

# Employer's Guide

**InternshipsVA is partnering with Handshake to connect students with internships through a first-of-its-kind partnership.**

## Program specifics

InternshipsVA is a statewide initiative helping Virginia employers design and launch high-quality, paid internships that build local talent pipelines and retain Virginia students after graduation. VEDP provides information, resources, technical assistance, and matching grants to help you stand up effective programs and hire interns.

Learn more at [vedp.org/internshipsva](https://vedp.org/internshipsva) or email [InternshipsVA@vedp.org](mailto:InternshipsVA@vedp.org).

## Why participate?

Internship programs help employers build brand awareness, develop a strong early-career talent pipeline, and identify best-fit future hires. They also offer students formative experiences that clarify career interests, expand skills, and create lasting employer connections -- strengthening Virginia's future workforce.

**InternshipsVA** gives Virginia employers a structured path to source student talent from in-state institutions, plus training, resources, and technical support for all businesses as well as financial support for organizations with 150 or fewer employees in Virginia.

**Handshake** is the leading early-talent network for reaching students across Virginia and beyond, with streamlined job posting and school connections. *There is no cost to post internships and jobs on the Handshake platform.*

## How to participate

**You're not yet on Handshake - [Getting Started With Handshake: Employers](#)**

- Create an employer account and join or create your company profile (use your company email for faster approval).
- Complete [verification](#) (identity/company) and wait for review by Handshake's Trust & Safety team.

**Once you're on Handshake**

- Post your opportunity: click Jobs → Create job; select Internship as position type; include Virginia location(s) and paid details per program rules.
  - It typically takes just a few minutes to post a job on Handshake, especially when using tools like the AI-assisted autofill from your job description!

- When posting, leverage the **auto-select/full network** option when available to broaden reach; this ensures that all jobseekers in Virginia are able to see the positions, including those at non-Handshake institutions
- Optionally promote via events: host a virtual info session or register for school career fairs to boost visibility on the posting.

## Practical tips

Include the following statement in your internship posting: “[**Company Name**] is a proud participant in the **InternshipsVA program**.” This sentence will ensure you appear in our curated list of internships promoted by the InternshipsVA program to all undergraduate students at all of Virginia's higher education institutions.

If you want to reach students at institutions that use a platform other than Handshake, posting to “all schools and eligible network options” will extend the reach of your posting, subject to posting criteria.

If your organization is eligible and would like to access the [InternshipsVA matching grant program](#), make sure that your posting specifically states that applicants must be currently enrolled at a Virginia higher-education institution or intending to enroll next semester, have a high school diploma, and not yet have completed an undergraduate degree.

Use clear titles (2–5 words), list core skills, and set application documents (resume/cover letter) to strengthen candidate quality..

## Handshake considerations

Handshake has [multiple tiers of access for employers](#), from Basic access, where no payment is required, to Enterprise pricing plans with additional benefits.

The Basic, free version of Handshake allows you to:

- Create your employer user account and company profile, connect with schools, and manage your brand presence on Handshake.
- Post unlimited internships/jobs on Handshake, at no platform posting cost, subject to school approval; set required documents and choose to accept applications in Handshake or on your site/ATS.
- Distribute postings efficiently: post to multiple schools, add more schools over time, keep Virginia schools in Favorites, and (when available) use Auto-select schools to broaden reach.
- Built-in role/skill taxonomy helps the right students discover your jobs via automatic job-role tagging based on your title/description.
- Manage candidates in one place: applicants, required docs, and notifications for your hiring team—plus students may see your upcoming events/fairs surfaced on the job posting to boost visibility.
- Optional add-ons: you can upgrade an individual job to Handshake Plus for wider distribution and automated outreach—useful for hard-to-fill roles—while keeping most hiring needs on Basic.