



INTERNSHIP GUIDE

Section 2: Preparation



Acknowledgement of Scope

While this internship guide was written specifically for the NAF Future Ready Lab program, the recommendations, resources, and templates provided can be customized to provide benefit for all internship models. Internship models can vary from one-on-one to group-based or from in-person to virtual. Regardless of the model, we recommend that all internships need the same characteristics to be a high-quality experience. Characteristics include a project of value, a focus on college and career-ready skill development, and networking opportunities with business professionals. When these characteristics are embedded in an internship model, it boosts the confidence and motivation of interns, it allows them an opportunity to practice positive work habits, and supports the development of their strengths and abilities.

Introduction

The NAF Future Ready Lab is a concept created by NAF to scale the quantity of paid internships available for high school students to prepare for future careers. Industry is at the heart of the design to promote talent development in the designated field and the collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders take NAF's concept to the local level to fit the needs of the employer partners and community.

The NAF Future Ready Lab Internship Guide – Section 2 relates to the preparation of the internship program. The planning team creates the 4–6 week NAF Future Ready Lab schedule for 20–25 interns using the internship program components, and produces recruitment, marketing, and communications materials. The essential steps in the preparation phase include:

- Beginning tasks on the internship program timeline.
- Creating plans for intern preparation and recruitment.
- Drafting the weekly schedule.
- Developing ideas for the project of value.
- Outlining plans for a marketing and communications strategy.



Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Internship Program Timeline](#)

[Internship Recruitment](#)

[NAF Future Ready Lab Schedule](#)

[Project of Value](#)

[Internship Program Components](#)

[Marketing and Communications](#)

[Strategic Action Checklist](#)

APPENDICES

[Internship Program Timeline](#)

[Internship Recruitment Flyer Template and Sample](#)

[Internship Job Description Template](#)

[Company Research Activity Template](#)

[Internship Invitation to Interview Email Template](#)

[Internship Offer and Welcome Email Templates](#)

[Internship Program Tracker](#)

[Photo Release Form](#)

[Research Consent Form](#)

[Weekly Schedule Sample](#)

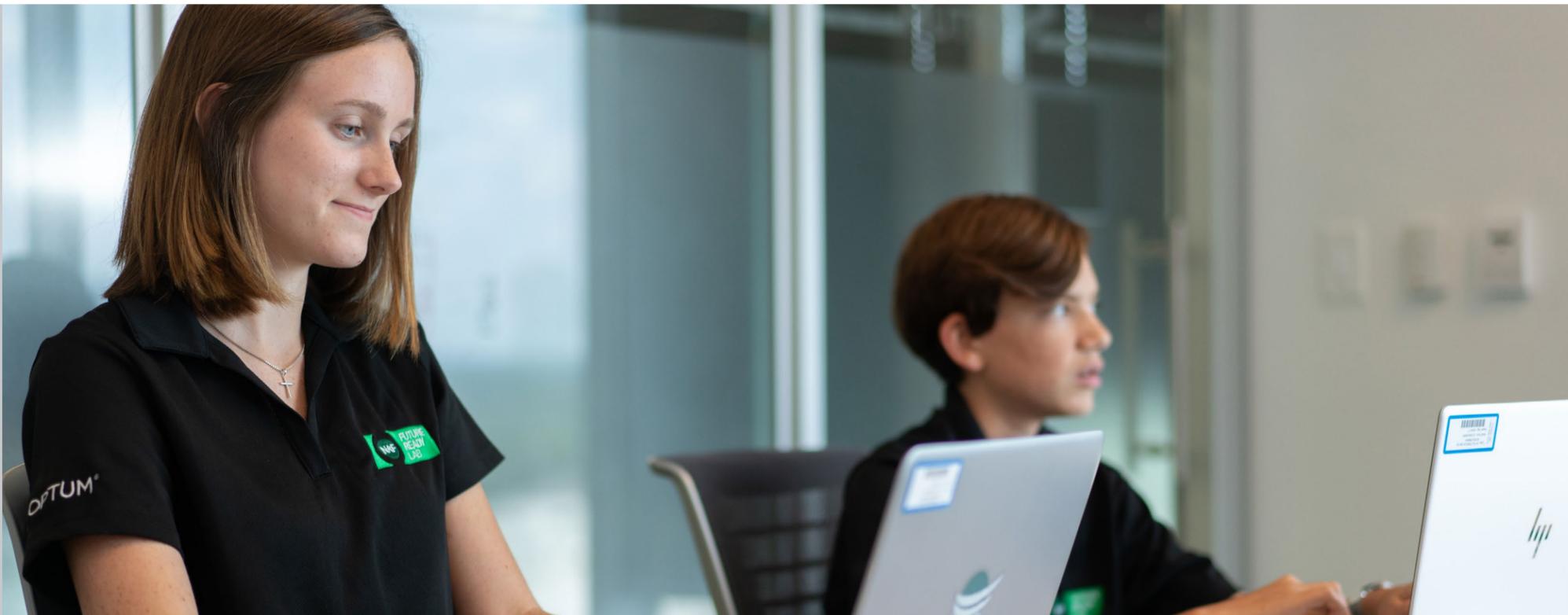
[Project of Value Template and Examples](#)

Internship Program Timeline

The internship program timeline is the most valuable tool that the planning team uses to track tasks throughout the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the internship program. The timeline captures all the tasks listed in the Internship Guide and covers the span of the next 12 months.

The timeline provides suggested deadlines, roles, and tasks. However, the planning team must personalize the timeline to meet the needs of the internship program. Make every effort to be specific in establishing the sequence of tasks and due dates to guide the planning and implementation process and to ensure a successful NAF Future Ready Lab.

 [click bars to view more details](#)



Internship Recruitment

Internship recruitment begins in January or February of the school year and is a responsibility shared by three members of the planning team as follows:

- School district lead is responsible for the internship recruitment and application process.
- Intern hiring lead is the liaison between the school district and employer partners and coordinates all phases of the intern hiring process including recruitment, interviewing, and hiring.
- Employer partner lead collaborates with the intern hiring lead on the recruitment and hiring timeline and the required deliverables.

 [click bars to view more details](#)

NAF Future Ready Lab Schedule

The NAF Future Ready Lab is a 4–6 week internship program that requires contributions from multiple stakeholders who collaborate to create an internship experience for 20–25 interns. The project of value is the culminating-internship product that incorporates work-based and project-based learning and focuses on targeted career topics related to the designated industry. Therefore, the structure and sequence of the internship program schedule must support the interns in meeting the requirements of the project of value that promotes the development of college and career readiness skills.

There are many vital considerations when proposing the implementation dates, number of hours, and time of day for the NAF Future Ready Lab schedule. The development of the daily and weekly schedules must incorporate essential components and requirements.

 [click bars to view more details](#)

Project of Value

The project of value is the culminating-internship product that accomplishes the following:

- Challenges the interns to demonstrate their value as employees to employer partners.
- Measures the interns' abilities to apply the knowledge and skills learned from their career academies and the internship program.
- Requires the creation of a product or completion of a process.

The NAF Future Ready Lab exemplifies project-based learning, which is a learning strategy that engages the interns by focusing on complex questions or problems and allows them to investigate solutions to real problems and issues within the employer partner's business during the internship program. The culmination of the learning process is the presentation of a solution or a product.

The project of value is the central component of the NAF Future Ready Lab, and all other components of the internship experience support interns in the completion of the project. To meet the NAF Future Ready Lab criteria, the project of value must:

- Offer authentic, beneficial, and relevant solutions to employer or community partners.
- Promote intentional learning outcomes.
- Give interns an avenue to offer input to the solution for a real problem/issue within the company.
- Serve as the guiding post to build the internship program around a common problem or theme.

The project of value topic directs the development of content for the NAF Future Ready Lab. All guest speakers, workshops, and activities must provide the project-related knowledge, tools, and skills necessary for interns to complete the deliverables outlined in the project of value.

Most high school students have limited experience working on a project with a team over an extended period. Therefore, use the following considerations to guide the conceptualization of the project of value and to accommodate the impact on the internship program schedule:

- Establish weekly deliverables and benchmarks to guide the progress of the project and to promote intern effectiveness and work quality.
- Provide project and time management workshops during the first two weeks to prepare interns to embark on their projects.
- Focus on soft skill development by providing team building workshops.

To support the completion of the project of value, block time in the daily and weekly schedules to include:

- Project overview
- Team huddles
- Project time
- Team report preparations
- Mock presentations



Internship Program Components

 [click bars to view more details](#)

Employer Partner and Community Partner Involvement

The employer partner lead and other personnel from the company are vital in the creation and sequencing of internship program components of the NAF Future Ready Lab schedule. They collaborate with the planning team to develop the project of value; including the selection of topics and authentic issues. The employer partner provides a variety of personnel to support various phases of the internship program as mentors and guest speakers who offer their expertise to accomplish the completion of the project of value. Consider: The internship program schedule should be structured for the planning team, mentors, and guest speakers to support interns on the project of value.

Internship Program Components

The NAF Future Ready Lab program components personalize the internship experience and workplace as the internship may be an intern's first experience in a formal work environment. The planning team must address the details to have an impactful experience.

Marketing and Communications

NAF's Marketing and Communications team promotes the Future Ready Lab internship program nationally and provides press release and social media templates for publicizing the internship program locally to ensure consistent messaging.

Similarly, locally run internship program planning teams (not using NAF Future Ready Lab branding) are encouraged to seek out opportunities to spotlight the collaborative effort in providing internships that help to develop the local talent pipeline. Locally run internship programs can also call on national NAF communications staff for additional support in marketing, publicity, and messaging needs. The planning team's communications lead is the driver of the marketing and communications plan and leverages support to move the plan forward by representing community partners' participation accurately and positively in all media.

For NAF branding guidelines, templates, and assistance with all elements of marketing and communications, including guidance on co-branding, contact NAF's Marketing and Communications team at communications@naf.org.

 *click bars to view more details*

Strategic Action Checklist

- Review the Internship Program Timeline to identify the required tasks.
- Draft an internship recruitment plan.
- Review state and district requirements for high school internships.
- Develop a draft of the weekly schedule.
- Develop two ideas for the project of value.
- Determine the NAF Future Ready Lab branding.
- Determine the NAF Future Ready Lab logo.



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