



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY INTERNS

Q) What is the Vermont Intern Program?

A) The Vermont Intern Program connects college students, recent graduates and young professionals with employers who have PAID internships. We post and promote positions, offer support with the search and application process and provide access to networking and professional development opportunities.

A program of Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR), interns who participate in the Vermont Intern Program are eligible for a FREE Individual Membership to VBSR. For 25 years VBSR has focused on advancing business ethics that value a triple bottom line: people, profit and planet. A membership organization with over 800 members across Vermont, VBSR proudly holds the honor of being the largest and oldest regional socially responsible business organization in the country. VBSR members are business owners, government officials, non-profit organizations, community organizers, students and others who support the cause. The VBSR community includes large corporations and sole-proprietorships; entrepreneurs and long-standing family businesses. Together, we advance VBSR's mission through Education, Public Policy, Networking and Programs that support sustainable economic development including energy efficiency, local commerce and workforce development.

Q) How does the program work?

A) The Vermont Intern Program posts and promotes PAID internships. At any time you can visit our website to view all available positions and apply using a simple online form. The form collects your contact information and allows you upload your cover letter, resume and any other documents the employer may require. There are two different ways internships are applied for:

1) Via Email

For most of the positions we list, the form you complete along with the materials you upload will constitute your "application". Once submitted, your application will be forwarded via email to the employer, who will review your application and if interested, contact you for an interview. From this point forward you should expect to communicate directly with the employer, but Program staff are available to you if extra assistance is needed. Note that each position you wish to apply for requires a separate application – even if for the same employer.

2) Via Employer Website

For some of the positions we list, the Vermont Intern Program will assist you with preparing your application materials, but you will actually apply for the position on the employer's website. In this case, you will upload your materials using one of our forms, and our office will review them. If your materials are ready to submit, we will provide you with a link to submit your application. If your materials need revision, we will return them to you with suggestions for

improvement. Please allow 1-2 business days for our review process. Note that it is your responsibility to complete the application process!

Q: Who is eligible?

A: The Vermont Intern Program is a workforce development initiative funded by the Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Education and Training Fund. As a state program funded by public tax dollars and under guidelines put forth by the Next Generation Commission, the intent is to serve in and out of school youth in Vermont. As such, the Vermont Intern Program is open to:

- 1) Any student currently matriculated in an undergraduate or graduate degree at a Vermont College or University
- 2) Any student from Vermont and enrolled in a undergraduate or graduate degree out of state
- 3) Any recent graduate up to two years post graduation currently living in Vermont

Q: Can I participate if I am an International student?

A: The Vermont Intern Program is available to:

- (1) Any student currently matriculated in an undergraduate or graduate degree at a Vermont College or University
- (2) Any student from Vermont and enrolled in a undergraduate or graduate degree out of state
- (3) Any recent graduate up to two years post graduation currently living in Vermont.

If an applicant intends to move to Vermont for an internship and live here for at least a year, they would be considered eligible via (3). This criteria is in place to support the goal of exposing young people to the diversity of career opportunities in Vermont in hopes that they will choose to stay or come back here to work and live.

For international students who want to do internships in the U.S., certain requirements apply. Please work directly with your school to navigate the visa requirements for your particular situation. If you are a recent graduate, please work with the school you recently graduated from.

Q: Is it free? Do I have to be a member of VBSR to participate?

The Vermont Intern Program is a workforce development initiative funded by the Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Education and Training Fund. There is no cost to participate, and you do not have to be a member of VBSR.

Q: Are all of the internships paid?

A) All of our internships are paid. Most positions in our program pay \$10-15/hour depending on the position responsibilities and intern's level of experience (\$10-12/hour is typical for an entry level position; \$12-15 is typical if the position requires more autonomy, responsibility or previous experience). As of January 1, 2016 the Vermont minimum wage is \$9.60/hour. Some positions may include room, board and/or a stipend in lieu of an hourly wage.

Q: Are all of the internships in Vermont?

A: All of the internships we post and promote are located in Vermont. As a workforce development program, we aim to connect young Vermonters with the kinds of meaningful work opportunities that will encourage them to live and work here and contribute their skills to our state's future. We welcome college students, recent graduates and young professionals to apply to our internships, and develop the professional skills and networks through which they can build a strong and fulfilling life.

Q: What kind of internships do you offer?

A: We post internships in all fields. The internships we list must pay the equivalent of Vermont's minimum hourly wage, and offer valuable learning opportunities. As a program of Vermont Businesses

for Social Responsibility (VBSR), a lot of the employers we partner with are VBSR members, and represent the fields of Renewable Energy, Food Systems, Public Policy, Alternative Transportation, Environmental Education/Protection/Stewardship and Corporate Social Responsibility. We update our listings frequently, and welcome applicants with a broad variety of interests.

Q: How can I be notified when internships become available?

A: Employers let us know they have opportunities, and we list them here:

- 1) Vermont Intern Program website: <http://www.internvt.org>
- 2) Twitter: [@VTINTERNS](#)
- 3) Email Newsletter: <https://vbsr.wufoo.com/forms/enewsletter-signup/> (sent every 1-2 weeks)

Q: Can I apply for more than 1 position?

A: We encourage you to apply for as many positions as you are authentically interested in and genuinely qualified for. You must complete the appropriate form and upload your materials for each position you are interested in.

Q: Can I become an individual member of VBSR even if I don't get an internship?

A: Of Course! Full time students of accredited institutions are eligible for a VBSR Student Membership (\$30/year). Other individuals not associated with a business are eligible for a Friend of VBSR Membership (\$100/year). For 25 years VBSR has focused on advancing business ethics that value a triple bottom line: people, profit and planet. A membership organization with over 800 members across Vermont, VBSR proudly holds the honor of being the largest and oldest regional socially responsible business organization in the country. VBSR members are business owners, government officials, non-profit organizations, community organizers, students and others who support the cause. The VBSR community includes large corporations and sole-proprietorships; entrepreneurs and long-standing family businesses. Together, we advance VBSR's mission through Education, Public Policy, Networking and Programs that support sustainable economic development including energy efficiency, local commerce and workforce development. In addition to the standard VBSR membership benefits, for students, recent graduates and young professionals a VBSR membership will:

- Lend distinction to your cover letter and resume
- Open up opportunities to meet potential employers and professional contacts through structured networking opportunities and educational events
- Provide you with a network to grow with as you develop your career

Sign up for membership [here](#). Learn more about VBSR [here](#).

Q: When can I expect to hear from the employer?

A: The reality of the current job market is that many employers don't have the time to respond to everyone who applies. Once we pass your application materials to an employer (or you apply via their website), they will choose whether to reach out to you and from then on you will communicate directly with them. If they are interested in you they will likely reach out to you within 1-2 weeks. Otherwise they may not respond. From the time a position is posted to the time someone is hired (and the other candidates are notified) as long as a few months may pass; at minimum a few weeks. One of the advantages of applying for internships through the Vermont Intern Program is that we make every effort to notify all applicants when we receive notice that a position has been filled.

Q: Will I have contact with the employer?

A: Your application will either be emailed to the employer or submitted via their website, so you will not have direct contact with the employer before your application is submitted. After your application is submitted the employer will contact you if they are interested in you as a candidate. While a personal

connection can go a long way to making a positive impression with an employer and increasing your chances of getting an interview, most business owners are incredibly busy and receive a large volume of applications for any position they offer, so contacting the employer during the application process is not the best time to make a lasting, positive impression. Instead we recommend you do the following BEFORE applying:

- 1) Attend a networking event or other in-person event where the employer will be, such as a business event, career fair or event hosted by the employer. Introduce yourself and share your enthusiasm for the company and what they do. Let them know that you are interested in internship opportunities with their company and ask if there is anything you can do to increase your chances of getting an internship with their organization.
- 2) Send a polite email (or even better - a LinkedIn message from your awesome profile!) saying that you are interested in their company, enthusiastic about the field they represent (and why) and appreciative of their consideration/time.

Few employers welcome phone calls, and a walk-in is a big no-no. This is why we put so much emphasis on the strength of your application materials. Submitting a stellar application (using the exact process the employer has outlined) is your opportunity to show an employer your competence, compatibility and commitment. A follow-up email may help your chances of getting an interview, but it won't reverse the first impression that your application makes. In-person contact is much more effective in influencing their decision, and networking and other events make for great opportunities.

Q: Why should I use the Vermont Intern Program?

A: The Vermont Intern Program offers students, recent graduates and young professionals value in many forms:

- Our website is the only online resource devoted entirely to paid internships in Vermont. We list 250-300 internships a year, most of which can only be found and applied for through our program. Our listings are vetted for quality and updated frequently, so you don't have to wade through scams, internships that are really part-time jobs and old listings to find the good stuff!
- Program staff can provide assistance with the search and application process, including advice on application materials and updates on the status of positions and your candidacy.
- If you secure an internship through the Vermont Intern Program, you will be eligible for a FREE Individual Membership to VBSR, which gives you access to the VBSR membership directory with full employer contact information, member job listings, discounted rates at VBSR's conferences, discounts from other VBSR members, and email updates on socially responsible business practices. VBSR Members also receive exclusive admission to events and notice of opportunities throughout the year, including networking and professional development events.
- VBSR is the oldest and largest socially responsible business organization in the country, and the 4th largest business organization in Vermont, making it a powerful organization to leverage in making connections, deepening your education and developing your career. Mentioning that you found a position through VBSR's Vermont Intern Program demonstrates your interest in socially responsible business and helps your materials stand out to employers.

Q: When do you offer internships? How many hours/week would I work?

A: We offer internships year-round with a huge variety in the # of hours/week and length of internship. Most internships last about 3 months, and follow the semester schedule (early September to mid-December, late January to mid-May, or summer), but many last longer or start/end on a different schedule depending on the needs of the employer and the type of work you will be doing. Internships may be part-time or full-time.

Q: How long does it take to apply for an internship?

A: There is no standard timeline for the internship application process. An internship may be filled within a few weeks or the search may continue for much longer. Most positions remain open until filled, some positions have strict deadlines and few accept applications on a rolling basis. Unless an application deadline is given, we recommend that you apply as soon as possible after seeing the posting while giving yourself enough time to produce high-quality materials.

Q: How do I find out more about the Vermont Intern Program?

A: You can learn more about the program [here](#).

Q) Will I be hired at the end of my internship?

A) We encourage employers to consider their interns as openings become available within the company. We also encourage employers to use internships as a means of "trying out" a potential employee in a low-risk environment. However, there are no guarantees that you will be hired for a permanent position at the completion of your internship.

Q: What are you looking for in an application?

A: Beginning in January 2016, applications will not be screened by the Vermont Intern Program unless the employer makes a specific request for us to screen for qualifications or the following criteria:

- No grammatical errors or typographical errors
- Cover letter personalized to the employer and position
- Cover letter and resume formatted according to modern conventions

Q: What can I do to improve my chances of getting an interview?

A: Submitting a stellar application (using the exact process the employer has outlined) is your opportunity to show an employer your competence, compatibility and commitment. We suggest the following to improve your chances of having your content stand out as relevant, strong and polished:

Update your resume and write a cover letter addressed to the employer. Your cover letter should include answers to the following questions:

- Which position are you applying for?
- How would this internship help you meet your professional goals?
- Why are you passionate about this position and the work the employer does?
- How do you connect with the employer's mission?
- What skills do you have that the employer is looking for?
- How/where did you learn these skills?
- What makes you unique?
- What personal strengths would be valuable to an employer or a team?

***Double check for errors and accuracy, but don't trust your eyes alone. Always have someone else proofread your materials before you send them. It can be difficult to see your own mistakes.

A cover letter template and examples of cover letters and resumes are available [here](#).