

National Intern Day: Internships Build the Next Generation of Lehigh Valley Talent

By Trisha Nardone and Paul Muschick

LEHIGH VALLEY - The Lehigh Valley's economy continues to grow and garner national accolades because employers, educators, and community organizations such as Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation work together to develop the workforce that companies need to succeed.

Internships are one of the most effective ways to do that, giving students valuable career experience while helping employers identify and develop future talent.

National Intern Day, celebrated this year on July 30, recognizes the role internships play in preparing the next generation of talent. From manufacturers and technology companies to health care providers, utilities, and financial institutions, employers across the Lehigh Valley are creating opportunities for students to gain real-world experience, build professional networks, and develop the skills that spur successful careers.

Some internships lead to full-time employment, helping employers strengthen their talent pipeline while encouraging graduates to build their futures in the region.

Here are just a few of the ways internships benefit employers, students, and the Lehigh Valley community.



Why Employers Invest in Internships

Interns bring fresh perspectives

Interns strengthen an organization's talent pipeline

Interns provide mentoring and leadership opportunities for existing staff

"Our organization has gained tremendous value from our internship program by cultivating a pipeline of emerging talent and bringing fresh perspectives into work. Interns contribute meaningfully to projects, offer new ideas and energy, and often transition into long term team members – reducing hiring costs and enhancing continuity. The program also builds leadership opportunities for current staff who mentor and guide interns, helping to develop future leaders from within."



What Students Gain From Internships

Career exploration

Real-world experience on meaningful projects

Soft skills (communication, collaboration, problem solving) that are universally in demand by employers

Opportunities for networking

Potential for full-time employment

"We got to interview our VPs and directors and get all their experience and their advice, for how to be professional and how to handle tough situations."

How the Lehigh Valley Creates Internship Opportunities

Intern Impact Day: This annual community service event is coordinated by the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley not only to support interns in making an impact on the community, but also for the community to make an impact on them. The hope is that interns will become more engaged with the region and people, leading them to consider the possibility of working in the Lehigh Valley after graduating.

Summer Intern Series: Lehigh Valley Inter-Regional Networking and Connecting Consortium (LINC) hosts events that allow visiting and local interns to explore the region, build relationships, and perhaps start to see themselves in the Lehigh Valley in the future. This summer, interns had the chance to enjoy an evening at Shankweiler's Drive-In Theatre and a trivia night at Seven Sirens Brewing. The series culminates in a summer sendoff party on July 30 at B. Social in Bethlehem.

Internship Resource Guide: This employer toolkit developed by Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation in collaboration with 11 Lehigh Valley colleges and universities shares best practices for creating and expanding internship programs and connects employers with career development professionals at these colleges and universities.

(Photos courtesy of Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley)

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