



# INTERNSHIP GUIDE

## Section 1: Overview



## Acknowledgement of Scope

While this internship guide was written specifically for the NAF Future Ready Lab program, the recommendations, resources, and templates provided can be customized to provide benefit for all internship models. Internship models can vary from one-on-one to group-based or from in-person to virtual. Regardless of the model, we recommend that all internships need the same characteristics to be a high-quality experience. Characteristics include a project of value, a focus on college and career-ready skill development, and networking opportunities with business professionals. When these characteristics are embedded in an internship model, it boosts the confidence and motivation of interns, it allows them an opportunity to practice positive work habits, and supports the development of their strengths and abilities.



# Introduction

NAF envisions a world in which all young people have equal opportunity for successful futures and where employers have a highly skilled and diverse workforce. NAF partners with high schools to create career academies that implement NAF's educational design with its four primary elements: Academy Development and Structure, Advisory Boards, Curriculum and Instruction, and Work-Based Learning. Implementing NAF's educational design transforms the high school experience, ignites students' passion for learning, and gives employers the opportunity to shape America's future workforce.

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# NAF Future Ready Lab Internship Guide

The NAF Future Ready Lab Internship Guide (also referred to as the Internship Guide) assists academies, school districts, and employer partners in determining if hosting a group-based internship program like a NAF Future Ready Lab is a viable option. If the decision is made to host a NAF Future Ready Lab, the guide provides step-by-step strategic actions with considerations, recommendations, tools, and resources to assist in the planning and implementation of a successful internship program.

The Internship Guide has four sections:

1. Overview
2. Preparation
3. Personnel and Visitors
4. Implementation

## Section 1: Overview

Section 1 introduces the critical to quality elements of a NAF Future Ready Lab and the benefits of the internship program to employer partners, school districts, and interns. Two critical elements of the internship program are the collaborative approach to providing internships and the employer partner, school district, and student readiness to engage and support an internship program. There are several other criteria required to host a NAF Future Ready Lab, including specific roles and responsibilities to plan and implement the internship program.

Section 1 provides a comprehensive listing and explanation of the necessary budget items as well as resources to facilitate budget calculations and fundraising. The budget is an essential consideration in determining readiness to participate in a NAF Future Ready Lab. A monthly timeline provides the recommended sequence of strategic actions and depth of partner engagement required to implement an internship program.


At the end of each section of the Internship Guide is a strategic action checklist. The checklist offers the opportunity to review the recommended considerations, assess the planning team's decisions, and delegate tasks to move from action planning to the implementation of a NAF Future Ready Lab.





# Critical to Quality Elements

A successful NAF Future Ready Lab incorporates both structural and program elements that are critical to a quality experience for all participants.

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# Collaborative Approach

A significant facet of creating a successful NAF Future Ready Lab is the collaboration between multiple stakeholder groups to host a meaningful internship experience for students. The collaborative approach permits employers and community partners to contribute their time, talent, or financial resources to developing the future workforce through internships.

## Partners may include:

- Employer partners
- Community partners
- Postsecondary institutions

The selection of partners must involve establishing explicit expectations as follows:

## Collaboration

- Multiple stakeholders work collaboratively to develop a successful internship program.
- The implementation of the internship program requires teamwork and time commitment from all parties to ensure a high-quality work experience for interns.

## Workspace

- The required workspace for 20-25 interns plus essential staff can be a dedicated location or the rotation of venues throughout implementation.

## Staffing

- All partners must participate in the planning and implementation phases of the internship program to ensure program elements align with partners' expectations while creating an ideal environment for interns to engage with cross-functional teams from across each partner's organization.
- Reference the [Roles and Responsibilities](#) for the internship program personnel for planning and implementation.

## Project of Value

- Interns complete a project of value that relates to one or more of the employer hosts or community partners who provide support for the interns.

## Employer of Record

- The identification of an employer of record is vital to establish which entity processes the interns' pay and assumes the human resource role of intern onboarding.
- An alternative is a third-party employer of record that typically bears an additional cost but minimizes human resource processing and solves other logistical barriers.

## In-Kind Contributions

- Staff: Re-assign current employees to fill the facilitator and the logistics coordinator roles.
- Equipment: Loan or donate laptop computers for intern use during the internship program.
- Workspace: Host interns at workplace.

*"The people in my world, my sphere, we talk about the importance of networks, of friends, of relationships with our kids, and how it builds a future for them."*

— JD Hoyer, NAF  
CEO





# Benefits of a NAF Future Ready Lab

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The NAF Future Ready Lab model creates opportunities that encompass and engage the interests of each stakeholder group involved in the planning and implementation process.





# Readiness

All stakeholder groups must demonstrate readiness to implement a NAF Future Ready Lab by being fully prepared and willing to commit to contributing to the internship experience.

There are eligibility requirements for hosting a NAF Future Ready Lab as follows:

- The planning team includes employer partners, community partners, and school district staff.
- Intern criteria include:
  - Current juniors (30+) making progress toward NAFTrack Certification.
  - Previous experience in work-based learning, project-based learning, and project management.
  - Participation in internship preparation and career readiness sessions.
- NAF academy membership dues are up to date.

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# College and Career Readiness Skills

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NAF partnered with industry leaders to identify the college and career readiness skills required for success in postsecondary education and careers. NAF's College and Career Readiness Skills are categorized into eight competencies.

At the end of the internship program, the facilitator assesses the mastery of each competency by using the NAF Internship Assessment. Interns develop and refine their skills associated with the eight competencies as they progress through the internship program.

A competency is a blend of fundamental skills with the experiential and factual knowledge that one requires to efficiently and effectively perform designated standards of practice. The descriptions of the eight competencies provide a list of college and career readiness skills that interns must master to demonstrate the achievement of each competency.





# College and Career Readiness Index

The College and Career Readiness Index (CCRI) is a comprehensive set of lessons designed for integration into an academy program of study to develop students' competency in 21st century skills. The CCRI lessons align with the eight competencies of NAF's College and Career Readiness Skills and enhance skills promoted in NAF's work-based learning continuum of career awareness, exploration, and preparation activities ensures that students are college and career ready and eligible for NAFTrack Certification. Therefore, academies use CCRI lessons and resources to promote the preparation of internship-ready students.

## College and Career Readiness Index Lesson Integration

To prepare internship-ready students for an internship program, select a sequence of lessons from the recommended CCRI lessons, and integrate the lessons into the academy's career-themed lessons throughout the school year. Academy teachers and employer partners have access to a robust set of resources to enhance instruction and build interns' capacity for success in the workplace.

CCRI includes lessons on topics such as:

- Discovering career options
- Resume development
- Interview preparation
- Professionalism in the workplace
- And more

CCRI lessons are located in the Academy Support Hub (ASH). To gain access to the CCRI lessons contact the academy portfolio manager.



# Assembling a NAF Future Ready Lab Team

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The planning team must have representation from each stakeholder group, including participating schools and school districts. There are essential roles needed to ensure success at each stage of the planning and implementation of the NAF Future Ready Lab. The roles must remain constant, although the persons serving in each role may vary, with one person serving in multiple roles, or the designated responsibilities may shift between members of the planning team.

Each role has varying areas of responsibilities and time commitment for designated months of active participation in planning and implementing the NAF Future Ready Lab.



# Budget and Financial Considerations

The NAF Future Ready Lab initiates a collaborative approach that brings together several stakeholder groups to distribute the cost of implementing the internship program. There are crucial financial considerations that the planning team must address before committing to hosting a NAF Future Ready Lab. All stakeholders must come to a consensus on the required budget to achieve the internship program objectives and to identify the entities responsible for paying the various expenses. The Internship Guide facilitates the budget discussion by outlining considerations regarding the various costs to implement the internship program. The planning team uses the Budget Sample and Template to review and discuss the line items before committing to hosting a NAF Future Ready Lab.

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# Fundraising and Grant Writing

## Fundraising

Establishing an estimated internship program budget assists in determining the need for funding. Think about fundraising as searching for partners as opposed to grants or donations. Focus on building relationships with individuals, foundations, and companies who can become continual sources of support.

Start soliciting businesses and organizations within the school district or academy/school network since they may be familiar with the career academy concept. Before attempting cold-outreach efforts, contact personal networks that tend to listen and may support the cause.

Individuals, businesses, or organizations may not donate funds but may offer valuable in-kind gifts, e.g., laptops for interns. Some entities may reach out to their networks and introduce other potential donors. Set solicitation goals and create a team strategy to share the responsibility of outreach to contacts. Appoint a planning team member to manage the prospecting and keep the planning team accountable with regular progress checks.

## Grant Writing

A grant is a monetary gift from an organization (government, foundation, corporation, or corporate foundation) to facilitate the grantee meeting designated goals and deliverables. Funds come as one installment or several over a specific period with required yearly reports on progress and outcomes.

### Preparation Steps:

- Conduct research to identify prospective grants that align with the goals and objectives of the internship program.
- Review the request for proposal carefully or call the grant program office to guarantee that the organization's mission supports career readiness through internships for high school students.
- Identify the timeframe for the application and award of funds.
- Review the evaluation criteria and note the required deliverables and metrics.
- Evaluate if the grant is a possible match for the internship program concept and if the award timeframe aligns with the scheduled dates of implementation.

Consider applying for grant funds if internship demographics, sample size, NAFTrack Certification and NAF's Internship Assessment data are all in alignment with the evaluation criteria

*"We are trying to address deficiencies that we see in college graduates in technical fields. We need to start at the high school level and NAF's programs produce what we're looking for."*

— Nicki Palmer, Verizon  
Chief Network Officer





# NAFTrack Certification

A growing number of America's top companies have committed to invest in their workforce by providing career development opportunities to NAF academy alumni. Together, NAF and its corporate partners crafted NAFTrack Certification to demonstrate that students have completed the full NAF experience and are ready for college and career. NAFTrack Certification measures student performance through career-related coursework, internship performance, and successfully completing high school. Upon graduation, NAFTrack partners offer career development opportunities to NAF alumni as a way to strengthen their future workforce and support academy graduates. For more information, go to the [NAFTrack page](#).

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- [NAFTrack Internship Batch Upload Instructions](#)
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# Monthly Timeline Overview

The creation and implementation of a NAF Future Ready Lab is a dynamic and multi-faceted process involving multiple stakeholder groups. The Internship Guide provides resources and templates for the planning team to develop detailed timelines and strategic action steps. Review the monthly timeline to become familiar with the sequence of required tasks during the planning and implementation process.

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# Strategic Action Checklist

- Review the [readiness](#) criteria with the planning team to establish readiness to host a NAF Future Ready Lab.
- Select and integrate College and Career Readiness Index lessons into the academy's career-themed lessons into academy courses throughout the year.
- Determine the planning team by reviewing the [Roles & Responsibilities](#) and identify individuals for each role:
  - Project Manager
  - Executive Champion
  - Employer Partner Lead
  - School District Lead
  - Intern Hiring Lead
  - Communications Lead
  - Operations Lead
- Review [Budget](#) considerations and secure the initial commitment of support from all stakeholders to move forward with hosting a NAF Future Ready Lab.
- Review [Monthly Timeline](#).



## Acknowledgements

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### MISSION

NAF solves some of the biggest challenges facing education and the economy by bringing education, business, and community leaders together to transform the high school experience.

### VISION

NAF envisions a world in which all young people have equal opportunity for successful futures.



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