



VIRGINIA
RESTAURANT • LODGING • TRAVEL
ASSOCIATION

Verified Internship Program

September 24, 2026

WELCOME



Dr. Jai Girard

Director of Education &
Workforce Development



Agenda

- 01** Why an internship pipeline matters right now
- 02** What VIP offers — one program, every hospitality business
- 03** Who your interns are: Virginia's post-secondary students
- 04** Program criteria and what verification requires
- 05** How to get started — plus time for your questions
- 06** Partner spotlight: funding & added member benefits



WHY IT MATTERS

Every restaurant, hotel, and travel business in Virginia is competing for the same young talent.

A well-run internship turns a curious student into a trained, loyal future employee
— before your competitors ever meet them.



Who are interns?

- Typically **rising juniors and seniors**
- Pursuing a degree or credential aligned with the internship experience
- Seeking **structured, career-connected work experience**
- Applying classroom knowledge in a **real-world professional environment**
- Exploring career pathways while developing **industry-specific and durable skills**
- Bringing current academic knowledge, new perspectives, and emerging talent to the workplace
- **Still learning** — interns should contribute meaningful work while receiving intentional supervision, feedback, and professional development

Intern ≠ temporary employee.

A strong internship is designed around **learning + contribution + career preparation.**



What is VRLTA's VIPs?

One program. Every corner of hospitality.

VIP is not industry-specific — it's open to any VRLTA member business, wherever you sit in the guest experience.

Restaurants

Kitchens, front of house, and hospitality management operations.

Lodging

Hotels and resorts — front desk, guest services, and operations.

Travel & Tourism

Attractions, travel agencies, and destination marketing.



Criteria to Join

Requirement	What It Means
VRLTA Membership	Business must be a member in good standing
Paid Position	The internship must be a paid opportunity
300+ Hours	Internship duration of at least 300+ hours
20 Hours of Education	Structured educational programming (20 hours) during the internship
Twice-Monthly Check-ins	Supervisor meetings, with evaluations with interns
End-of-Internship Review	Exit interview and program evaluation submitted



Best Practices

Understand Their Goals

Learn career aspirations during onboarding, and pair interns with a mentor who fits.

Offer Holistic Opportunities

Rotate interns across departments to build a diverse skill set and network.

Attract the Right Talent

Highlight your culture and ask questions that assess passion and fit.

Pay Your Intern

Paid internships attract more motivated, diverse candidates — and VIP requires it.

After Approval

- ✓ **Designate Your Supervisor** Doesn't need to be HR or the intern's direct boss — just the right person to lead.
- ✓ **Plan for 300+ Hours** Adjust if your intern's school curriculum requires.
- ✓ **Schedule Meetings & Surveys** Block recurring time for twice-monthly check-ins and evaluations.
- ✓ **Plan 20 Hours of Education** Department rotations, interview practice, and time with directors all count.

Staying Verified

Reapply before October 1st each year for your first three years. After three successful years, you're in good standing for three more — no reverification needed.

Year 1

Reapply by Oct 1

Year 2

Reapply by Oct 1

Year 3

Reapply by Oct 1

Years 4–6

Good standing, no
reapplication



Ready to become a VIP?



Scan me

Digital Resource
Library



Up Next



Hannah Overby

Regional Internship Manager





THE INTERNSHIP ADVANTAGE: BUILDING A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE

September 24, 2026

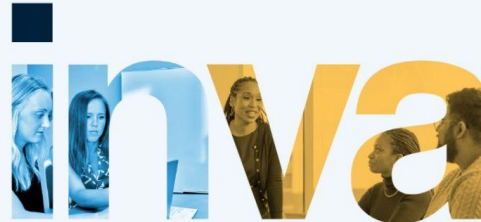
INTERSHIPSVA IS A NEW VEDP PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT ALL VIRGINIA BUSINESSES WITH THEIR TALENT PIPELINE

InternshipsVA helps employers design and launch high-quality, paid internships that not only build strong local talent pipelines but help keep talented college students in Virginia after graduation.

Invest in **growth.**

Innovate for
the **future.**

Inspire the
next generation.



INTERSHIPS VIRGINIA
INVEST. INNOVATE. INSPIRE.

VEDP

INTERNSHIPS ARE A POWERFUL RECRUITMENT TOOL FOR BUSINESSES

Talent Pipeline

Internships provide a direct pipeline to emerging talent, allow employers to evaluate potential employees in real work settings, and reduce hiring costs and risks as interns already understand an organization's culture and mission.

Fresh Perspectives

Students often bring innovative thinking and up-to-date knowledge from their studies. Internships attract candidates from varied backgrounds, helping build a diverse workforce.

Increased Staff Productivity

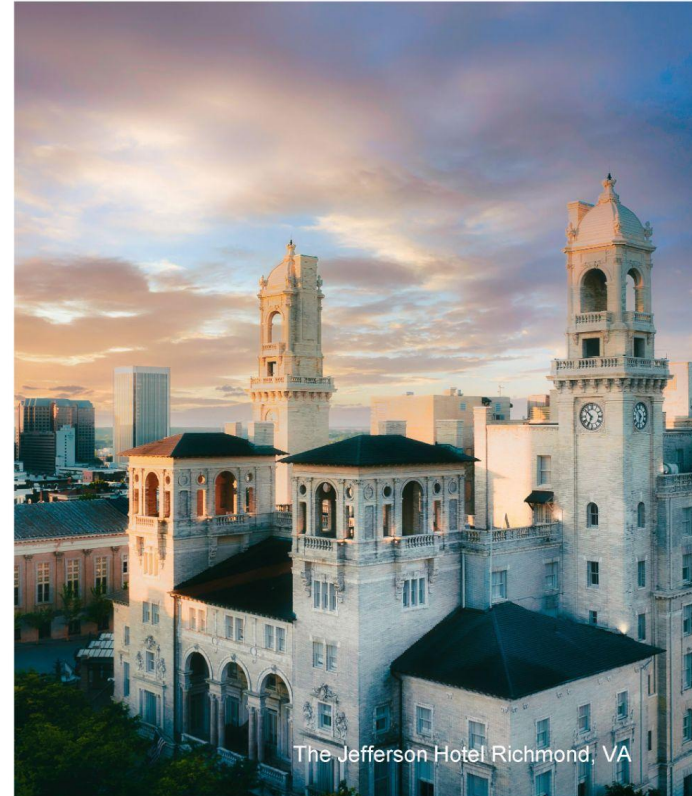
Interns can work on real projects, freeing up full-time staff for strategic work.

Leadership Opportunities

Internships provide management training opportunities for current staff, helping to grow supervisory and leadership skills.

Employer Branding

Offering internships strengthens your reputation among students and universities and shows commitment to developing future talent and supporting education.



BUSINESSES FACE A WEALTH OF CHALLENGES WHEN STARTING OR EXPANDING INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS



Cost

Concerns related to financial cost, staff time, and administrative requirements



Capacity

Limited capacity, particularly internal HR capacity



Creating Effective Programs

Uncertainty around how to structure internship programs that are impactful to both the company and the student(s)



Candidates

Difficulty identifying and recruiting candidates who align with business needs

INTERSHIPSVA MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM REIMBURSES ELIGIBLE EMPLOYERS FOR 50% OF AN INTERN'S WAGES (CONT.)

- Employers are responsible for sourcing, selecting, onboarding, and hiring interns either directly as a W-2 employee on the employer's payroll or through a staffing service of the employer's choice, as well as managing the interns. Interns hired as 1099 contractors do not qualify for the matching grant program.
- The matching grant program does not reimburse third-party organizations that manage internship programs on behalf of other employers. The employer that hosts the internship and oversees the intern's work must be the applying entity and must meet all program requirements.
- Employers may not use matching grant funding for interns that are also being supported by another state-funded program.
- Employers must submit the online InternshipsVA Matching Grant Application at least two weeks in advance of the internship.
- One employer application may be submitted for multiple internships planned for up to a 12-month period (each intern by position title must be represented on the application), but reimbursement requests must be submitted separately for each intern upon completion of each internship.

INTERSHIPSVA IS YOUR PARTNER IN BUILDING HIGH-QUALITY INTERNSHIPS

**Internship Program Design
& Strategy**

**Supervisor & Mentor
Support**

**Position Development &
Project Design**

**Internship Quality
Improvement**

**Recruitment & Talent
Sourcing**

**Conversion & Talent
Pipeline Development**

INTERSHIPSVA IS PARTNERING WITH HANDSHAKE TO CONNECT STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS

Handshake, the largest career network for Gen Z, is accessible to all students and allows companies to post internship and job opportunities for free.

Employers can use Handshake — already used by a majority of Virginia's colleges and universities — to reach students across the state with one platform.

This partnership gives VEDP insight into student engagement and workforce trends, enabling us to measure impact, align higher education with employer needs, and accelerate progress toward the state's long-term workforce goals.

It's easy to get started

Employers can join Handshake for free and post paid internships on Handshake!

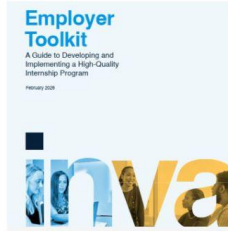
Post to all schools and include the sentence “[Organization Name] is a proud participant in the InternshipsVA program” to ensure that students and institutions are able to successfully search and filter for these opportunities.

By connecting students directly with employers through a platform they already know and trust, we're expanding access to high-quality internships and ensuring Virginia graduates are prepared to launch meaningful careers right here in the Commonwealth.

— Dr. Megan Healy
Chief of Talent and Workforce Strategy

The logo for Handshake, featuring the word "Handshake" in a bold, italicized, black sans-serif font, centered within a solid light green rectangular background.

INTERSHIPSVA CONTINUES TO ROLL OUT HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS



Employer Toolkit

- Developed in partnership with Strada to equip employers with the tools needed to start or expand their own internship programs
- Includes how-to guides, checklists, templates, and linked resources that can be adjusted and applied for organizations of all sizes and in all industries



By the end of today's training, we hope you will be able to:



Articulate the benefits of offering a high-quality internship program to your organization



Identify the key characteristics of a high-quality internship, including compensation, meaningful work, and mentorship



Develop an action plan to implement or improve an internship program within your organization

Training Opportunities

- An Employer's Guide to High-Quality Internships: Bi-weekly, one-hour virtual discussions, also available through individual and group in-person sessions.
- Monthly Topic-Based Trainings: Sessions cover effective intern supervision, onboarding, evaluations and surveys, and internships as an early-talent hiring strategy.



Introducing InternshipsVA

Last week marked the official launch of InternshipsVA. Governor Abigail Spanberger, Lieutenant Governor Ghazala Hashmi as well as members of the Administration, the General Assembly, and the Virginia business community joined VEDP to celebrate the new brand and the formation of a team dedicated to helping Virginia employers develop and enhance their internship programs.

Monthly Newsletter

- Content themes that follow the cycle of internships
- Helpful tips, resources, upcoming events, and employer spotlights
- Sign up to receive it!



INTERSHIPSVA REGIONAL INTERNSHIP MANAGERS ARE AVAILABLE TO MEET ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH



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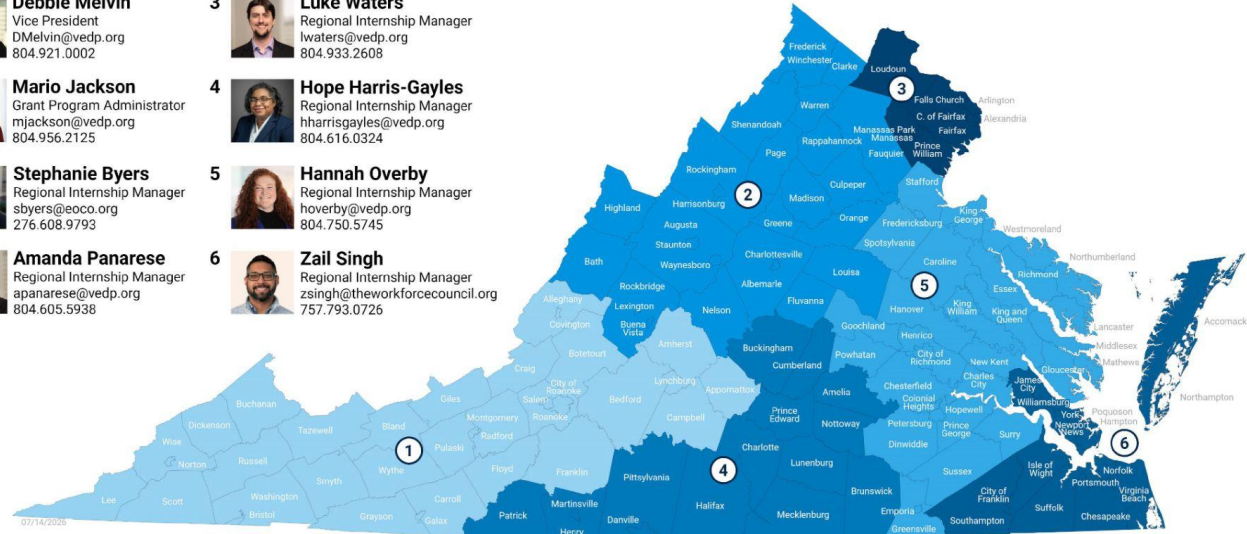


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THANK YOU!



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