



Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating Board

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Internship program provides students with a job, a future

OLYMPIA—Five Washington communities are helping students gain internship and pre-apprenticeship experience as part of a program that builds work readiness, school and employment success.

Some 250 students are receiving work experience this spring and summer in paid and unpaid internships targeted to in-demand industries. The students are also receiving career guidance and assistance filling out college financial aid forms such as the FAFSA. In some cases, students may be able to use their work experience as their senior project.

The Opportunity Internship Program began in 2009. This current program cycle started in January 2012 and runs through June. For many students, the program not only provides their first job but is a first step in building a resume that leads to more work, further education and a possible career pathway that lifts them out of poverty.

“Low-income students face tough challenges, but reap enormous benefits when they get that first job,” said Eleni Papadakis, executive director of the state’s Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board). “Work experience is critical for young people, not only to prepare for the next job, but to learn about meeting workplace expectations, discover their talents and further their education to reach career goals they now view as possible.”

The Workforce Board is administering the \$500,000 project through a contract with the state's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. All told, nearly 1,000 students have been served by the Opportunity Internship Program since 2009. The program is also included in the 2011 PASS Act, aimed at dropout prevention, among other goals. This year’s participants include:

- Northwest Workforce Development Council-Skagit, Whatcom, Island, San Juan counties
- Olympic Workforce Development Council-Kitsap, Clallam and Jefferson counties
- REACH Tacoma-A nonprofit youth-oriented community organization
- Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council-Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum
- Spokane Area Workforce Development Council

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Each student will receive at least 90 hours in an internship or pre-apprenticeship. Students who enroll in an eligible training or education program within a year of graduating high school may be eligible for the State Need Grant program.

Those students who go on to complete a postsecondary program are guaranteed an employer interview, where they will be expected to be on time, dress appropriately and answer questions. The program targets high demand occupations with a starting wage of \$30,000 or more annually.

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The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a partnership of labor, business and government, dedicated to helping Washington residents obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers.