



# THE COMMONS VIRTUAL SUMMER INTERNSHIP

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



## KEEPING TALENT AND INDUSTRY CONNECTED IN A TIME OF CRISIS

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 are being forced to restructure or entirely eliminate 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.*



# PROGRAM DETAILS

The Commons *Virtual Summer Internship* delivers a comprehensive growth experience for high-performing students of all backgrounds and degree programs. All programming from The Commons has a strong focus on diversity of people, skill sets, passions, and mindsets. Interns will receive real-world work experience, explore the creative problem-solving process, build their professional network, and develop as career-ready workers. Interns will be granted a \$1,500 stipend for their work (delivered in three installments).



## WHO WE'RE SEEKING

- Students financially impacted due to a rescinded summer internship
- Students enrolled at any Wisconsin college or university
- Students pursuing any degree: STEM, design, business, marketing, etc
- Students interested in building out tech-enabled solutions to real-world problems
- Students wanting to develop their skills, push their creativity, and work collaboratively

## WHAT THEY'LL BE DOING

- **Facilitated Workshops:** Each intern will work on two different multidisciplinary project teams throughout the summer, with guiding workshops 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.

## WHEN THEY'LL BE DOING IT

- **10 weeks:** June 8 - August 14
- **Cohort 1:** 9am-1pm Monday and Wednesday, 9am-12pm Friday
- **Cohort 2:** 9am-1pm Tuesday and Thursday, 9am-12pm Friday
- **Part-time:** up to 150 hours total (*depending on possible internship credit requirements*)
  - 3-5 additional hours/week of homework and experiential programming

# PROJECT / WORKSHOP 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](http://www.thecommonswi.com/virtual)



# HOW COMPANIES CAN PARTICIPATE

The COVID-19 health crisis has forced many local companies to make the difficult decision to cancel student internships this summer. This shouldn't disrupt the talent attraction pipeline. The Commons *Virtual Summer Internship* responds with a high-quality and turnkey solution to give companies a low-cost alternative to canceling an internship and a new way to access a pool of up to 200 emerging professionals. More details below:

## WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

- Companies seeking a low-cost alternative to rescinding summer internships
- Companies wanting to support students that have had their summer internships rescinded
- Companies looking to engage with a large, diverse and inclusive pool of local talent
- Companies looking to enhance their existing in-person or virtual internship program

## WHAT YOU'LL GET

- Fully-managed, turnkey programming led by The Commons
- Multi-disciplinary teams of students working on relevant industry challenges
- Variety of opportunities for staff and leaders to engage with student teams
- Direct introductions, referrals, and marketing to the entire talent pool
- Access to summaries of student assessment data and performance reviews
- Experiential programming yielding well-rounded, career-ready, and connected innovators
- Invitations for staff to engage in all experiential programming
- Brand recognition on all program materials and publicity

## WHAT'S REQUIRED

- Intern sponsorship is \$3,000/intern, with \$1,500 going back as a living stipend (\$10-\$12/hour)
- For every five interns sponsored, a student team will be created to work on an industry-relevant challenge determined by the supporting company and The Commons team
- Identify at least one leader to deliver a session for the experiential programming
- Create a mailing list of staff to serve as mentors and participate in experiential programming

**READY TO GET INVOLVED?** Contact Michael Hostad at [michael@thecommonswi.com](mailto:michael@thecommonswi.com)



*The Commons is an initiative of The Greater Milwaukee Committee, a non-profit civic organization dedicated to making the region the best place to live, learn, work, play, and stay.*