

# SYEP & ACPS EMPLOYER OPPORTUNITIES



Produced in collaboration with ACT for Alexandria's Youth Employment and Career and Technical Education Working Group

Investing in our young people through career exposure is a smart, low-cost strategy to strengthen your future talent pipeline. By hosting a young person for an internship, job shadow day, workshop, or employment panel, your company will gain early access to emerging talent while building brand loyalty with the next generation of workers.

***The return on investment is immediate and tangible:*** create a direct pipeline of future candidates, bring fresh perspectives and ideas into the workplace, boost employee engagement through meaningful mentorship, and strengthen your reputation as an employer of choice in the community. Even a few hours of engagement can spark long-term relationships with future hires and customers.

For young people, these experiences are transformative—building confidence, expanding career awareness, and developing real-world skills that classrooms alone cannot provide. For your company, it's a high-impact way to demonstrate your values in action while energizing your teams and shaping the workforce of tomorrow.

Here are some opportunities right here in Alexandria. Contact Kat Ashmore at the City of Alexandria's Workforce Development office [katrina.ashmore@alexandriava.gov](mailto:katrina.ashmore@alexandriava.gov) or Sarah Black at ACPS [sarah.black@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:sarah.black@acps.k12.va.us) for more information.

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## Employer Engagement Opportunities in Alexandria

### 1) Career Talks & Classroom Visits, & Meet the Industry Panels

**Time Commitment:** 1-2 Hours

**What it is:** Employees speak to students (in person or virtual) in Middle and High School, about their careers, education paths, and workplace skills.

### **What youth gain:**

- Awareness of careers they may not know exist
- Real-world context for school subjects
- Inspiration and role models

### **What employers gain:**

- Brand visibility in the community
- Early connection to future talent
- Employee engagement through volunteering

## **2) Career Fairs and Expos**

**Time Commitment:** 3 hours in late afternoon or evening

**What it is:** An event where employers, educators, and organizations connect with students to share information about careers, internships, and employment opportunities.

### **What youth gain:**

- Exposure to real career paths
- Direct connections with employers and mentors
- Insight into the skills and education needed for different jobs
- Increased confidence and motivation about their future options

### **What employers gain:**

- Early access to emerging talent, opportunities to build a future hiring pipeline
- Increased brand visibility among students
- Staff can develop mentorship and leadership skills while strengthening community engagement

### **Example activities:**

- Host a table
- Deliver an information session
- Hands-on demonstrations

### 3) Workplace Tours / Company Visits

**Time Commitment:** Half-day

**What it is:** Students visit the workplace to see operations firsthand.

**What youth gain:**

- Understanding of workplace culture
- Exposure to professional environments
- Insight into multiple roles in one company

**What employers gain:**

- Showcases company culture and facilities
- Builds excitement and curiosity about the industry

**Example activities:**

- Office or facility tour
- Meet-the-team sessions
- Hands-on demonstrations

### 4) Workshops & Skill-Building Sessions

**Time Commitment:** 2–4 hours or multi-session

**What it is:** Employers lead hands-on learning experiences.

**What youth gain:**

- Practical, transferable skills
- Confidence and workplace readiness

**What employers gain:**

- Strong community impact
- Opportunity to shape job-ready skills

## 5) Job Shadow Days

**Time Commitment:** 1 day

**What it is:** A student spends a day observing an employee to see what the job is really like.

**What youth gain:**

- Realistic view of a career path
- Understanding of daily tasks and teamwork
- Opportunity to ask questions in a safe environment

**What employers gain:**

- Low-lift entry point into youth engagement
- Early relationship-building with future talent

**Typical Schedule:**

- Morning orientation
- Shadow meetings/tasks
- Lunch with team
- Reflection and Q&A

## 6) Project-Based Learning Partnerships

**Time Commitment:** 4–8 weeks (light involvement)

**What it is:** Students work on a real business challenge and present solutions.

**What youth gain:**

- Problem-solving experience
- Teamwork and presentation skills
- Exposure to real business challenges

**What employers gain:**

- Fresh ideas and perspectives
- Community visibility
- Early talent identification

**Examples:**

- Market research projects
- Social media campaigns
- Product or service ideas

## 7) Internships

**Time Commitment:** Weeks to months, at least 90 hours to count for work based learning credits

**What it is:** Students work part-time or full-time on real projects under supervision.

### What youth gain:

- Real workplace experience
- Professional skills and references
- Career direction and confidence

### What employers gain:

- Talent pipeline development
- Support on projects
- Opportunity to evaluate future hires

**Internships are one of the *highest-impact* youth engagement strategies:**

## 8) Part-Time or Summer Jobs - SYEP

**Time Commitment:** Ongoing employment

**What it is:** Paid roles for students or recent graduates.

### What youth gain:

- Income and independence
- Workplace responsibility
- Customer service and teamwork skills

### What employers gain:

- Reliable entry-level workforce
- Opportunity to train early-career employees
- Strong retention and loyalty

## 9) Apprenticeships

**Time Commitment:** Months to years

**What it is:** Structured, paid training combining work and formal education.

### **What youth gain:**

- Earn while they learn
- Industry-recognized credentials
- Clear career pathway

### **What employers gain:**

- Highly skilled workforce tailored to company needs
- Reduced hiring and training costs
- Strong retention and loyalty

**Apprenticeships are a *gold standard* for building talent pipelines.**

