

# INTERNSHIP DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

## SRJC Water/Wastewater Program

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) defines internships as follows:

An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

## Why?

Providing internship opportunities to students can benefit your utility as well as the student and the community as a whole.

Internships benefit the Utility by:

- Providing a chance for employees to train others, thereby increasing their technical and supervisory skills
- Energizing the workplace with enthusiasm and new skillsets
- Getting to know future applicants before they interview, without a long-term commitment
- Training interns to do things “your way”
- Providing labor to support operations so your employees can focus on high-priority work
- Opening your access to a year-round source of highly-motivated students
- Building your reputation and desirability as an employer
- Exposing and recruiting future employees to your union (if applicable)

Internships benefit the Student by:

- Enhancing classroom education
- Offering hands-on training
- Providing valuable work experience
- Networking with the industry
- Learning professional conduct
- Providing hours for certification
- Offsetting college expenses (if the internship pays)

Internships benefit the Community by:

- Strengthening the applicant pool
- Improving local partnerships
- Providing future operational reliability
- Increasing awareness of the field
- Supporting the SRJC program

## Step-by-step Process

1. **Develop contacts:** Assign an Intern Coordinator at your utility. Contact the SRJC Water/Wastewater Program Coordinator.
2. **Make decisions:**
  - a. **What are the goals of the internship?** The best internships balance the needs of the student (for relevant work experience) with the needs of your utility (for meaningful work). What tasks are good for interns to do? Do you have any special projects?
  - b. **How long will the internship last?** Longer internships provide more experience, and over time interns will require minimal supervision. Shorter internship periods allow students to get experience at a variety of locations, and give you an opportunity to get to know more future employees.

- c. **What are the required qualifications?** Students from our program have six degree and certificate options, and may take up to nine classes specific to the industry. You can limit your applicants to those with certain classes or certificates completed. <link to new website, Our Program page.>
3. **Consider legal needs:**
  - a. As with normal employees, following labor laws and a providing a safe workplace are necessary.
  - b. Consult with your union if applicable to ensure the internship is in accordance with union rules.
  - c. Consider your administrative needs.
  - d. If an SRJC student is enrolled in the Work Experience class, they are covered by SRJC for worker's compensation insurance.
  - e. Paying interns is optional, but remember that paying interns helps to strengthen the economy, encourages responsible applicants, and creates loyal future employees. The Fair Labor Standards Act is used to determine whether interns must be paid or can be unpaid: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>
4. **Start application process:** Develop a job announcement that describes the job, environment, pay, timeframe, and qualifications. Advertise (see the job posting resource on our website). Review applications, interview, and select an intern.
5. **Supervise the intern:** Internships are different from temporary or part-time jobs because they have an intentional "learning agenda" in a structured work environment and include learning objectives, observation, reflection, evaluation and assessment.
6. **Evaluate the intern, assess the program, and make improvements.**

## Resources

Baywork developed an "Internship Guidebook" to help local industry partners create internship programs.

<http://baywork.org/resource/internship-guidebook/>

Baywork developed the "Career Pathways Report" to assess the employment needs of our local water & wastewater industry.

<http://baywork.org/resource/water-wastewater-career-pathways/>

The University of Notre Dame has an excellent step-by-step "Employer's Guide to Developing an Internship Program."

[https://careercenter.nd.edu/assets/136851/employer\\_internship\\_development\\_guide.pdf](https://careercenter.nd.edu/assets/136851/employer_internship_development_guide.pdf)

The State of California published this Student Internship Program Guide geared for state agencies but it has some good information that could be applied in any industry, and many checklists and forms.

[https://jobs.ca.gov/PDF/Student\\_Internship\\_Program\\_Guide.pdf](https://jobs.ca.gov/PDF/Student_Internship_Program_Guide.pdf)

Foundation for California Community Colleges has a resource for payroll processing and more.

<https://foundationccc.org/What-We-Do/Workforce-Development/Career-Catalyst>