



Best Practices for Supporting Youth in the New World of Work

Reference Guide for Employer Partners

Futures and Options is committed to supporting employers in creating robust internship experiences for New York City high school students. Our observations over the last three years, as well as our conversations with interns and supervisors, have given us critical insight into how to design worthwhile internship experiences for both parties. The resulting recommendations of best practices makes us confident that, even with remote work here to stay, the right structures can enable high school students to meaningfully contribute to your organization while developing skills and gaining exposure to the world of work.



Training your intern

- Determine which virtual platforms and software your interns will use and train them on how and when to use those platforms.
- Teach interns the “unwritten rules” for professional etiquette during video conferencing, such as finding a quiet space for the call, keeping cameras turned on, and muting when others are speaking.



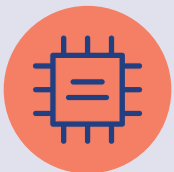
Assigning job responsibilities

- Assign finite tasks at the start of then internship and then, as you get to know your interns and their skills, expand on those tasks and assign more complex projects.
- Break down projects into individual tasks in a shared document, and include expected deadlines for each task. Ask interns to update their progress on tasks regularly.
- Direct interns to work on a presentation during their downtime that focuses on broader issues facing your organization and that will be presented at the conclusion of the internship. This will give your interns a more comprehensive perspective on the company and will offer an opportunity for them to practice making virtual presentations.



Communicating frequently and effectively

- Communicate with your interns regularly. It is best to have a check-in meeting at the start of the workday and a check-out meeting at the end of each day.
- Encourage interns to lead icebreakers and other interactive activities during virtual team meetings.
- Create dedicated spaces for talking to your interns about your career journey and the current responsibilities of your role.
- Help your intern understand when to use chats, when to write emails, and/or when to video call. At each company, certain topics are more appropriate for certain communication channels.



Selecting the right software

- Choose platforms that interns have already used. Many interns have previous experience with Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Suite products from school and extracurricular programs.
- Consider using project management software to organize tasks and get a clearer understanding of what your interns have completed.



Encouraging opportunities for networking

- Create opportunities for interns to virtually engage meaningfully with other employees at your organization.
- Help your interns make LinkedIn profiles and encourage them to connect with other employees at the organization.