings, local professional organizations)
- Encourage the intern to give a presentation at a staff meeting or department meeting
- Provide information to the intern on career paths and opportunities with the organization and other related organizations
- Give interns the opportunity to share with each other their impressions and experiences about the organization
- Provide formal feedback on performance, skills, strengths, and areas for improvement

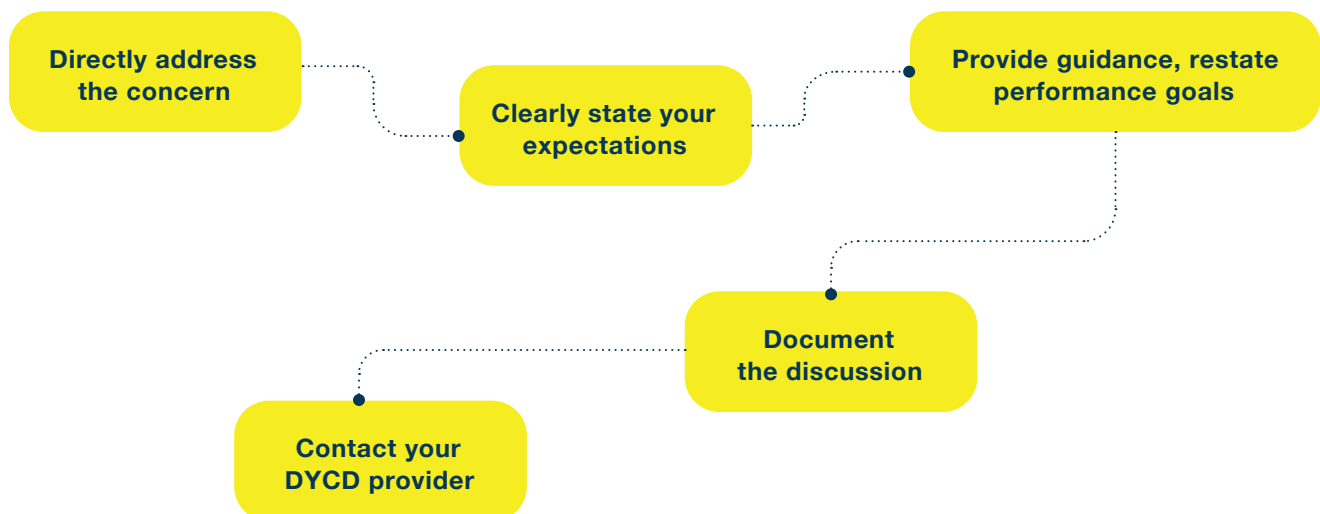


If your intern is not producing the results that you need, it is best to intervene early and have a conversation with them. Outline your concerns specifically and calmly and inquire if there is anything you can do to support them. Some youth participants' home circumstances may pose challenges. Showing compassion in such situations will build rapport and lead to greater output.

If you are hosting interns remotely, consider that you are managing the outcomes rather than the process. This means that you should focus on the quality of the projects or tasks rather than the number of hours it took to complete. So long as participants are producing the quantity and quality of results that your organization is looking for in a timely manner, they are doing what is necessary to be successful. The process will vary based on the intern's experience level, work habits, and learning style.

If you've ever been an intern, you know that the supervisor you're assigned to significantly influences the overall quality of the experience. An effective supervisor acts as a coach, advocate, and mentor. The foundation for this relationship is clear and consistent communication. Start by establishing goals and expectations for the intern's role. Explain what "professional" means to your organization. Continue to check-in and provide feedback to improve both their performance and impact.

In cases where performance issues persist and deeper support is needed, we strongly urge that you follow the suggested steps below to manage performance:



Youth participants are eager and willing to learn and adapt along with you. Your SYEP provider is a great resource, and you should feel free to contact them if you notice any trends that need to be addressed or you need additional support throughout the internship program.

# PRACTICING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION WITH YOUTH PARTICIPANTS



Strong Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies and practices empower youth from all backgrounds to visualize successful futures for themselves and provide them with a sense of belonging and self-worth. There are proven benefits to organizations that practice DEI, and we ask all employer partners to create a safe, nurturing, and engaging working environment for all youth.

A few tips on how to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in your workplace with your intern:

- Consider culture. Is your workplace culture conducive to diversity, equity, and inclusion? Do you have policies that might prevent a new employee or intern from feeling comfortable and/or doing their best work?
- Onboard mindfully. Your intern's onboarding experience will speak volumes about your organization; as best you can, infuse your onboarding materials with DEI (this could mean graphics depicting diverse individuals, mentions of resources, etc.). If you don't use materials for onboarding and instead rely on a verbal process, discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion and how these issues matter to your organization and the work you do.
- Communicate. Foster open communication between your staff members regarding DEI. Open up and talk about it. One of the first ways that we can make changes is to start a conversation – and to let all voices speak up.

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**Thank you for your dedication to helping our city's youth grow in their professional knowledge and abilities. Your support and commitment make a difference in their understanding of work, careers, and the possibilities for their future.**

**Questions?**

Please reach out to your DYCD Provider for any further questions that arise during your SYEP Experience. Thank you for your partnership to impact New York City's youth entering the workplace!