

Area Community Services Employment and Training Council (ACSET)
West Michigan Internship Initiative
Community Project 2009-2010
Employer Recruitment

Purpose:

In 2007, West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA) gathered 300 local leaders who identified Educational Attainment (increasing the percentage of people in the region ages 25 to 34 with a four-year college degree) as a top priority for the region. After examining best practices from around the country and gathering information as to the statistical effectiveness of several internship programs, members agreed the expansion of internships provided one of the best methods for retaining and expanding our intellectual capital base.

Hypothesis: Increasing internship placements in our region will lead to permanent positions and retention of our investment in intellectual capacity.

Realizing the need to increase the number of college graduates choosing to live and work in West Michigan, the West Michigan Internship Initiative was created in the spring of 2008 to assist the small to mid-sized employer who did not have a well-developed system for hiring and developing interns.

By creating a new shared vision that recognizes the power of working together, ACSET, Kent ISD and WMSA, can be part of a viable strategy for increasing the intellectual capital of our region, which will strengthen the economy and raise the quality of life for everyone in West Michigan.

Short-term Benefits: This program will allow 50 students in Allegan and Kent Counties to participate in a carefully monitored work or service experience in which the student has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he/she is learning throughout the experience.

Long-term Benefits: To create up to 3,000 additional internship opportunities in West Michigan over the next three-years (for a total of 25,000 internships statewide) via participation in a statewide internship initiative. Further, to exceed the State and U.S. average of 25-34 year olds with BA degrees or higher in West Michigan by 2012.

Plan to Recruit Employers:

- Utilize the funding available through *The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*.
- Create up to 50 internships for students who reside in Allegan or Kent County.
- To be placed during the period of 9/1/09 thru 3/31/10.
- Target current and former *Workforce Investment Act* youth, 18 years of age or older.
- Program promotion will be in cooperation with the Career Services offices at Aquinas College, Calvin College, Cornerstone University, Davenport University, Grand Rapids Community College and Grand Valley State University.

The organizations (employers) offering the internship programs will:

- Be a for profit employer with up to 200 employees.
- Be a nonprofit organization.
- Be located in Allegan or Kent County.
- Seek program approval from Cindy Brown, Internship Initiative Project Manager, 616-871-2452 or cbrown@wm-alliance.org.
- Post job descriptions online at www.interninmichigan.com.
- Follow the *Five Steps to Developing a Quality Internship Program* found in the *Employers Internship Toolkit*.
- Internships will be a minimum of 12 weeks at 15 hours a week to a maximum of 16 week at 12 hours a week.
- Submit monthly reports to the Project Administer.
- Submit a final progress report at the end of the funding period to the Project Administer.