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SummerWorks program providing 80 youth with summer jobs

More than 260 youth served since Workforce Southwest Washington started program in 2019

Vancouver, Wash. (July 14, 2021) – Helping Southwest Washington increase the number of young people with access to quality summer work experiences, [Workforce Southwest Washington](#) (WSW) recently secured a \$50k grant from [JPMorgan Chase](#). The grant will assist in preparing the region's young people for the future of work through new approaches to Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEP), guiding them on a path to greater economic mobility.

For summer 2021, WSW is expecting 80 young adults to participate in its [SummerWorks](#) program, a 100-hour internship, with approximately 40 businesses hosting the interns. Before the internship begins, youth complete a 40-hour job readiness course that touches on time management, communications and teamwork, among other topics.

Due to the COVID pandemic, internships will be a hybrid of in-person and virtual. Students will be working at a variety of organizations and learning skills that will be useful in future jobs. Youth will be helping to care for animals and clean shelters at humane societies, helping deliver and organize food at local food banks, learning customer service and other skills at local shops and stores, and doing data entry, social media and research projects.

SYEPs help equip young people with the skills and experiences they need to succeed and bridge the gap between the demand for summer jobs and the number of available positions. With the COVID-19 crisis and associated economic impact leading to less access to summer jobs, young adults are relying on part-time work and internships to support themselves and their families. Historically, economic downturns disproportionately impact young people, especially young people of color. That's why SummerWorks, with support from JPMorgan Chase, is working to provide young people with virtual learning experiences, career mentoring and other opportunities to learn about postsecondary options for promising career pathways.

In addition to income, young people also need meaningful learning experiences that provide opportunities to learn and build transferrable skills. To help ensure young people have access to opportunity during this time, SummerWorks and JP Morgan Chase are supporting innovative approaches to regular summer youth employment programming such as shifting career readiness and work-based learning programs to virtual settings (e.g., new web-based curricula, online mentoring).

Serving businesses, job seekers and youth in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.



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“We learned a lot about innovation during 2020 when we had to pivot during the pandemic and make the program 100 percent virtual,” said Kevin Perkey, CEO of Workforce Southwest Washington. “Our young people and businesses are resilient and the move to online pioneered a series of innovative new virtual internships.”

“Between persistent racial injustice, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic downturn, it’s been a challenging time for families across the country,” said Cat Martin, Corporate Responsibility Program Officer for JPMorgan Chase. “And especially in under-resourced communities, young people are being hit particularly hard. That’s why JPMorgan Chase is working with cities including Vancouver to address this problem by identifying innovative strategies for reconnecting young people to work-based learning experiences. Summer jobs provide students with a meaningful learning work-based experience, source of income, chance to build professional networks, and pride in their ability to contribute to their families and communities.”

About Workforce of Southwest Washington

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW), a nonprofit organization, funds community prosperity by investing in services that help individuals gain skills to obtain good-paying jobs or advance in their careers and help companies recruit, train and retain workers. Since 2003, we’ve invested more than \$100 million in Southwest Washington. WSW is the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) designated by federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) legislation to oversee the public workforce system in Cowlitz, Wahkiakum and Clark counties. Learn more at www.workforcesw.org.

About JPMorgan Chase & Co.

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This project is funded by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, with funds provided through Workforce Southwest Washington.

WSW is an equal opportunity employer/program.

Auxiliary aids are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay 711.

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