

LINK FUTURE READY Internships 2026

LINK LAKE NORMAN



Jaime Lane

Founder / CEO

LINK Lake Norman

jaime@linklakenorman.com

www.linklakenorman.com

© LINK Lake Norman, LLC.

The Problem

Building a FUTURE READY pipeline of workforce.

© LINK Lake Norman, LLC.

The "Future-Ready Workforce" Partnership Program

This program, is a structured initiative for LKN businesses and industries to share their opportunities and potentially build their future talent pipelines by hosting and developing local student interns so they can see the amazing opportunities and pathways for "What's Next" after high school. The focus is on career exploration and readiness, practical real world hands on job experience, and essential soft skills training facilitated by LINK Lake Norman and our professional partners.

The Core Problem & Our Solution

The Problem Statement

Problem:

Many talented students within the Lake Norman community come from underserved populations. While they possess immense drive and potential, they often face systemic barriers that limit their access to meaningful career pathways. They frequently engage in survival-focused jobs that meet immediate financial needs but offer minimal opportunities for long-term growth, skill development, or professional purpose. This results in a significant gap between their potential and their opportunities, perpetuating cycles of limited career mobility and contributing to a local talent drain.

Why This Matters (The 'Why'):

Providing these driven individuals with access to professional internships and the right soft skills training is not just about a summer job; it is a game-changer for their career trajectories, their families' economic stability, and the overall vitality of our local community. We must provide opportunities that replace "survival roles" with roles that offer purpose, value, and a genuine chance to thrive.



The Solution

Inefficient Workflows Costing Us Revenue

© LINK Lake Norman, LLC.



The "Future-Ready Workforce" Solution

The Program Goal

Goal:

The goal of the "Future-Ready Workforce" Partnership Program is to implement a community-centric model that ensures these students have the opportunity to achieve more. In partnership with Seasons of Giving Lake Norman, we are able to give more opportunities and offer tax deductions for participation, sponsorships, and investments.

We aim to:

- Connect LKN students 16 -22 years old with local businesses for invaluable career exploration and real-world experience.
- Provide essential soft skills training and mentorship (facilitated by LINK).
- Help participating businesses build robust future talent pipelines and achieve high retention rates.
- Equip students with pathways into the workforce, certifications, 2-year/4-year degrees, trainings, certifications, and life and soft skills necessary for success.

Employment Model:

Businesses hire interns directly onto their payroll systems and pay a minimum starting wage of \$12 per hour. The Businesses allow for flexibility for vacations, sports camps, and other commitments.

- This is a project based internship- which means they will put something that they have fixed, invented, improved, or related to their roles for a Final End of Program Presentation at CPCC MERANCUS Campus in to their employers, families, elected officials, principals, and community. They will showcase their internships and show off their soft skills they learn
- Interns can work up to 39 hours per week. The minimum should be no less than 10 hours per week.
- Businesses can choose the commitment for days / weeks that interns participate: from between 3 -10 weeks for the summer, with the ability to keep the interns onboard as part-time, full-time, as needed, etc.
- Businesses must allow for a 2 hour block (TBD) for the Lunch and Learns each week. Students may work prior to the lunches, as well as after.
- If uniforms are required, the business must provide them.



© LINK Lake Norman, LLC.

Program Workflow

Overview of Key Process Stages

© LINK Lake Norman, LLC.



PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION



Recruitment

Identify and attract potential candidates for internships.



Internship

Engage participants through hands-on learning experiences.



Evaluation

Assess performance and provide constructive feedback.



Showcase

Present outcomes and celebrate participant achievements.

© LINK Lake Norman, LLC.

Detailed Program Insights

The FUTURE READY program aims to create a structured pathway for participants, ensuring they receive valuable experiences throughout the process. Each stage is designed to foster growth, learning, and partnership between LINK and local businesses, ultimately preparing interns for future career opportunities.

THE FUTURE READY PROGRAM

Building Pathways and Pipelines for a skilled, trained, and ready for the future.



Roles of Businesses and LINK LKN

Your Role Is Significant. We are transformative leaders within our community. If we do not support the development of our own kids, our community, and the future workforce, then who will?



Stage	Action by LINK	Action by Business	Outcome
Recruitment 🔍	Vets interns (assessments, interviews, interests).	Reviews vetted candidates; final virtual interview.	Hiring Decision & Onboarding.
Internship 📁	Coordinates weekly Lunch & Learns (Soft Skills). Weekly Check-ins and Q & A sessions with managers and intern (s)	Onboards to payroll (min \$12/hr), manages daily tasks/mentorship.	Skill Development & Experience.
Evaluation ✅	Assesses progress, provides reports to business, coordinates volunteering, and team activities	Provides feedback, identifies potential future talent.	Data-driven insights.
Showcase 🏆	Plans, Markets, & executes event (Aug 2026).	Share and invite stakeholders in your network, Attend, celebrates intern achievements, network.	Recognition & Talent Pipeline.

Investment

Comparing Costs and Value for Businesses

Direct Costs

Business expenses directly related to program participation.

LINK Program Fee:

The program administration for 1 Intern is \$1400 for from vetting students in March, to Final Presentations in August. If you have more than 1 intern, each additional intern is \$850

Wages 💰

- Employee interns at a Minimum of \$12 per hour.
- The min hours worked should be no less than 100 hrs for the summer
- If uniforms are required, employers will provide

Fees 💵

- Program management
 - Life /Soft -Skills training
 - Weekly Surveys/Feedback
 - Bi-Weekly onsite visits
 - Training materials
 - Support services
 - Final Reporting
 - Final event coordinations

Value 🤝

- No heavy lifting- We help curate job descriptions/ opportunities
- Soft Skill development
- Employee Growth and responsibility
- Mentorship to our future workforce
- Potential future employees

Benefits 🌟

- Enhanced productivity
- Building the Workforce
- Community and student impact
- Employer branding
- Sharing opportunities and making an impact

LINK Program Fees

- Transparent fee structure tailored for businesses looking to invest in future talent development.
- Comprehensive support included for all participating businesses.



Intern Hiring Options

Choose the best plan for you

Pricing

Based on the number of interns hosted per company, hours, and internship length, summer, afterschool, year-round, effect the pricing structure. You may continue the internship throughout the year.**



Included Benefits for Partner Companies

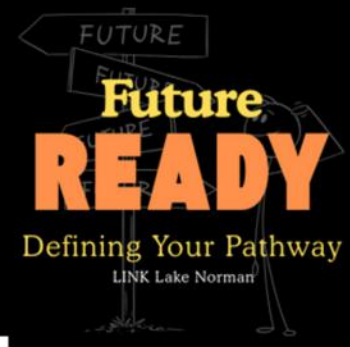
- Networking opportunities, roundtables with local businesses and professionals in the industry
- Opportunity to host lunch and learns on site, workshops, and training sessions to enhance skill development and integrate your interns direct reports – strengthening interaction, communications, support, mentorship, and attainable goals.
- Opportunity to train YOUR current workforce
- Support from LINK staff and professionals in soft skill trainings, career guidance, and mentorship, and pathways.

BE A PART OF BUILDING A WORKFORCE READY COMMUNITY



Community Sponsorship Opportunities

Invest in the FUTURE READY Program



Presenting Sponsor \$5,000



All sponsorships are tax-deductible through our partner, and aligned mission, Seasons of Giving Lake Norman, a 501(c)(3) organization.

As a Presenting Sponsor, a business is prominently featured throughout all program activities. This top tier includes extensive branding on materials and digital platforms, providing maximum exposure. This tier also allows businesses to market through materials, lunch and learns, sponsoring interns for small businesses, impacting the community. Additionally, sponsors receive exclusive networking opportunities, allowing them to connect with future leaders and influence the next generation in their industry.

Pipeline Partner \$2,500



The Pipeline Partner tier enables businesses to engage directly with participants in the program. This investment not only enhances brand visibility but also allows for tailored access to interns. Companies at this level are highlighted during events, giving them the opportunity to showcase their commitment to shaping the future workforce.

Advocate Level \$1,000



The Advocate Level offers a unique chance for local businesses to support the FUTURE READY program with a modest investment. Sponsors at this tier will receive recognition in promotional materials, providing visibility in the community. This partnership fosters relationships with future talent while showcasing a commitment to workforce development in our community.

Presenting Sponsor (🌟)	\$5,000+	All benefits + Top Branding + Speaking Role + Award Presentation
Pipeline Partner (🔗)	\$2,500	Advocate benefits + Showcase Table + Featured Post
Advocate Sponsor (👥)	\$1,000	Advocate benefits + Showcase Table + Featured Post
Community Supporter	\$600	Logo on Website, 1 Lunch and Learn Sponsor, in media at presentations

The "Future-Ready Workforce" Partnership Program

This program is a structured initiative for LKN businesses to build their future talent pipelines by hosting and developing local student interns. The focus is on career readiness, practical experience, and essential soft skills training facilitated by LINK Lake Norman.

Program Overview and Structure

- **Goal:** To connect LKN students with local businesses for career exploration, providing them with essential soft skills and real-world experience while helping businesses build future talent pipelines and achieve high retention rates.
- **Employment Model:** Businesses hire interns directly onto their payroll systems and pay a minimum starting wage of \$12 per hour.
 - **LINK Lake Norman** is the acting consultant for the LINK Lake Norman Future Ready Internship Program. LINK Lake Norman will require the program fee to participate to secure your placement, no later than March 15th.

LINK's Role as Internship Program Director and Administrator:

- **Recruitment & Vetting:** LINK interviews and assesses all potential interns for personality, interests, skills, accountability, and future pathways before recommending them to employers.
 - **Gathering Data:** Workers Permits, we require a signed doc from 3 references- a coach, teacher, business, club, etc for applications. Health Forms if needed, any other data you need to facilitate a easier onboarding prior to day 1.
 - **Placement & Onboarding Support:** Facilitates virtual calls between vetted interns and employers for final hiring decisions. We will do drug testing for a fee. Gather time off needed for vacations, camps, etc.
 - **Training & Reporting:** Manages and executes a mandatory weekly "Lunch and Learn" soft skills training program and provides assessment reporting to participating companies.
 - **Program Management & Events:** Coordinates volunteering opportunities, manages project materials, and organizes the culminating Showcase Event.
 - **Connections and Opportunities:** Building pathways and working alongside local high school administration and CTE teachers, CMS, the county, CPCC, Mitchell Community College, local colleges, and our students. Breaking the barriers, connecting, building programs, opportunities, and investing in our future.
- **Intern Roles:** Interns are exposed to all opportunities that make up a business name: marketing, logistics, sales, manufacturing, mechanics, HVAC, social media, HR, R&D, finance, etc., broadening their perspectives on the diverse roles available locally. All roles can be attained with a 2- year degree, certification, training, or directly into the workforce.

Pricing Structure:

Business "Buy-In" & Investment

Participating businesses contribute to the program through a yearly "Program Administration & Training Fee" for each intern hosted. This fee covers LINK's services, onboarding, lunch and learns, speakers, materials, and events. For businesses hosting multiple interns, pricing will be adjusted based on the length of the placement and the total number of interns. All interns must complete at a min of 100 hours + over the summer from May - August. The internship will conclude August 25th or when it is deemed completed by LINK and Employer at each entity.

Program Components**For Businesses:****Intern Wages**

- Paid directly by the business to the intern (minimum of \$12/hour).

LINK Program Administration Components

(Included in the program costs)*

Admin & Vetting

- Services for sourcing, interviewing, assessing, and placing interns.

Weekly Lunch & Learns

- Mandatory soft skills training sessions facilitated by LINK and its professional partners.

Assessments & Reporting

- LINK provides ongoing progress reports to the business, along with site visits and collaborative efforts.

Program Materials

- Includes materials, food and beverages for lunch and learns, project supplies, etc.

Volunteering Coordination

- Collaborating with local non-profits for community service opportunities.

Showcase Event

- Scheduled for August 2026, where interns will present their learnings, inventions, creations, improvements, and designs, sharing their experiences alongside their company mentors. Host companies will also present their businesses and overall experiences, while LINK will market supporting entities throughout the internship, including press releases, interviews, and weekly spotlights.

The "Per Intern" Investment Fee

Businesses will select an internship structure (hours/days per week) and pay the corresponding program fee to LINK.

Internship Structure

Interns are considered employees of the businesses that employ them and are not employees of LINK Lake Norman. LINK Lake Norman acts as the independent contractor and administrator for the FUTURE READY Program.

Interns are covered under the employer's insurance requirements, in line with their current payroll schedules.

***Approximate Hours/Week:** 10-30 per week**

The Value Proposition

This model ensures that companies invest in the future, by supporting the program, hosting intern(s), sponsoring lunch and learns, being a participant for soft skills trainings, or supporting and investing in the FUTURE READY programs and internships.

The return on investment is multi-faceted:

- **Vetted Talent:** Access to pre-screened, diverse motivated local talent that meets your job descriptions, that LINK helps to curate for you.
- **Skill Development:** Interns receive high-quality soft skills training managed externally by LINK for the duration of the internship, mentorship, opportunities, and pathways created by the skills and experiences that the interns learn in their job placements.
- **Talent Pipeline:** A structured way to test and recruit future full-time employees, sharing knowledge, insight, and skills that may change their outlooks and pathways, while drastically improving employee engagement and retention rates.
- **Community Advocacy:** Significant positive PR and recognition among peers, elected officials, and parents as a business committed to LKN's youth and economic strength.
- **By Participating:** Your industry will be recognized in the LKN Magazine, as well as at the kick off event where media will be present, and certified as a community builder partner in Future Ready. There will also be recognition by your interns and competitions on areas of your businesses that were impactful to them.

This isn't just an internship. This is a program that I developed and managed for the past 3 years, first with Lake Norman Economic Development for 2 years, I advocated for it to continue to impact more, and carried it over to Make an Impact Foundation, KIDS WORK. With the support of our past and new partners, community leaders, and industries, this program continues to grow and is changing the lives of our youth, parents, and employees, bringing career exploration, pathways to what's next, the softs skills to get there, and opportunities for job placement.

Look at it this way- If I knew what I know now, I wish I had this opportunity. It would have changed my pathway, my purpose, and my drive to succeed. I can only hope that my child is able to do the same thing.

When you see the impact it changes you but it also changes the lives of our future generation of workforce that we NEED the most!

Jaime Lane
Founder | CEO
LINK Lake Norman
jaime@linklakenorman.com



Future READY

Defining Your Pathway

LINK Lake Norman



**LINK Lake Norman
Future Ready
Program**

www.linklakenorman.com
jaime@linklakenorman.com
704-224-7830