



Innovation + Job News

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Internship portal aims to place 3,000 young professionals in 3 years

By: Deborah Johnson Wood

The [West Michigan Strategic Alliance](#) (WMSA) recently announced a plan to develop a West Michigan Regional Internship Web Portal. The portal aims to strengthen the region's ability to attract and retain 25- to 34-year-olds by connecting them with local internship opportunities. The goal is to increase the number of college educated young professionals in West Michigan, which, in turn, will make West Michigan more competitive in the global marketplace, generate jobs and spur economic growth.

Drawing on qualified interns from the higher education institutions in the state, employers can go to one web site to select the types of interns they want and choose from specific colleges. In turn, students can browse the web site to see what opportunities are available to them.

"If we can get more juniors and seniors in college plugged into internships here, it will get them more interested in getting jobs here and staying here," says Pam Landes of [Think Again](#), a consultant on the web portal project. "The goal is to create 3,000 new internships over three years."

Part of the project is helping employers create template materials and develop an internship program.

"These portals are very common across the country," Landes adds. "Young talent is in demand everywhere and they can go almost anywhere for a job. The data suggests they choose where they're going to live and then figure out where they'll work. With Grand Rapids' vibrant urban life, the beaches and the nature, we've got a whole package to offer them."

WMSA will collaborate with businesses, colleges, universities, and other stakeholders in West Michigan to develop the portal and make it a statewide resource. The site will launch by the end of the year.

Source: Pam Landes, Think Again; West Michigan Strategic Alliance

Deborah Johnson Wood is the development news editor for Rapid Growth Media. She can be contacted at deborah@rapidgrowthmedia.com.