



Notice of Grant Opportunity: Career Accelerator Internship Grant Program

Submission Deadline: January 30, 2026

Term: June 1, 2026 through August 31, 2026

The New Jersey State Plan for Higher Education: “Where Opportunity Meets Innovation: A Student-Centered Vision for New Jersey Higher Education” includes the vision that every student in New Jersey should have the opportunity to work with an employer, conduct meaningful research supervised by a faculty member, or access some other form of experiential learning before graduation. This commitment also emphasizes the importance of ensuring that every New Jersey student has access to a high-quality, career-relevant academic program to succeed in the global economy.

The New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) plays a central role in linking higher education with statewide economic and workforce development priorities. The work goes beyond funding; assisting with positioning New Jersey students to succeed in a changing economy, while supporting employers with diverse, work-ready talent pipelines.

A key element of this strategy is expanding **experiential learning opportunities** for students across New Jersey. OSHE works to close equity gaps, improve career readiness, and ensure that all students can access meaningful professional development experiences while pursuing their degrees through integrating academic learning with practical application.

The **NJ Career Accelerator Internship Grant Program (CAIGP)** is one of OSHE’s signature initiatives, aligning higher education with labor market needs, building pathways into high-demand industries, and advancing equity in experiential learning.

The New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development has allocated funding to support the NJ Career Accelerator Internship Grant for FY26.

Purpose

The New Jersey Career Accelerator Internship Grant Program is designed to expand the availability of paid, high-

quality internship opportunities for college students and recent graduates, while strengthening the state's workforce pipeline. The program provides funding to New Jersey-based employers to offset the cost of hiring interns, enabling organizations to offer structured, supervised internship experiences that include defined learning objectives, skills development, and exposure to career pathways aligned with New Jersey's economy.

Through this grant program, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education aims to increase equitable access to experiential learning, promote employer engagement with higher-education institutions, and support the retention of emerging talent in New Jersey. By prioritizing paid, educationally meaningful internships, the program helps students build career readiness competencies, supports employers in cultivating future workforce needs, and advances the State's broader goals for economic growth and opportunity.

Funding is available to New Jersey-based companies, non-profits, not-for-profits, and small businesses that are hiring interns for summer 2026 (June – August). The purpose of this funding is to provide New Jersey based companies the opportunity to offer structured learning experiences to undergraduate students, graduate students, and recent grads who attend a New Jersey institution of higher education or are a New Jersey resident attending an institution outside of the state.

Employer Eligibility Criteria

Any New Jersey based company who is in good standing with the State, can offer a structured learning experience as detailed below, and the ability to comply with the requirements of the grant.

To be eligible for this grant, the applicant must meet the following criteria:

- **Direct Employer:** The applicant must be the direct employer of the employees for whom the grant is being sought. This means that the applicant must have a direct employment relationship with the individuals who will benefit from the grant.
- **No Third-Party Staffing Agencies:** Third-party staffing agencies, temporary employment agencies, and any entities that provide employees to other organizations on a contractual or temporary basis are not eligible to apply for this grant. The grant is intended for employers who directly hire and employ individuals.
- **Self-Application:** The applicant must be applying for the grant on behalf of their own organization and its employees. Applications submitted on behalf of client organizations or other entities will not be considered.
- **Proof of Employment:** Applicants must provide documentation that demonstrates a direct employment relationship with the employees for whom the grant is requested. This may include payroll records, employment contracts, or other relevant documentation.
- **Organizational Integrity:** The applicant organization must operate in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Any history of significant legal or ethical violations may impact eligibility.

Ineligible Employers

The following types of employers are not eligible to apply for this grant:

- Third-party staffing agencies
- Temporary employment agencies
- Employers applying on behalf of client organizations
- Any entity that does not have a direct employment relationship with the individuals who would benefit from the grant

Other eligibility requirements include:

- The employer must be located in New Jersey
- The employer must identify as a for-profit corporation, non-profit organization, not-for-profit organization, or small business
- The employer must be able to provide copies of the following documents issued by the State of New Jersey: Certificate of Formation, Business Registration Certificate, and proof of any certification (M/WBE, VOB, DVOB, SBE, ESBE, DBE, LGTBQ+, UEZ) if applicable.
- The employer must provide their W-9.
- The employer must be able to pay their intern as a W-2 employee.
- The employer must provide their NAICS code.
- The employer must be willing to provide an educational internship experience that fosters the skills necessary to succeed in the employer's industry.
- The employer must have or be willing to register with the State of New Jersey as a non-procurement vendor.
- The employer must designate a point of contact(s) for communication and supervision.

The internship experience must consist of the following and will be evaluated as such:

- A structured learning experience that allows students to apply knowledge learned in the classroom
- Skills and knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment opportunities
- Clearly defined learning objectives/goals
- A designated supervisor(s) who is a professional with expertise and education and/or professional background in the field who will provide routine developmental feedback to the student(s)
- Resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the employer that support the learning objectives/goals

The employer must submit an internship description for each position they are seeking funding, which should include the following information:

- Company & Contact Information
- Summary (Overview of position)
- Responsibilities, duties, and projects (bullet points preferred)
- Desired major(s)
- How to apply
- A sample internship description can be found here: (link to sample)

Funding Availability

The funding structure has been designed to align with the [national salary average](#) for undergraduate interns. Interns must be paid \$20.00 an hour and should work between 150-200 hours over a minimum of 10 weeks between June and August. Participating employers will be advance funded at a rate of \$4,000 per student intern awarded. Requests for the number of interns cannot exceed the following ranges:

FTE	Number of Interns you can request
<10	2 or less
10-20	5 or less
20-50	10 or less
51-100	15 or less
>100	No more than 20

Interns must be paid \$20.00 per hour for 15–20 hours per week for at least 10 weeks between June and August 2026. If the intern’s total hours exceed 200, the employer is responsible for the additional cost. **Grant funds may only be used to cover intern wages and may not be used to cover administrative costs or payroll taxes.**

To clarify:

- The **full \$20/hour** must be paid to the intern **as gross pay**.
- Employers are responsible for covering **all employer-side payroll taxes** and related costs (e.g., FICA, unemployment insurance, workers’ compensation).
- These costs **cannot be charged to the grant** and must be budgeted separately by the employer.

We recognize these costs are part of employing any W-2 employee. The intent of this program is not to shift the full financial burden to employers, but rather to create a **mutually beneficial partnership**: employers provide professional experiences; OSHE provides funding to cover student wages. Many employers see this as an investment in their talent pipeline, organizational visibility, and future hiring strategies.

Process for Submission and Notification

Completed applications are due to OSHE no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 30, 2026.

Applications should be uploaded to [FY26 Career Accelerator Internship Grant Program Employer Application](#) with required attachments: Business Registration Certificate/Certificate of Formation; Business Certifications (if applicable) and internship description(s). Following successful upload, please complete the [CAIGP Internship Description Form Summer 2026](#) for each type of intern you are requesting funding for. Your application will not be considered complete unless we have a form for each title you have identified in the Application form linked above. To ensure all materials are adequately reviewed during our review process, please provide all attachments via Qualtrics **and** complete the [CAIGP Internship Description Form Summer 2026](#). Additional submissions, submission modifications, and e-mailed applications will not be accepted. **The application MUST include all required documents and internship descriptions. Applications with missing components will not be considered.**

Applicants will receive email confirmation upon successful submission of the application. Only one submission per employer shall be accepted and considered. Please carefully review all components of the application for compliance with this Notice prior to submission. OSHE is under no obligation to consider multiple submissions from the same applicant and will review the earliest submission.

The review period will start on February 2, 2026. You will be notified no later than March 2, 2026. If awarded, you will receive an award notice and grant agreement in early March. Each grantee will need to complete an [internship verification form](#) for student interns hired to receive their disbursement. The deadline to complete this [form](#) will be April 10, 2026. Upon execution of grant agreement, [internship](#)

[hiring verification form\(s\)](#), completion of the student letter(s) of commitment, and mandatory attendance at the CAIGP Orientations, disbursements will be processed on a rolling basis through the month of May for the full amount. OSHE will not disburse funds until all steps are complete, including verification that you have filled all funded internships with eligible students.

A final report, inclusive of budget template, will be due to OSHE no later than September 18, 2026. OSHE will provide a template for the final report and budget in advance of the submission deadline. Use of funding must abide by State guidelines. Remaining funds need to be returned to OSHE by September 30, 2026.

Questions?

Please join us for the upcoming Technical Assistance Webinars to review this funding opportunity, the review process, and eligibility:

Career Accelerator Internship Grant Program Technical Assistance Webinars

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

1:00pm-2:00pm

Register [here](#)

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

10:00am-11:00am

Register [here](#)