

## Get a leg up on career path with an internship

Internships, whether paid or non-paid, have become increasingly important for college students to secure, often for summer employment purposes. Internships represent much more than simply a job. They stand to benefit the student in numerous other ways. It is important to recognize that internships are in many respects no longer optional.

Currently, almost 80 percent of college students plan to complete one or more internships before entering the workforce. This article briefly reviews the nature of internships, describes their benefits, identifies national and local organizations with available internships, and offers tips to students on how to explore internships.

### Internship defined

An internship is commonly defined as a period of time, a semester for example, whereby the student gains practical work experience around an occupation or industry. An internship can sharpen the student's insight on the nature of the work, the education and training typically required to enter and advance within the field, the working conditions and the earning potential.

An internship can benefit both the student intern and the employing organization. Louisville's business community has come to increasingly view internships as a way of keeping our young talent in town, and from this perspective, they serve an economic development purpose.

### Benefits

Internships offer the student several potential benefits including the opportunity to:

- Gain practical employment experience and strengthen one's skills set.
- Test the waters around a specific field or industry of interest.
- Help finalize plans for a college major.
- Build a foundation that can expand career options after college.
- Enhance a resume and begin establishing a career and/or business network.

### Internship resources

Many companies around the country offer internship opportunities for college students, including companies such as Disney, Google, GM, and Northwestern Mutual.

Many nonprofit and governmental agencies offer internships. Good resources for finding internships in other cities are [idealists.org](http://idealists.org), [coolworks.com](http://coolworks.com), [internships.com](http://internships.com) and [internweb.com](http://internweb.com).

Locally, GLI sponsors summer internships via the Greater Louisville Interns Program. According to GLI spokesman Sam A. Mannino, GLI's regional Web-driven effort is designed to pair college students and employers in a quality summer internship experience. The internship is further designed to "provide students with hands-on experience and increase their real world knowledge, but also to help employers evaluate students and again improve prospects for keeping our young talent in town."

For information, visit [GraduateGreaterLouisville.com/interns](http://GraduateGreaterLouisville.com/interns).

Louisville banks, larger companies, utilities, hospitals and advertising agencies often offer intern positions.

A student may always negotiate with organizations to create an internship position that is specific to their needs. Good Web sites for finding internships in Louisville are [indeed.com](http://indeed.com) and [simplyhired.com](http://simplyhired.com).

### Practical tips:

As students begin exploring internship options, they should bear in mind the following:

- Check with your college's career office since they customarily maintain an internship database.
- Be sensitive to deadlines. Summer internship deadlines generally range from Jan. 1 through April 1.
- Competition can be keen. Be prepared to use your family's network of business and community contacts for leverage.
- Remain flexible. A part-time internship may meet a student's needs as well as a full-time internship.
- Gain clarity concerning the full nature of the internship opportunity before making a final decision.

Ellen Shapira is a college and educational consultant at Jewish Family and Vocational Service (452-6341).

*Article prepared by:*

**Ellen Shapira**

*College and Educational Consultant*

*Jewish Family and Vocational Service (JFVS)*

*Louisville, Kentucky*

*(502) 452-6341 ext. 225*

[ellens@jfvs.com](mailto:ellens@jfvs.com)