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**Longview nonprofit benefits from hosting summer intern**  
*Subsidies available for nonprofits, women-owned and small businesses  
to hire student summer interns*

**Longview, Wash. (Oct. 21, 2024)** – Small businesses and nonprofit organizations in Cowlitz and Clark counties that are short-staffed may be able to get assistance paying the salary of a summer intern with a [Future Leaders Project](#) (FLP) grant available through [Workforce Southwest Washington](#) (WSW).

Businesses owned by women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ community members, veterans, nonprofits, and community-based organizations are encouraged to complete an online application to request a subsidy to help pay the wages of an intern for summer 2025.

Online applications are due by **Friday, November 1, 2024, at 5 p.m.** and can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/4dRqjkl>.

[Hello Life Eating Disorder Recovery Services](#), a Longview-based nonprofit, took advantage of the grant to host an intern during summer 2024.

Hello Life's mission is to provide an equitable and free pathway to eating disorder recovery and positive body image while working to break down the systemic barriers that contribute to health inequities in Cowlitz County.

"For small agencies like us, having the opportunity to have a paid intern on-site for several weeks is truly impactful to our work," said Shira Lile, Executive Director of Hello Life. "Being a recipient of the Future Leaders Project grant allowed us the capacity to carry out this massive research project in a timely manner."

Since the onset of COVID-19, Hello Life has seen a huge uptick in the number of individuals they are serving who are battling with eating disorders and who also have experienced barriers to accessible food and healthcare. It prompted the agency to launch the county's first-ever research study examining the relationship between eating disorders and food accessibility.

Hello Life's intern, Madelyn "Maddie" Hennerty, served as a Research Associate performing data analysis, grant writing, and conducting community outreach and engagement, among other tasks.

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“Maddie brought extensive knowledge, passion, experience and creative ideas to our agency. She was a core pillar in helping Emery, our lead research intern, launch this research project into the community and help gather its data. She was also embedded in our community engagement and outreach events whenever possible,” said Lile.

Working in a professional environment was beneficial to the student intern as well.

"The internship taught me the importance of versatility as I wore many different hats in the workplace," said Maddie Hennerty. "It gave me a period post-graduation to develop my technical skills and figure out what I wanted to do professionally. I highly recommend other students consider applying for an FLP internship."

After completing the internship, Hennerty was invited to join Hello Life’s board of directors.

“Maddie was such an incredible asset to Hello Life. She shared the agency’s vision of expansion and eating disorder equity for all and brought so much energy, creativity and compassion, she was a natural fit for our Board of Directors,” said Lile.

While internships traditionally focus on work experience, FLP asks host organizations to include interns in staff meetings and events and provide opportunities for them to interact with the organization’s leaders.

“Giving students access to the organization’s leadership and helping them build social capital and a professional network is a key piece of FLP,” said Nolan Yaws-Gonzalez, Associate Director of Programs who leads FLP for Workforce Southwest Washington. “It’s about providing opportunities to build relationships with people who could serve as mentors, job references or future employers.”

Now in its fifth year, FLP has served 57 students through 29 organizations and is hoping to increase the number of interns and businesses it can serve each year. Twenty-four interns were hosted by 19 organizations in summer 2024, with grants funding 13 internships. With additional grant funding secured from the JP Morgan Chase Foundation, WSW hopes to subsidize up to 18 nonprofits and small businesses in 2025.

“It is exciting to see the impact these internships have on both the employer host sites and the Future Leaders Interns they host – it truly ends up being a win-win experience where businesses report they have increased capacity to tackle projects and student interns have the opportunity to gain real-world experience while expanding their networks and developing new skills,” said Yaws-Gonzalez. “We are hoping more companies in Cowlitz County will apply for grants this year.”



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The [Future Leaders Project](#) (FLP) is an initiative of [Workforce Southwest Washington](#) (WSW), [Columbia River Economic Development Council](#) (CREDC) and [Washington State University Vancouver](#) (WSU Vancouver) that aims to help cultivate diverse leaders for our community. FLP connects students from communities that have experienced longstanding inequities and exclusion and first-generation college students with business-sponsored summer internships, providing growth and professional development opportunities.

Internships are a valuable tool for both students and businesses. The young adults get hands-on, real-world work experience and the organization gets new energy and perspective, skills and visibility in the community.

In 2024, grants from WSW funded internships at the Association of Science Communicators, Building Futures Foundation, Clark County Food Bank, Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC), Educational Opportunities for Children and Families, Fourth Plain Forward, Greater Vancouver Chamber, Hello Life Eating Disorder Recovery Services, Nut-Tritious Foods, Partners in Careers, PointNorth, and Southwest Washington Contractors Association (SWCA).

Hosting FLP interns provides companies with benefits, including:

- Innovative ideas and fresh perspective.
- Support for projects employees might not have time to complete.
- A proven, cost-effective way to recruit and evaluate potential permanent employees.
- Opportunities for staff to gain supervisory skills by mentoring and managing interns.
- Effective ambassadors for your organization, as interns often help increase the visibility of their host organization with their peers and family members.
- Opportunities to promote community involvement and demonstrate your organization's commitment to workforce development – an excellent public relations tool!

Companies can learn about the Future Leaders Project and hiring interns by contacting Nolan Yaws-Gonzalez, Associate Director of Programs at Workforce Southwest Washington, at [nyaws-gonzalez@workforcesw.org](mailto:nyaws-gonzalez@workforcesw.org) or 360.567.1066.

“WSW is grateful to have received another Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) focused grant from the [JP Morgan Chase Foundation](#). The funding we received in 2023, provided 13 nonprofit organizations and small businesses with the opportunity to host Future Leaders Interns during Summer 2024,” said Nolan Yaws-Gonzalez, Associate Director of Programs, who oversees WSW’s investment in the FLP.

WSU Vancouver students should contact Bill Stahley, WSU Vancouver Employer Engagement Coordinator at [bstahley@wsu.edu](mailto:bstahley@wsu.edu) or 360.546.9273 or visit [Future Leaders Project](#).

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Note to media: To view a short video of intern Maddie Hennerty, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWPPfp3neh0>

[Workforce Southwest Washington](#) (WSW), a 501c3 nonprofit and the Local Workforce Development Board for Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties, is dedicated to leading a regional workforce development system where every individual has access to quality employment and every business has access to a highly skilled workforce. WSW designs, coordinates and funds workforce programs and services in collaboration with local partners. Our initiatives aim to equip both youth and adults with the essential skills, training, and education required for employment and career advancement. We aid in business growth by funding and collaborating with quality companies to facilitate recruitment, training, and retention of skilled employees.

The PY24 Future Leaders is supported by \$206,682 (65% of total) U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration federal funding and \$109,947 (35% of total) non-federal funding from the J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation.

Workforce Southwest Washington is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay 711.

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