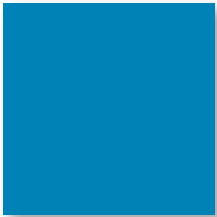
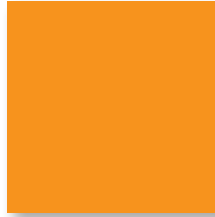


Employers are Building Tomorrow by Investing in Talent Today



Career opportunities abound in Doña Ana County – in Aerospace, International Trade, Healthcare, Energy, Agriculture and more.

We also have an abundance of prospective talent sitting in 10 high schools countywide – nearly **13,000 future contributors to business and industry.**

The key to unleashing their potential, and as a result, the prosperity of our businesses, industries, and economy, is by eliminating “brain drain” that occurs when our bright young talent leave our county to pursue opportunity elsewhere... simply because they had no idea some of the best jobs and quality of life in the U.S. are right here in Doña Ana County.

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Building the Bridge to Career Opportunities

The solution is building direct relationships between employers and students now. Internships are the very real bridge to opportunity for employers hungry for workforce talent and young people hungry for meaningful career opportunities.

We saw the impact that just an eight-week summer job had on our students who participated in the Doña Ana County Summer Enrichment Program. In a survey of 550 of the 1,300 students, they expressed overwhelmingly positive comments about what the experience meant to them. Many talked about the “soft skills” they learned, about gaining experience in a career field in which they are interested, and importance of the relationships they built with co-workers, among many other benefits. One student said the most beneficial thing they learned was:

“Understanding work ethic, understanding what it means to work, time management, organization skills and communicating in general.”



Employers, too, had positive comments about the experience of sharing eight weeks in the summer with high school juniors, seniors, or recent grads. In a survey of about 100 employers, (86% of whom plan to participate again, and 88% of whom said they would consider hiring their interns in the future), the employers shared their perspectives about the experiences of meeting younger workers and having them make meaningful contributions to their organizations:

“It’s a great feeling seeing young minds. Some shy, quiet, and nervous and then watching them leave with confidence and out of their shell. Always a pleasure working with them.”

“The students were very helpful, creative and supportive of the business goal in mind.”

“The student that we had working in our office was an amazing young lady and was very helpful. She was very teachable and has a real thirst for learning.”



Opening The Door to Student Interns

While there's great value in hiring young workers anytime, there are even more students available for working opportunities through internships (also called work-based learning) conducted in partnership with high schools.

Internships are work experiences for those students 16 years or older and takes place during the school day. Internships can be paid and unpaid, if the student receives academic credit toward meeting their graduation requirements. Paid internships can be paid by the employer and/or through funds from the local workforce services provider as "pre-apprenticeships."

Employers who host student interns also have support from teachers or career staff at the high school, so there's a support system in place to ensure the best experience for employers and students. Employers can discuss their unique situations with the career coordinators and help structure a work experience that's a benefit for the employer and a benefit for the student.

The difference between an internship and a regular part-time job is the learning focus of the experience for the student. Hands-on learning is the key to exposing students to the world of work and the very best way for them to learn those vital soft or employability skills of critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, communication, and more.

Paired with the academic instruction at school, internships help build students who are ready to successfully enter the workforce once their academic career is over... and many times that entry can be with the employer who hosted the internship. In fact, many companies use student internships as a recruitment strategy to identify workforce talent.

Every employer in Doña Ana County has some valuable real world experience to offer this next generation of workforce talent, and the best lessons aren't learned in the classroom – they are learned on the job.



Who Should Host an Intern?

Employers of any size can host a student intern. The essential elements are:

- A designated supervisor
- Specific timeframe and number of hours to be worked
- Evaluation/feedback of the student's performance over the course of the internship
- Resources needed for the work (i.e. a workspace, technology, an email address, etc.)
- Does not necessarily lead to a job at the end of the internship

Employers have two timeframes to invite interns into their workplaces: **August to December** and **January to May**. Currently, there is a third option through the Doña Ana County Summer Enrichment Program which runs eight weeks in the summer.

The best internship experience for the employer should include communication with the internship coordinator and student ahead of time about:

- Description of the work duties of the intern
- Preferred skills, knowledge, or career interest of the student that would make for the most beneficial learning environment
- Goals for the student's learning experience
- Contact information for the designated supervisor

While the student is covered by the school district's insurance while at a job site, there are limitations. There are also US Department of Labor laws that apply for student interns. Check with your school coordinators to learn more.

Regular communication with the student and the internship coordinator helps the student continue growing in their work experience, as well as the employer gaining a positive benefit to their workplace.

Students can return to the employer for more than one semester if both the student and the employer agree. Or, employers who really enjoy the mentoring experience, can host new interns every semester.



How Do Internships Benefit My Business?

Employers nationwide are reporting workforce shortages, and New Mexico struggles mightily in this area, with .34 workers available for every 1 open job in the state. This is causing a shift in hiring practices for many employers, who are becoming more and more open to young talent.

Employers who bring high school interns into their workplace find:

- Students who receive academic credit or workforce funds to cover their work experience come at no cost to the employer
- Growing the size and productivity of their workforce
- A natural pipeline of future workforce talent
- New perspectives and new digital skills of younger workers
- A positive community reputation for helping grow and retain future talent

What's My Next Step?

Contact the career connections staff at the district nearest your business or organization to get started.

Las Cruces Public Schools
<https://www.lcps.net/page/ace-and-career-readiness>

Gadsden Independent School District
Julian Encina
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Hatch Valley Public Schools
Brandy Holguin
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Dona Ana Community College
Rodolfo Acosta
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