

Rotating Industry Internship Discussion Paper

Background:

Approximately 43% of the 600,000 jobs available in Texas require middle skills, which means the completion of some education or training beyond high school, but not a four-year college degree. TWC has a long history of adopting policies and initiatives that support high school students making progress toward obtaining professional or technical licensure or certification before graduation to put them on a valuable career track. A certification earned in high school provides graduates with a clear career pathway and higher wages right out of high school.

Issue:

For students to progress towards or complete a certification before graduation, they need information about occupations available in Texas industries sooner to make informed decisions about careers that best suite their skills and preferences. While various career exploration resources are available to Texas students as early as middle school, the most valuable resource for students to identify an appropriate career is real-world experience, like internships. To best support these important life decisions, students should have access to as many industries and occupations as possible prior to starting a credential track.

Recommendation:

As a part of TWC's internship initiative offerings, a new Rotating Summer Internship Program, designed to expose high school students to a variety of jobs within diverse industries early in their high school career should be launched using up to \$500,000 in WIOA funding. The program should give students the opportunity to gain real-world experience in multiple industries, ensuring that students gain working experience that could help the student better understand if they chose the correct academic path.