



Texas Tri-Agency Partners Relaunch “Texas Internship Challenge” to Connect Education with Careers

March 6, 2018

As students in high school and college begin their search for internships for the summer and fall, Texas’ Tri-Agency partners continue their work through the “Texas Internship Challenge” to help bolster the opportunities available for young people.

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) joined forces to establish the Texas Internship Challenge, a statewide campaign first launched in 2017 and now relaunched in 2018, challenging industry and employer partners to increase and promote more paid internships for Texas students.

The program also challenges Texas colleges and universities to grant academic credit for and promote internships to students, and challenges students to apply for and accept internships.

TWC has created a website, TXInternshipChallenge.com, where employers can post internships and students can apply for them at no cost.

“Internships provide invaluable mentoring which positions our students for future success by increasing their skills, awareness and work-readiness for Texas careers,” said TWC Chairman Andres Alcantar. “Internships present employers with a unique opportunity to raise students’ understanding of their industry and

can serve as a launch point for recruiting a future worker. I challenge Texas employers to join the Texas Internship Challenge and help the future Texas workforce understand the broad range of occupations available to them in the Texas economy.”



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This project is wholly funded with Federal workforce development funds.



Through the Texas Internship Challenge, the Tri-Agency partners are addressing a workforce need which it has heard frequently from employers: That students need to learn/acquire workplace skills. Internships help students learn workplace skills, introduce and expose students to the state’s in-demand industries, and help students be more competitive for a job search. One of the four goals of the state’s 60x30TX strategic plan for higher education is for students to have identified marketable skills. These skills are acquired by students through education, including curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities such as internships.

Employers gain potential full-time employees that can be recruited directly from qualified interns, as well as exposure for their company and their industry’s in-demand occupations. Internships have become an important part of upward mobility for future job seekers—60 percent of employers prefer work experience gained through an internship or professional experience.

On Feb. 5, the Tri-Agency partners met in Austin with industry and education stakeholders to discuss expansion strategies for the Texas Internship Challenge. Chairman Alcantar, Texas Commissioner of Education Mike Morath, Texas Commissioner of Higher Education Raymund Paredes, TWC Commissioner Representing Employers Ruth Ruggero Hughs and TWC Labor Commissioner Julian Alvarez were joined by executives from Lockheed Martin Corporation, Accenture, JPMorgan Chase, among other industry and education leaders to discuss specific goals on internship expansion strategies, which include stressing the importance of internships, examining different strategies to grow internships and listening to ways the program can expand outreach.

“We must ensure that every child leaves high school prepared for success, whether they choose to attend college, enroll in the military or enter the career field,” said Commissioner Morath. “The Texas Internship Challenge provides every high school student in Texas the stepping stone to a bright future of opportunities.”



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“Working with the business community to create more paid internship opportunities is one of the most promising strategies we can offer for students, especially for the more than 60 percent of poor kids in Texas,” said Commissioner Paredes. “These students have to earn income to make their way through college. Paid internships get them into business networks, help them find a job after college, and help them acquire the marketable skills they need to get those jobs. This supports our 60x30TX marketable skills and student debt goals, and enables Texas employers to promote jobs in their industries to our future workforce.”

“In our meetings across the state employers expressed the need to have a talent pipeline equipped with work-based learning experiences. Internships will prepare students with skills to meet the demands of the 21st Century,” said Commissioner Hughs. “I applaud and continue to challenge Texas employers in helping the future Texas workforce understand the broad range of opportunities available to them in a growing Texas economy.”

“Internships not only provide important work and life experiences for students, but also set them up for future workplace success,” said Commissioner Alvarez. “The Texas Internship Challenge will help link learning in the classroom, create relevance between the different subjects studied, and help all students develop the skills required for future occupations.”

The agencies encourage internship programs as a bridge for students to explore in-demand industries and occupations. Students will benefit from mentoring, career guidance, identification of marketable skills, and learn about high-demand occupations. Employers will benefit from the opportunity to explore candidates for full-time recruitment and leverage the developing skill sets and perspectives of students, while also highlighting careers in their industries.

Learn more about upcoming internship opportunities or how to post an internship by visiting TXInternshipChallenge.com.



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