

“Keeping the Talent”

The Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners recognizes the importance of internship programs and keeping our talent here. So much so that one of our main economic development goals is to enhance and expand opportunities for student and apprenticeship programs. We recognize that internships and apprenticeships provide students on-the-job learning opportunities to experience firsthand, how their academic courses apply to a real world work environment. For some students, this is a great way to test-drive their selected career and to network with professionals in their industry.

Unfortunately, the pandemic not only disrupted classes, but also internships. As of May 1, 2021, approximately 22 percent of companies were cancelling internships entirely, as well as another 19 percent being undecided, according to a poll from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

Palm Beach County government currently offers over 450 student positions and 16 apprenticeship positions. Along with directly supporting internships, the County also partners contractually with organizations such as The Research Park at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), FAU’s Tech Runway and Palm Beach County’s CareerSource and Film & TV Commission.

As one of thirteen universities in the State University System, Florida Atlantic University (FAU) prides itself on being in the top three this year for performance-based funding from the State Legislature and the Board of Governors. One performance-based metric is tied to internships and job creation. FAU has developed numerous programs and career advising opportunities to help connect students with meaningful internships. Through these opportunities, students gain experience that will assist in developing the necessary skills in preparation for their transition into the workplace. FAU Tech Runway, an accelerator for early stage startups, provides these companies access to the deep pool of FAU interns and frequently sees these internships convert into full-time positions. From an economic development standpoint, internships through FAU lead to job creation, which in turn positively impacts the overall economic growth of our region.

The Research Park at Florida Atlantic University® recruits technology-focused companies along with promoting internships. The student experience is integral to their overall education and future career, so the Research Park at FAU matches innovative company needs with motivated students full of new ideas. All of the thirty (30) companies based in the Research Park at FAU employ interns, and recognize proximity and access to talent as one of the primary drivers of their decision to locate in a research and development park. When an intern is hired full-time, as often happens, they can be productive on day one. “By matching interns to opportunity in knowledge intensive Research Park at FAU companies, we’re ensuring economic diversity becomes sustained and of long term benefit to Palm Beach County’s economy,” commented Andrew Duffell, president of the Research Park at FAU.

CareerSource’s Young Adult Internship Program provides young adults who have minimal or no prior work experience the opportunity to earn wages while learning about a profession. Employers commit to providing interns meaningful work experience, necessary training and supervision to ensure their success. Participants are out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and 24. Internship opportunities are provided to participants after the completion of Career Prep, a 3-week work readiness training. These paid internships run for 12 weeks at no cost to the employer. CareerSource has provided 222 internship opportunities from 2020-2021, with 60% of the young adults residing in the Glades area.

Along with our business and educational communities, the County recognizes that decisions made today frame educational and workforce opportunities for future generations that will in turn, enhance our local workforce, keep our talent here, and continue to advance a stable and diversified economic base maximizing jobs for all County residents. For additional information, please contact me at 561-233-3600 or showard@pbcgov.org.