

YOUTH EMPLOYER SITE BEST PRACTICES



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.

Quick Readiness Test

If the following statements are true, your organization is ready to host:

-  A supervisor and schedule are in place.
-  Meaningful work has been identified.
-  A plan for onboarding and feedback exists.

You're set to host a successful internship!

There are organizations in Alexandria to help connect you with young people and to create meaningful opportunities. *A good place to start is with David Remick, Dremick@arlingtonva.us, at the Alexandria/Arlington Regional Workforce Council*

Checklist — Get Ready To Host

What does an employer need to be ready to host a young person?

1) Purpose & Scope

- Define the goal of the internship (career exploration, project support, pipeline building, community engagement).
- Decide the format: job shadow day, short-term internship, or semester/summer internship or other.
- Identify the department/team that will host the intern.

2) Meaningful Work

- Create a short position description.
- List real projects or tasks the young person can contribute to.
- Ensure work is educational, not just administrative.

3) A Supervisor & Mentor

- Designate a primary supervisor responsible for: Daily guidance, Task assignment, and Feedback and evaluation
- Assign a secondary mentor or “buddy” for day-to-day questions.

4) Logistics & Workspace

- Arrange a workspace (building access, desk, laptop, login access if needed).
- Prepare any required paperwork (NDA, policies, emergency contact, required background checks).
- Confirm dress code and workplace norms.

5) Plan the First Day Experience

- Create a simple onboarding schedule (leverage your current onboarding process).
- Prepare a company overview presentation.
- Provide a tour (virtual or in-person).
- Introduce key team members.
- Review expectations, goals, and communication norms.

6) A Learning Plan

- Identify 3–5 learning goals for the young person.
- Plan skill-building opportunities (shadowing, trainings, meetings).
- Schedule at least one informational interview with another team.
- Include a small independent project to present at the end.

7) Provide Feedback & Reflection

- Schedule midpoint check-in.
 - Provide constructive feedback and encouragement.
 - Ask the young person for feedback on their experience.
 - Conduct an end-of-internship reflection conversation.
 - Provide a letter of recommendation or reference if appropriate.
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