



THE COMMONS VIRTUAL SUMMER INTERNSHIP

A deep dive into technology, innovation, and professional development for interns impacted by COVID-19



GET QUALITY WORK EXPERIENCE BEFORE YOU EVEN BEGIN COLLEGE.

Internships and relevant work experience are critical to retaining the young, diverse, and motivated talent in Wisconsin. With the COVID-19 health crisis, many local companies have entirely eliminated their summer internship programs - leaving students stranded without work, companies with a stagnant talent pipeline, and schools struggling to meet new student demands for high-quality work experiences.

To address these issues, The Commons has designed a robust and impactful *Virtual Summer Internship* program. This 100% online program is a bold regional response to this talent crisis, matching deep learning experiences with quality networking between a pool of driven talent and participating companies.



ABOUT THE COMMONS

From high school to college to career, The Commons has created a vibrant platform for attracting, developing, and retaining high-quality, future-thinking talent across southeast Wisconsin. The Commons crafts hands-on learning experiences that spark the innovation mindset, build meaningful professional connections, and strengthen community engagement.



STUDENT INTERNS

The Commons is 20 high-performing high school juniors and graduating seniors from any Wisconsin high school for the *Virtual Summer Internship*. A detailed rubric will assist in the selection process, but priority will be placed on students demonstrating strong motivation, professionalism, communication, and collaboration skills. Being a Milwaukee-centric experience and working on technology-focused projects, student applicants should be seeking Milwaukee connections and be prepared to build out solutions for real-world problems.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

- Junior or graduating seniors enrolled at any Wisconsin high school
- Students interested in any career field: STEM, design, business, marketing, etc
- Students prepared to work and grow alongside some top-tier college students
- Students seeking connections to Milwaukee area employers
- Students interested in building out tech-enabled solutions to real-world problems
- Students wanting to develop their skills, push their creativity, and work collaboratively

EXPECTATIONS OF INTERNS

- Commit to a distraction-free attendance of all virtual workshops
- High degree of motivation, professionalism, collaboration, and communication
- Meet project deadlines and follow through with work in a timely manner
- Learn new skills, develop existing skills, and grow as a professional
- Build personal learning plans and strive to meet goals throughout the summer
- Reflect on actions, address conflict, make adjustments, and improve as a team member
- Foster new network connections and experience Milwaukee culture
- Complete up to 150 hours of project work



ADVANCED TECH TEAM

Through a partnership with the [Milwaukee Tech Hub Coalition](#), a select group of technically-advanced students will be supported to pursue a deeper dive into technical skill development, build unique industry connections, and qualify for exclusive recruitment opportunities with Tech Hub Coalition member employers.

This opportunity is primarily being offered to our collegiate participants, but may be offered to a high school student that demonstrates outstanding technical aptitude.

PROGRAM DETAILS

The Commons *Virtual Summer Internship* delivers a comprehensive growth experience for high-performing students of all backgrounds and career pursuits. The program balances explicit learning outcomes with quality project work and meaningful community engagement. Selected interns will create real-world solutions, explore the creative problem-solving process, build their professional network, and develop as career-ready workers.

The information below outlines the details of the 10-week virtual program.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- **10 weeks:** June 8 - August 14
- **Part-time:** up to 150 hours total
 - 15 hours/week of workshops, team work, project tasks, and experiential programming
- **Cohort Model:** A cohort will run Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00am-1:00pm. Depending on student demand, a second cohort may run on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at the same time.
- **Blended Teams:** Selected high school students will be blended into teams of college students from across the region. Students should be prepared for this collaborative work environment.
- **Facilitated Workshops:** Each intern will work on multi-disciplinary teams throughout the summer, with guiding workshops virtually facilitated by The Commons team
- **Two Projects:** The program begins with a four-week “startup” project, followed by a six-week “innovation challenge” sourced from a supporting corporation or local entrepreneur
- **Building Portfolios:** These are real-world projects that will get legitimately developed. The tangible deliverables are perfect material for portfolios and stand out on resumes
- **Exploring Tech:** Both projects will have a strong entrepreneurial theme and deliberate technology component to them, to ensure that participating interns of any degree understand the relevancy of these skills and mindset to whatever career path they may be pursuing
- **Learning Plans:** Each intern will perform several self-discovery, goal-setting, reflective, and individualized learning plan exercises to assist with advanced, self-directed skill development
- **Assessments:** Throughout the summer, The Commons team will facilitate several self-assessments and team performance reviews to track skill development, confidence-building, network connectivity, perception change, and other performance metrics
- **Experiential Programming:** To ensure a high-quality summer experience, The Commons and NEWaukee have partnered to deliver a full lineup of professional development, networking, mentorship, and community engagement sessions throughout the summer
- **Project Management:** All workshops, experiential programming, and project management will be facilitated through Zoom video conferencing, Slack, and Google Drive.

PROJECT DETAILS

Each project will have a multi-disciplinary team of students working together to come up with a unique solution, build out a functional prototype, and make a compelling pitch.

June 8 - July 3

PROJECT 1: BUILD A STARTUP

Example: How might your team utilize public health data to create a new telemedicine company?

- **Week 1:** Orientation, Market Research, Customer Discovery, Self-Assessment
- **Week 2:** Ideation, Prototyping, Individual Learning Plan
- **Week 3:** Production, Business Models, Team Assessment
- **Week 4:** Pitching, Feedback, Project Reflection, Individual Learning Plan

July 6 - August 14

PROJECT 2: SOLVE AN INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Example: How might your team help a staffing firm leverage artificial intelligence and chatbots to make a higher quality experience for interested candidates?

- **Week 5:** Project Reveal, Market Research, Customer Discovery, Self-Assessment
- **Week 6:** Ideation, Prototyping, Individual Learning Plan
- **Week 7:** Production, Business Models, Feedback, Team Assessment
- **Week 8:** Production, Marketing, Feedback, Individual Learning Plan
- **Week 9:** Production, Pitching, Feedback, Individual Learning Plan
- **Week 10:** Final Pitches, Project Reflection, Self-Assessment

LEARNING OUTCOMES + ASSESSMENTS

The Commons has worked closely with Dr. Nancy S. Blair, Professor Emerita of Doctoral Leadership Studies at Cardinal Stritch University, to develop a comprehensive set of learning outcomes and targets, as well as robust assessment tools to prove students' learning. Combined with regular reflection, individualized learning plans, and goal-setting, The Commons Virtual Summer Internship delivers a rigorous professional growth experience.



VIRTUAL EXPERIENCES

The Commons and NEWaukee have partnered to craft a robust and impactful lineup of virtual experiential programming - exploring professional development, networking, mentorship, community, and more. These programs are designed for deep engagement between interns, staff, and community, resulting in talent retention.

SUMMER KICKOFF

- **Digital Welcome Party:** Welcome kit, message from Mayor Barrett, community leaders talks

WEEKLY VIRTUAL EVENTS

- **Coffee Coworking Club:** Interactive networking program to building meaningful relationships
- **Lunch + Learn:** Interactive professional development sessions on a variety of topics during lunch
- **Isolation Innovation:** 90-minute creative innovation session with randomly-assigned teams

MONTHLY VIRTUAL EVENTS

- **Diverse Dining:** Lunch-time conversation around inclusion and diversity
- **ORG Pitch:** YP and nonprofit groups talk about what they do and how to tap in
- **ForeFront:** Discussions with small business owners and their neighborhoods
- **The MentorSHOP:** Fireside chats with local leaders, instigators, disruptors, and creators
- **Mentor Mob:** Mentor sessions for students and local pros to connect and discuss careers
- **Startup Stories:** Talks with local founders to share successes, failures, challenges, and more

SUMMER WRAP UP

- **Demo Day:** Student teams and local companies virtually highlight their innovative work



Running your internships virtually, but still want a great experience?

The Commons and NEWaukee will offer an all-access pass for all of the experiential programming listed above to your virtual interns for \$300/intern.

For more information, visit:

www.thecommonswi.com/virtual



