

WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience is any activity in which you are at a worksite doing real work for pay. This can take the form of internships or apprenticeships, work-based learning experiences arranged through a school's CTE program, or part-time employment.

Work experiences are designed to:

- Promote hands-on, real-world experience in a field of interest
- Provide productive value for the employer
- Offer opportunities to develop, practice and demonstrate employability skills
- Build occupational knowledge
- Create awareness of the education needed to be successful in the industry



THE VALUE OF WORK EXPERIENCE

1. Having prior work experience will make you **more likely to be successful** in your job search.
2. Work experiences are a great way to **explore different career paths**, industries, types of work, and workplace environments. If you are unsure about your desired career, work experiences can help you figure it out.
3. It's the **best way to understand a particular job** or industry. You will have opportunities to see the job in action, ask questions and learn from actual employees in the industry, and gain firsthand experience in the career field. This is a great way to know if it is for you or not.
4. Seeking out and participating in work experiences such as internships or part-time jobs in your chosen field **demonstrates interest and dedication**. It tells future employers that you are motivated to work in that field.
5. If you are struggling with career decisions, or have no clue what you'd like to do for a career, trying out a variety of work placements may help you **narrow down your options and make decisions** about your potential career path.
6. Internships, service learning, and part-time or summer jobs can all help you **learn what it means to be an employee** and about work in general. This is definitely valuable to figure out before your first full-time job.

7. Experiencing work will **teach you about yourself**. Learning what you like and dislike about that particular industry, what your skills and strengths are, any potential weaknesses or areas that need improvement, and more before you land your first “real world” position will be beneficial.
8. **These experiences may lead to a job offer!** If you enjoy the work and are doing a good job in your position, you may be offered more responsibilities or even a full-time position.
9. Work placements are a great opportunity to **network with people** in your community and / or desired career path. This will help you build your contacts and could lead to possible recommendations or referrals.
10. Work experience **builds your resume**. Having a couple experiences described on your resume will put you further ahead than those without work experience.

*Adapted from [Why is Work Experience Important?](#) From All About Careers

PAID INTERNSHIPS

Paid internships are a type of pre-professional work experience where you are paid to learn relevant knowledge and skills to be successful in a particular career field. Internships can open the door to employment opportunities, either within the company of the internship or otherwise.

Internships on a resume tell employers that a candidate has had some hands-on experience and that will outshine those who do not have an internship on their resume. Internships also offer an immersive learning experience showing what it is like to work in a particular field that research and informational interviews cannot provide.

What to Expect

- Prospective interns should seek out internship opportunities in their career field(s) of interest.
- There will likely be “busy work” that is required of interns. Tasks such as making copies or other menial tasks may be required.
- Interns need to be professional and exhibit good work habits. Things like being on time (or a few minutes early), dressing appropriately, and keeping conversations and actions inclusive and appropriate at all times are expected.



- Interns will make mistakes and have to ask for help. That's okay! It's expected that there will be a learning curve to any position and that mistakes will happen.
- Interns may be paid weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or provided a stipend (a fixed amount paid as a salary or allowance).
- For 2019, the average hourly wage earned by bachelor-level interns was \$19.05 ("2019 Internship & Co-op Survey Report" 5).
- Internships may require between 8-40 hours per week.
- Finding an internship can be achieved through networking, online databases and listings, and through school guidance offices or college career centers.
- An internship may lead to an offer of employment, but it is not guaranteed. In 2019, the offer rate for interns was 70.4 percent
- Internships for high school students may be volunteer positions, or unpaid.
- Internships at smaller companies may offer more access to mentorship and networking opportunities that may be more helpful than an internship at a larger company.



QUESTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE INTERNS TO CONSIDER

1. Is this internship in my career field(s) of interest?
2. Is this a paid internship?
3. How much of my time is required each day / week?
4. Where is the internship located? Is this near or far from home and school?
5. How will I travel to and from the internship?
6. What is the size of the company? How might this impact my experience?
7. What will I be working on during this internship? Will this lead to new skills that I can show prospective employers?
8. What is most exciting about this opportunity to me?
9. What would I like to gain from this experience?



Resources to Learn More or Find an Internship Opportunity

- [What is a Paid Internship?](#), The Balance Careers
- [Paid vs. Unpaid Internships: How to Decide](#), WayUp
- [The Differences Between Paid and Unpaid Internships](#), Internship Finder
- [Internship Opportunities for Students of Color](#), The Balance Careers
- [Top 10 Things You Should Look for in an Internship](#), WayUp
- [9 Common Mistakes Students Make When Applying for Internships](#), WayUp
- [Building Your Resume: How Many Internships Do You Need?](#), WayUp
- [Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act](#), U.S. Department of Labor
- [Internships](#), Thurgood Marshall College Fund
- [Internships](#) on WayUp
- [Paid Internships](#) on Internships.com
- [Internship Finder](#)
- [Internships in Maryland](#), Internships.com
- [Maryland State Internships & Resources](#), Maryland.gov

VIRTUAL INTERNSHIPS

Virtual (or Remote) Internships allow students to gain work experience without physically showing up to an office. This type of internship is solely completed online. Virtual internships have gained popularity as more companies are offering remote work to their employees, meaning that more people are working from home. Virtual internships are also popular among students who do not live in the city where they wish to intern or do not have transportation available to them.



The COVID-19 pandemic has also had an impact on internship programs. By the end of April 2020, more than 80% of reporting companies planned some type of change to their internship program (“Special Report: Coronavirus”). Many companies have opted for virtual internships in 2020 as a result of the lockdowns and closures due to coronavirus and this may continue into the coming years. It is likely that your students will encounter virtual internships as part of their search and the information and resources below will aid in helping them decide if it’s a good fit for them or not.

What to Expect

- Virtual Internships require increased planning and preparation on the part of the intern and their supervisor to ensure success.
- It should be expected that interns will spend a lot of time on the computer and sitting at their desk. This is one key difference between in-person internships and virtual.

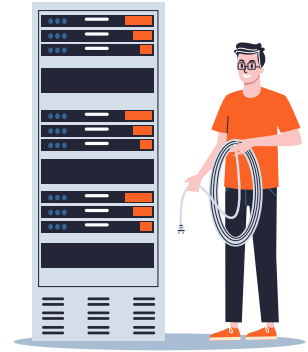
- A reliable Internet connection and video call capabilities will be required.
- Interns still get to be part of the team. Just because the internship is not taking place in person does not mean that teams are any less effective or communicative and interns will be included.
- Interns will still receive support and mentorship from their supervisors and teammates and will not be expected to figure everything out on their own.
- There may be increased flexibility in terms of schedules in a virtual internship.
- In a virtual internship, one will not be required to travel to an office, except, perhaps for the rare occasion.
- Well-developed written communication skills will be more important in a virtual internship because most communication will be taking place via email, chat, or comments in a project management system. Interns will have to be able to express themselves clearly in writing, both formally and informally.
- It will be important to maintain a professional attitude, presentation, and environment even though you are working from home.
- Working from home is not for everyone. It requires a person to establish boundaries between home life and work life and routines that support both. When working from home, work hours can easily extend into all hours of the day and it may cause burn out if it seems like there is no end to the work day.

Resources to Learn More or Find an Internship Opportunity

- [What is a Virtual Internship?](#), Virtual Internships
- [How Virtual Internships Work](#), The Balance Careers
- [How to Make the Most of a Virtual Internship](#), Princeton University Center for Career Development
- Video: [How to Excel at a Virtual Internship](#), Forbes
- Video: [How to Be Successful at a Virtual Internship!](#), The Intern Queen
- Video: [Preparing for Your Virtual Internship](#), Afzal Hussein
- Video: [How to Build Relationships During Your Virtual Internship](#), The Intern Hustle
- [What a Virtual Internship is Really Like as Told by a Current Intern](#), USC Career Center
- [All About Virtual Internships](#), FastWeb
- [Virtual Internships](#), Notre Dame of Maryland University
- [Internship Guidance During COVID-19](#), University of Maryland

APPRENTICESHIPS

An apprenticeship is a program designed to train individuals for a specific type of job through on-the-job learning under another, more experienced employee. Apprenticeships combine a company's need for highly skilled employees with a training program for new hires or employees who need to upgrade their skills. It is common to find apprenticeship programs in manufacturing and construction industries, but they are also becoming more widely available in growing industries such as IT, healthcare, energy, transportation, and logistics ("What is an Apprenticeship?").



What to Expect

- An apprentice is typically paid throughout the program.
- An apprentice will “undergo hands-on training under the guidance of an experienced mentor” (“What is an Apprenticeship?”).
- Many apprenticeships will require accompanying academic courses to gain knowledge related to the industry or career.
- As an apprentice gains new skills and knowledge and reaches pre-determined goals and milestones throughout the program, they may be compensated with pay increases and increased responsibilities.
- Typically a nationally accredited certification is awarded at the completion of an apprenticeship program. This will be valid in all states that participate in the program.
- Apprenticeships may last between 1-6 years depending on the occupation and program design.

Resources to Learn More or Find an Internship Opportunity

- [Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program \(MATP\)](#), Maryland Department of Labor
 - [Be an Apprentice](#), MATP
- [Apprenticeship Maryland](#), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
 - A youth apprenticeship program for ages 16 and older
- [Apprenticeship.gov](#)
- [Discover Apprenticeship Fact Sheet](#), Apprenticeship.gov
- [American Institute for Innovative Apprenticeship](#)
- [6 Differences Between an Internship and Apprenticeship](#), Glassdoor
- [What is an Apprenticeship? Career Guide](#), Indeed

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING / AMERICORPS

Another work experience option is participation in community service learning opportunities through organizations such as AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps is the only federal agency in America tasked with elevating service and volunteerism. They work with local partners to help “Americans improve their lives and the lives of their fellow citizens through service” (AmeriCorps).



AmeriCorps works to connect individual members and volunteers to nonprofit organizations in communities of high need so they can serve directly to address “critical community needs like increasing academic achievement, mentoring youth, fighting poverty, sustaining national parks, preparing for disasters, and more” (AmeriCorps). Students looking to make a difference in their communities or in the U.S. may be interested in joining AmeriCorps before entering the workforce or attending college.

How does it work?

- Choose where you want to serve.
- Pick your organization to serve with.
- Choose your focus.

Benefits

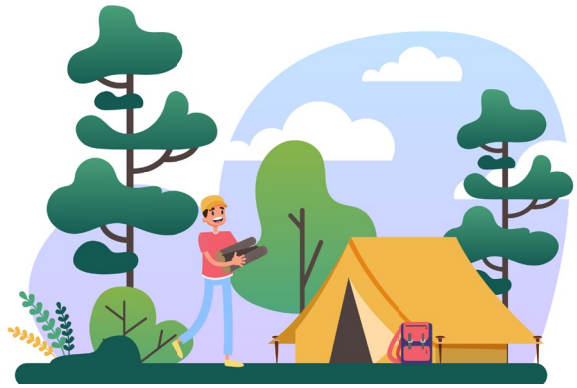
- Earn an education award.
- Earn a living allowance.
- Gain professional skills.

Learn More

- [AmeriCorps NEW Site](#)
- [AmeriCorps / CNCS Legacy Site](#)
 - [AmeriCorps Programs](#)
 - [AmeriCorps FAQ](#)
- [AmeriCorps YouTube Playlist](#)
- [National Service in Maryland](#), AmeriCorps
- [Maryland Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism](#), Maryland.gov

CONSERVATION CORPS

In addition to AmeriCorps, with a specific focus on environmental conservation, an option for volunteer service work experience is Conservation Corps. This program of the American Conservation Experience, is for Americans aged 18-35 who are interested in land management as a career path or course of study. These volunteers serve under a professional supervisor as part of a team to “explore future outdoor careers, learn practical field skills, and develop confidence as emerging leaders in the field of conservation” (“Conservation Corps”). Participants in the program learn and train under the guidance of staff from the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and more.



“ACE’s Conservation Corps and Conservation Volunteer projects represent the spectrum of practical environmental restoration work accomplished on America’s public lands. In 2012 ACE completed crew projects for 22 National Parks, 13 National Forests, 7 Wildlife Refuges, 7 Bureau of Land Management Field Offices, and in partnership with dozens of local parks, non-profits, and land trusts” (“Conservation Corps”).

How does it work?

- Serve for a minimum of 12 weeks with the possibility to serve for up to 6 months or longer.
- No prior experience in practical conservation necessary to participate.

Benefits

- Work in the great outdoors!
- Earn an education award.
- Earn a stipend during service.
- Gain professional skills in the area of environmental conservation and land management.

Learn More

- [Conservation Corps](#), American Conservation Experience
- [Maryland Conservation Corps](#), Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- [The Corps Network](#)
- [Chesapeake Conservation Corps](#), Chesapeake Bay Trust
- [Natural Resources Careers Camp](#), Maryland Department of Natural Resources

FULL TIME / PART TIME EMPLOYMENT

In the United States, full-time employment is categorized primarily as working between 30 and 40 hours per week and part-time employment generally captures anything less than 30 hours per week. Part-time and full-time employment can also be confused for hourly and salaried employees, but the two have nothing to do with one another. "A salaried employee is paid an annual salary, while an hourly employee is paid a specific rate per hour worked" (Murray) regardless of whether they work full- or part-time hours.

Full-time jobs tend to be what we think of when we think of a career. But part-time jobs are valuable as well, especially if a student wants to incorporate freelance work into their career plan. Part-time jobs typically allow for more flexibility in schedule and work well with attending school or seeking educational opportunities. It is often a good experience for high school students to obtain a part-time job to help prepare them for the world of work and give them hands-on experience in a workplace.

Full-time

- Work at least 30 hours per week
- Receive the full range of employee benefits
- Insurance, paid time off, retirement, etc.
- More rigid schedule

Part-time

- Work less than 30 hours per week
- May receive none, some, or all employee benefits depending on the employer
- Flexibility in scheduling

Resources to Learn More or Find an Employment Opportunity

- [How to Decide Whether Part-Time or Full-Time Work is Right for You](#), Flexjobs
- [How to Get Your First Part-Time Job for Teens](#), The Balance Careers
- [Full-Time Employment](#), U.S. Department of Labor
- [When Should a Part-Time Employee Be Reclassified as Full-Time?](#), SHRM
- [State of Maryland Job Openings](#)
- [Maryland Job Resources](#), Maryland.gov
- [Maryland Workforce Exchange](#), Maryland Department of Labor
- Job Search Sites:
 - [Indeed](#), [Monster](#), [Glassdoor](#), [FlexJobs](#), [Snagajob](#)