

# Summer Internships

**2025**

**Employer Manual**

EO Companies  
*Ignite Program*







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Note to Employers .....	4
About EO Companies .....	5
About Ignite .....	6
Your Role .....	7
Internship Applications .....	9
About the Internship .....	10
Worthwhile Work .....	12
Workplace Readiness .....	14
Contact Information .....	17

# A NOTE TO EMPLOYERS

We all remember that first call where everything spoken after, “You got the job!” faded into the background while our smiles grew wide. We remember the faces of the people we interacted with daily; the desk, the front room, or even the field we spent the majority of our time; and that first feeling of indescribable accomplishment we got to experience with others on our team.

Your commitment to the Ignite Program is offering this feeling of achievement and invaluable work experience to the youth in our region. Thank you for choosing to partner with us.

The internship component of EO’s Ignite Program provides our region’s high school students with a temporary summer work experience designed to help students gain career awareness and practical soft skills. Your mentorship of the student(s) who will be working with you and your business will influence many of their habits for their entire career. This is no small responsibility, but we are here to help you along the way.

This Employer Manual will serve as a go-to resource for you and your business before and throughout the program, along with EO staff support. Your investment in our region is helping to prepare the next generation of Southwest Virginia’s workforce.

Thank you for your support!

Travis W. Staton  
EO Companies President + CEO





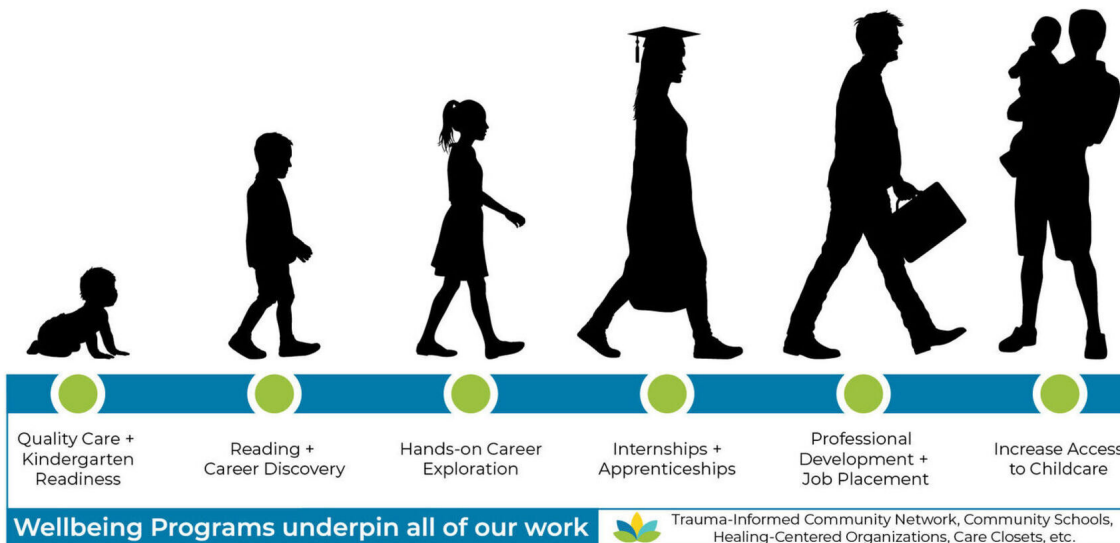
# ABOUT EO COMPANIES

At EO, we envision a region where all communities are thriving, and people are well.

EO works along a cradle-to-career continuum that supports early childhood care and education, kindergarten readiness, reading proficiency, career discovery and exploration, internships, professional development, and early career job placement.

We prioritize data-informed solutions that leverage community listening and cross-sector convening to build innovative and sustainable social change.

## OUR CRADLE TO CAREER FRAMEWORK



EO currently provides programs in the counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe, and the cities of Bristol, Galax, Norton, and Radford.

For more information about EO Companies, visit [www.eoco.org](http://www.eoco.org).

# ABOUT IGNITE

Young adolescence is a time of intense identity formation and high school students are discovering who they are and finding their place in the world. Recent studies have shown that engagement begins to drop in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, and that as many as 60% of students are “chronically disengaged” by the time they enter high school.

Developing ways to introduce students as early as 6th grade to career options and opportunities so they understand the relevance of what they are learning and stay on track, with a goal in mind, is critical.

Ignite aims to address these issues starting in middle school all the way through high school graduation, creating connections that keep students engaged in learning, inspiring them to take rigorous courses and build relationships with employers, and increasing the likelihood that they will be interested in and prepared for post-secondary education, advanced vocational training, and/or excelling in the workforce.

EO Companies' Ignite Program sparks career interest in the next generation of Southwest Virginia's workforce through career awareness and hands-on learning. These summer internships are one component of Ignite that will help bridge the gap between the worlds of learning and work by connecting schools and students with employers and employees. Across EO's service area, the Ignite Program is investing in the lives of over 30,000 students – enabling middle school and high school students to realize their potential and be ready to enter and advance in the region's workforce.

More information about the Ignite Program can be found online at [EOco.org/internships](http://EOco.org/internships).



# YOUR ROLE

## *IGNITE INTERNSHIP MENTOR*

When preparing for your internship this summer, there are some responsibilities to keep in mind. Your student intern has come ready to learn about your organization and they've also come to develop soft skills they've not yet fully grown into.

To meet these needs, we request that the organization participating in an internship this summer designate one employee to be the Ignite Internship Mentor. This employee will directly supervise and hold the student intern responsible throughout the internship. This employee should be doing similar work to what is assigned to the student intern, or the mentor should be knowledgeable in it, so that they may be available to assist directly when need be.

Choose your Ignite Internship Mentor thoughtfully in order to better serve the student intern and provide a thoughtful work experience.



# *MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES*

## **Before the Internship:**

- Attend the Ignite Internship Mentor meeting scheduled by EO, date TBD.
- Create and provide a job description and various potential assignments for each student intern your organization may have.

## **During the Internship:**

- Provide a safe work environment and any related training your student intern may need in order to do their work effectively.
- Evaluate the student intern's performance periodically and sign off on their weekly logs. Be their point of contact and check in with them every time they come to your organization to work.
- Provide a structured process for expectations and responsibilities along with applicable projects or daily work the student intern can complete.

## **After the Internship:**

- Fill out any required reports and/or surveys about your mentor experience with EO.





# INTERNSHIP APPLICATIONS

Once EO Companies has received your internship agreement and job description, we will list your Internship posting on Bamboo for students to apply. Detailed instructions have been provided to the students and the Ignite Coordinators on items needed for the application, such as resume, cover letter, two (2) Teacher recommendations and any other qualifications you have requested.

You will receive applicants for your internship opportunities only after the required documentation and permissions have been received. You will then receive the information via email for review.

**We advise that students not contact employers outside of applying and please keep your contact with students through email until the interview.**

## *RESUME AND COVER LETTER*

Ignite's summer internships will be a first chance for many high school students to get real work experience. Many students will include various activities and clubs, volunteer experience credentials they have earned, and classes they have taken instead of referencing past employers on their resume. This tells the story of what they've been doing in school and in their community!

# ABOUT THE INTERNSHIP

## INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

EO's Ignite Program provides our region's high school students with a summer internship component designed to teach critical workplace skills and prepare students for the workplace through hands-on work experience. Internships bridge the gap between the worlds of learning and work by connecting schools and students with employers and employees.

### **Length of Internship**

The length of the internship is successful completion of 80 hours on site (plus 2 pre-employment training hours) for a total of 82 hours, and typically should take up to four (4) weeks to complete. There are times in which the internship will last longer than four (4) weeks in order to reach 80 hours. EO recommends 16-20 hours of work per week, depending on the employer's preference and as agreed upon by the intern. Summer internships need to take place between June 1 and July 31, 2025.

### **Payroll & Timesheets**

Each intern will be paid at the wage agreed upon in the Partner Agreement but no less than minimum wage per hour and will be paid by you, the employer. Payroll information, timesheet requirements, and other information concerning payment will be between the intern and the employer. During the internship, an EO team member will work with interns to collect hours worked for program completion tracking.

### **Work Schedule**

Interns will need to complete a total of 80 program hours plus two (2) pre-employment training hours for a total of 82 hours. Each intern's work schedule will look different. It is up to the intern and employer to come up with a schedule that works. The pre-employment training hours should be completed prior to beginning work.

## *INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED*



### **Presentation**

At the end of the internship, all students will complete a presentation explaining their experience from the internship. These presentations should be submitted to an EO team member and completed within one week of completing the internship. In addition, select students may be asked to participate in a live presentation about their work experience. You will be notified if your intern is selected for a live presentation.

### **Pre-Employment Training**

All students participating in an internship will need to participate in a two (2) hour pre-employment training. This may be held in person or virtually. This is required to be completed prior to beginning work and it is paid by the employer once confirmed completion is received by an EO team member.

### **Absences**

Employers will discuss their own protocol when it comes to what absences count as excused or unexcused. Students will not be paid for the hours missed for an absence. However, students are encouraged to work with their Ignite Internship Mentor to make-up missed hours (if permissible).

Interns must communicate about an absence through a phone call directly to the Ignite Internship Mentor. If an intern notifies their mentor they will be coming in late or notify him/her that they cannot come in at all, the intern must call at least an hour before original start time. The Intern may not alert the mentor of an absence or a late arrival through email, text, or social media unless instructed to do so by the mentor.

# WORTHWHILE WORK

## *YOUR INTERN SHOULD BE...*

...doing work specific to a field or department.

- Assisting with projects and implementation
- Online research
- Data analysis and compilation marketing/social media
- Learning to read blueprints

...completing general office or daily work.

- Filing and organizing
- Data entry
- Answering phone calls and general emails
- Gaining insight into regulatory compliance and safety standards

...handling other miscellaneous projects.

- Taking notes, serving as a meeting secretary
- Brainstorming
- Organizing online or physical work spaces
- Building databases

## *YOUR INTERN SHOULD NOT BE...*

...completing work that would take the place of a full-time employee.

...doing copious amounts of job shadowing or observation work.

...working alone for long periods of time.

...traveling in a car alone with any adult associated with the internship site.

...working alone or with only one other adult in an isolated environment.

## *FIRST WEEK GOALS*



The internships this summer will come with plenty of exciting opportunities for your participating student intern. EO Companies ask that you make sure to complete these goals below within the first week of your student intern being on site. These steps will ensure you and your student intern are on the same page throughout the program.

### **Welcome tour of business**

- Staff introductions
- Orientation of work space
- Instructions on where to park
- Designated areas of interest

### **Organization Overview and History**

- History of organization
- Mission and goal of organization
- Any recent developments/accomplishments

### **Terms and Conditions Discussion**

- Payroll information
- Procedure for absences
- Unacceptable behavior
- Dress
- Cell phone/social media usage

### **Expectations and Goals**

- Weekly logs and objectives
- Communication styles
- Daily and weekly tasks

# WORKPLACE READINESS

## *STUDENT WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS*

Every employer, regardless of the type of internship, has a set of standards they are looking for in a future employee. The following is a brief description of some of the expectations shared with the interns that employers may be looking for while completing the internship. While not all the expectations listed will be for everyone, something from this list is relevant to everyone.

### **Professionalism**

- Punctuality – Arrive on time for work and meetings
- Appropriate Dress – Follow the workplace's dress code
- Communication – Use polite and professional language in interactions with mentors and colleagues.
- Respect – Show respect for all employees, clients, and the work environment

### **Work Ethic**

- Reliability – Complete assigned tasks on time and with care
- Attention to Detail – Focus on accuracy and quality in work
- Initiative – Be proactive in seeking additional tasks or responsibilities when appropriate

### **Learning and Adaptability**

- Eagerness to Learn – Be open to feedback and willing to improve skills
- Adaptability – Adjust to the workplace culture and new tasks as needed
- Curiosity – Ask thoughtful questions to deepen understanding of tasks and the industry

### **Collaboration**

- Teamwork – Work cooperatively with others and contribute to team projects
- Listening Skills – Pay attention to instructions and guidance
- Support – Offer help when teammates or supervisors need assistance

### **Ethics and Confidentiality**

- Integrity – Be honest and trustworthy in all dealings.
- Confidentiality – Respect sensitive or proprietary information related to the business

## WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS CONTINUED



### Safety and Compliance

- Follow Rules – Adhere to workplace safety protocols and company policies
- Ask Questions – Clarify procedures if unsure to avoid mistakes or risks

### Basic Technical Skills

- Technology Use – Be comfortable using workplace tools, such as email, word processors, or specific software
- Organization – Keep track of schedules, tasks, and deadlines

## FOR STUDENTS TO KNOW

*The following information has been shared with students. We wanted to make you aware.*

### Student Safety

Your safety is what is most important. Safety training will be a part of Pre-Employment Training. If you should ever feel unsafe, harassed, or discriminated against at the work site you should leave and immediately contact both your direct supervisor or Internship Mentor and EO staff with any concern you may have.

### Email and Social Media

You should use your school email and primary phone number to contact your Internship Mentor. Using a school email is important for consistency and alignment with your MajorClarity account. A secondary email address should be provided if the student is a graduating senior, or their school does not allow outside emails to their school account.

### Cellphone Usage

While at work, there should be minimal to zero cellphone usage unless the Internship Mentor allows. Each workplace will be different and will cover their policies and procedures when reporting to work.

### Networking

During the internship, students can begin building their professional network. By networking, students can interact with others and develop professional contacts that can speak of their work and can be used for a professional reference in the future.

### Employment Continuation Opportunity

In some internships (not all) there may be opportunities for students to work beyond the set internship requirements of 82 hours. This is determined by the employer's needs and funding availability. In this situation, the employer will notify the student directly of the opportunity and it will be the decision of the student to continue.



*STUDENTS WILL BE IMMEDIATELY TERMINATED  
FROM EMPLOYMENT IF...*

...he/she is under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.

...he/she uses tobacco products on your organization's property.

...he/she participates in a fight on your organization's property.

...he/she ruins, vandalizes, or destroys any of your organization's property.

...he/she possess firearms, explosives, weapons, or any other hazardous material on your organization's property.

...he/she lies or fails to report properly to his/her Ignite Mentor or on the weekly log.

...he/she uses his/her cell phone excessively or does not follow the organization's cell phone policy





# CONTACT INFORMATION



Should you need further information about the internship process, or have questions, please contact:

## Crystal Breeding

Director of Education + Emerging Workforce

EO Companies

[cbreeding@eoco.org](mailto:cbreeding@eoco.org)

276-525-4073



