

YOUTHFORCE INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR TOOLKIT

LAYING THE FOUNDATION pg. 2

- Introduction
- Understanding the YouthForce NOLA Internship Program
- Intern Training and Preparation

PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERN pg. 4

PRE-INTERNSHIP DAY pg. 6

DAY ONE OF THE INTERNSHIP pg. 7

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM pg. 9

- Check-Ins
- Best Practices & Advice for Supervisors
- Digital Timesheets: ImBlaze

FINISHING WELL:

CLOSING OUT THE INTERNSHIP pg. 13

- Capstone Presentations
- The Hireability Assessment
- Exit Interview
- Complete the Program Feedback Survey
- Closing Ceremony

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & LINKS pg. 15



Have a question? Need Support?

Program and Intern Questions or Concerns

Jon Cospers, jon@youthforcenola.org

Playbooks or Project Plans

Adrian Brenneman, adrian@youthforcenola.org



Laying the Foundation

Introduction

We have developed this comprehensive Internship Supervisor Toolkit that contains all of the information you need to be a successful YouthForce Internship supervisor. The Toolkit outlines program logistics, expectations, and best practices. We cover the most essential information in Employer Orientation, but we know it's helpful to have information readily available to refer back to.

Work-Based Learning Mentorship Basics

Supervisors for the YouthForce Internship program are the intern's "go-to" person within your company for the duration of their work-based learning experience. Supervisors will assign projects, tasks and deadlines, oversee and provide feedback on interns' work, and help them develop and refine the skills they need to be successful. Embracing the difference between "Work-Based Learning" and a "Job" can make a world of difference as you prepare for, engage and manage your intern.

WORK-BASED LEARNING	JOB
Your youth is an intern	Your youth is an employee
An Internship is an opportunity for a young person to gain career exposure, career skills, and mentorship as youth navigate their career path.	A Job is where a young person is required to apply their existing skills from day one to produce an outcome for their employer.
Your supervisory role is mentor	Your supervisory role is manager
A mentor will invest time and resources to support the skills growth and career development of the intern without expectation for meeting specific required work outcomes.	The supervisor will be managing the employee and will hold them accountable for required work outcomes.
Pay is considered a learning stipend.	Pay is considered wages.

Understanding the YouthForce Internship Program

Program Basics

The YouthForce Internship program consists of two phases: Training and Internship. All Interns will participate in 60 hours of soft skills and work readiness training. Interns will then be placed in a 90-hour internship with a local business. Each intern will have an opportunity to earn up to \$2,100 in award stipends throughout the program. Interns will have a coach to provide guidance and support throughout the program, in addition to the mentorship they receive from their internship supervisor.



Intern Training and Preparation

The YouthForce Internship Training¹ is intended to teach interns essential work readiness and soft skills to ensure they are prepared for the world of work. The curriculum includes professional development sessions, interactive group activities, and special events where interns are able to deepen their understanding of our four skill clusters: business services, digital media/IT, health care, and skilled crafts.

The main topics covered during training include:

- Soft Skills² (MHA Lab's Building Blocks and Hirability Skills)
- Business Etiquette (email and professional communication, professional dress)
- Job Seeking Skills (networking, interviews, company research, resumes, LinkedIn)
- Life Literacies (digital literacy, financial literacy, scheduling)
- Industry Exposure
- Program Expectations and Human Resources

Interns complete about 50 hours of training prior to starting their internships. Our interns regularly demonstrate tremendous growth in this short amount of time, especially in terms of their soft skills (communication, social awareness, collaboration, etc.), their confidence and level of comfort engaging with adults in a professional setting, and their awareness of typical work expectations.

It's important for supervisors to understand that interns come in with a wide variety of skills and knowledge at the beginning of the program, especially in terms of digital literacy and industry exposure. We do our best to get our interns up to speed, but these areas take time to develop. **If your interns need a certain set of digital skills to be successful in their placement with you, please let us know in advance.** We will do our best to match you with interns who have those skills and/or provide upskilling training when possible.

We also know many of our interns come into the program with one set of career goals and see these goals change over the course of the program. We do our best to match interns with a placement that is aligned to their career interests, but these are not fixed data points; throughout training, interns are exposed to new careers, and sometimes their interests shift. If one of your interns begins to express interest in another career or industry, do not be offended! Internships tend to focus on skills that are extremely transferable. Even if they change their career plans, the communication, problem solving, and time management skills they're honing through this experience will be crucial to their success.

Have a question? Need Support?

Program and Intern Questions or Concerns

Jon Cospier
jon@youthforcenola.org

Playbooks or Project Plans

Adrian Brenneman
adrian@youthforcenola.org

1. Check out the [YFI Training Curriculum Overview](#) to learn more

2. Soft Skills are also known as 21st Century Skills, Social Emotional Learning skills, etc.



Preparing for Your Intern

❑ Add Key Dates to Your Calendar

Don't let anything sneak up on you. Make sure orientations, the pre-internship day, and the internship and end dates are on your calendar. It's also important to make sure you're receiving emails from the YouthForce team (*check your spam folder*), so you don't miss other key deadlines and reminders.

❑ Choose or Create and Review Your Playbook

We have developed several “off-the-shelf” [Internship Playbooks](#) to be used as a supervisor's guide. These playbooks are a step-by-step resource with pre-planned deliverables, feedback prompts, and capstone presentation ideas. If these playbooks don't align with the projects you had in mind, we have also developed a [Customizable Playbook Template](#) that allows you to create a playbook tailored to the experience you want your interns to have. By thoughtfully answering the questions in the design questionnaire, we will create a playbook just for you that can be referred to each week of the internship and used for future internships, as well. [Watch this quick video to learn more!](#)



So that we can make the best possible match between your company and interns, we will ask you to confirm your playbook of choice or finalize your customized playbook before the interns begin their training. If you have questions or concerns about the playbooks you have reviewed or the customization process, please reach out to Adrian Brenneman (adrian@youthforcenola.org).

❑ Determine a Secondary Supervisor

In the event you are absent or simply unavailable, it's important to have a clear “second in command” who can fill in temporarily. Before the internship begins, please:

- Align on norms and expectations with the secondary supervisor
- Invite them to join your initial meeting on Day 1, so they are part of the foundation building
- Keep them updated about the intern's schedule and key projects/tasks

❑ Plan a Team Lunch

During the first two weeks, plan to have lunch with your interns and a few co-workers so they can meet your company's broader staff and put their work into a larger context. This **informal** time together gives your interns a chance to practice their networking skills, learn more about the individuals in your company, and share more about themselves as they settle into their roles. Please identify a date and time for this in advance, so you can invite the interns and confirm their availability on Day 1.

❑ Finalize Your Intern's First Day

Confirm the date, time, and location of the intern's first day with the YouthForce staff. This first meeting can set the tone for the internship — giving interns clear expectations and building rapport. Be sure to review the description in this toolkit and review the [First Day Checklist](#) in advance.

❑ Review Introduction Emails

You will receive an email from the YouthForce team introducing you to your intern(s) before the internship begins. Please be sure to **reply all** to this email confirming Day 1 details and work schedules and sharing any additional information the intern(s) needs to know for their first day.

❑ Familiarize Yourself with the Soft Skills Referenced in Orientation

YouthForce NOLA uses the evidence-based work-readiness Hireability Framework developed by [MHA Labs](#). MHA Labs spent seven years working to isolate a universal skill framework that could predict supervisor satisfaction of their intern's work performance. MHA Labs isolated 12 work-readiness skills that are most predictive of supervisor satisfaction – meaning the supervisor deemed that their intern was work-ready enough to be hireable. Check out the [Hireability Skills one pager](#) to learn more.



HIREABILITY SKILLS ONE PAGER



Pre-Internship Day

Pre-Internship Day is an opportunity for interns and supervisors to meet each other prior to the interns' first day. This is a time for you and your intern(s) to break the ice, finalize the interns' schedule, and discuss each other's hopes and expectations for the experience.

❑ Break the ice!

- Take the time to really introduce yourself to your intern. Get them excited about working with *you!*
- Come to the meeting curious. Based on the profile that is shared with you in the introduction email, what can you ask them about their school, career aspirations, likes/dislikes?
- Your intern may be quiet. Don't mistake this for a sign of disengagement. They are likely just nervous in this new experience. Be the engaging, welcoming adult we all needed in our shy high school days.

❑ Set the interns' work schedule for the duration of the internship

- Based on the schedule options that you and your interns have selected, we'll confirm one of the schedule options in the intro email. Interns will come to the pre-internship meeting with any modifications they need to make to the schedule (e.g. They may need to miss one Tuesday for a doctor's appointment and add another day to their schedule to make it up).
- Interns must work a total of 90 hours, and we strongly recommend planning for 100 hours to account for any unexpected schedule changes (e.g., absences due to sickness, power outages).
- Be sure to plan ahead for any adjustments you may need to make for holidays (e.g. July 4th). We try to account for this on the schedule options, but we know companies may have a unique holiday schedule.
- During the meeting, closely review and finalize the interns' schedules.
 - Interns will come to the meeting with a draft internship schedule printed or in Google Sheets. Review and edit this together. To approve the schedule, please write or type your name and date into the corresponding boxes at the bottom.
 - After you sign, interns should share the final version with their coach and internship@youthforcenola.org to ensure all parties have access to the agreed-upon schedule.
 - YouthForce staff will then update the interns' ImBlaze shifts accordingly.

❑ Exchange contact information

- We continually emphasize the importance of clear and early communication during training. Our expectation is that internships are no different. You and your intern will need to contact each other in the event of unforeseen circumstances like their RTA bus running late, your child waking up sick, etc. You should both have each other's contact information saved with a clear plan of when and how (call/text/email) to contact each other in such an event.



Day One of the Internship

• Welcome the Interns

- Be sure to have their work station set up before they arrive with whatever documents they may need, along any company swag, a notebook, and pen. This shows that you have been preparing for them to join the team.
- When possible, greet your intern at the door or lobby. Having a familiar face at the beginning of their first day will be reassuring
- On your way to their work station, point out where certain things are like the kitchen (explain usage the norms!), break room, and rest rooms.

• Get to Know Each Other

- Start off the meeting with introductions and a culture-building ice breaker. It is highly recommended that the supervisor also participates in this activity.
 - Here are a few ideas for day one ice-breaker prompts:
 - Which superpower would you have and why?
 - If you could only listen to one album or musical artist for the rest of your life, what or who would it be and why?
 - Who is the person who has had the greatest positive influence on you?
 - If you could have lunch or dinner with one person in the entire history of humanity, who would it be and why?
- Share info about yourself and your team, and give interns a chance to introduce themselves.
 - We suggest giving them specific questions or prompts to answer. They'll likely feel very nervous on day one, so this will help provide a structure and ease nerves. For example, "Please share your name, pronouns, what school you attend, and one thing you're hoping to learn this summer."

□ Provide a Company Overview

- Share your company's vision, mission, values, and other key info.
- Interns are curious to learn more about the companies they are working with, even if they won't be involved in some aspects of the work.
- We also recommend sharing insights into office norms before COVID-19 and any adjustments your team has made since the beginning of the pandemic.

□ Introduce the Secondary Supervisor and Other Team Members

- Introduce the interns to the person you identified as the Secondary Supervisor for this internship. Explain to your interns that this is the person they should go to if you (the primary supervisor) are ever absent or unavailable.
- Ensure the interns have this person's contact information.

• Schedule Weekly Check-Ins

- Take a moment now to schedule weekly check-ins (30-60 minutes) with your interns to provide regular feedback, give an opportunity for the interns to ask clarifying questions about tasks, and set a culture of consistent communication. All interns should attend the same check-in with you.
- Create digital calendar events for check-ins. Be sure that the secondary supervisor, interns are all on the calendar event (the secondary supervisor is not required to attend).

Read more
about
check-ins
on pg. 11



Day One of the Internship continued

❑ Establish Expectations for Daily Touch Points

- Communicate your plan and expectations for daily touchpoints, which can either be done at the beginning or end of each internship shift. This could be a daily check-in/check-out email from each intern communicating daily goals and achievements or a daily group huddle. We defer to your preference, but we do expect some form of daily touchpoint to provide accountability and consistency.

❑ Share Communication Expectations & Norms

- Explain how you prefer your interns to contact you in general (email, phone, or text).
- Discuss additional communication procedures (i.e., when/how the interns should contact you in different scenarios – unexpected absence, quick questions between check-ins, etc.).
- Make sure interns have accurate contact information for you and any other key members of your team they will be working with.
- If your company has video meetings, discuss those norms with your intern.

❑ Discuss the Project Plan

- Review the overall goals and outcomes for the internship, as well as the key skills and knowledge the interns will develop over the course of the internship.
 - We recommend sharing the overview page and the “What Does Success Look Like?” chart of your internship Playbook for full transparency with the interns. Think of this page like a syllabus that everyone can refer back to throughout the internship, as needed.
- Explain key deliverables and set deadlines.
 - We suggest having the interns create digital calendar events for key due dates and invite the intern supervisor to help build digital literacy and time management skills.
- Provide detailed explanations of expectations for tasks and projects.

❑ Provide Additional Details for Week One

- After explaining the full scope of work and overall expectations for the internship, make sure to also deep dive into their tasks and next steps for the first week.
- Provide interns with specific due dates for the coming week and make sure they know how to submit any deliverables to you that are due before your first check-in.
 - You’ll likely want interns to submit their work product to you far enough in advance of your first check-in for you to be able to evaluate their work and prepare to provide feedback and clear next steps for week two.



Maintaining Momentum: Check-ins

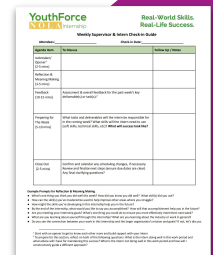
Check-Ins

As a supervisor, it is important that during your regular check-ins with your intern, you:

- Make sure to give feedback on recently completed and currently in-progress projects/tasks
- Share details about upcoming projects/tasks
- Give the intern time to ask you questions that have come up over the past week

After interviewing internship participants we learned that the most successful supervisors were the ones who prioritized finding time to communicate with their interns and share their experiences.

We know every supervisor has a unique check-in style, and many organizations have formats that they already use. You are welcome to use check-in templates and resources you already use with your employees and/or manager when checking in with your interns or **download the YFI Supervisor & Intern Weekly Check-In Guide from [our resource page](#)** to use during your check-ins.



**WEEKLY
CHECK-IN
GUIDE**

The check-in agendas include the following sections (but feel free to adjust to fit your needs):

- ❑ **Ice Breaker/Opener** – Start with an opener to get to know each other more and build rapport
- ❑ **Reflection & Meaning Making** – Ask open-ended questions to help the interns reflect on the past week, reinforce the transferability of skills used, and monitor progress towards high-level goals
- ❑ **Feedback** – Supervisors should assess the interns work and prepare feedback in advance, then utilize the [Feedback Formula](#) to engage in a feedback conversation
- ❑ **Preparing for the Week** – Deep dive into upcoming projects, tasks, and deliverables. Be explicit about expectations and due dates.
- ❑ **Clarifying Questions & Confirm Next Steps** – Review next steps discussed during the check-in, clarify any lingering questions, and re-confirm date and time for the next weekly check-in.

If you need more help preparing for or facilitating check-ins with your intern, please be sure to reach out to the YouthForce team.



Maintaining Momentum: Best Practices

Best Practices & Advice for Supervisors

❑ Get to know your interns

- Share your personal story (e.g., where you are from, if you went to college and if so, what you studied in college, industry certifications or credentials you've earned, how you selected your career path, long-term goals).
- Ice breakers and casual conversations at the beginning or end of your meetings can help you learn more about your intern over the course of the internship
- Notice, respect, and use your interns' personal pronouns. To help you cultivate a safe and welcoming environment, check out this [Welcoming Schools](#) website and [mypronouns.org](#)
- Maintain professionalism throughout the internship. Supervisors should refrain from initiating and/or accepting connection requests with interns on social media platforms other than LinkedIn.

❑ Set up a consistent weekly schedule and stick to the schedule you set

- Establishing a consistent weekly schedule (ie. same days and times every week) will help both you and your intern keep the schedule straight. This also mirrors real-world work scenarios, when employees typically have a set work schedule.
- However, be sure to plan ahead for any adjustments you may need to make for holidays (e.g., July 4th).
- Once the schedule is finalized, create recurring digital calendar events for your daily check-ins (beginning or end of day) as an extra reminder for you and your intern.

❑ Make the most of check-in meetings with your interns

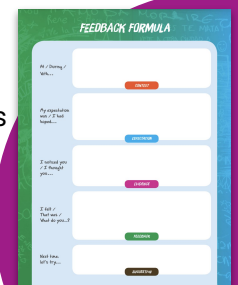
- Utilize the [Weekly Check-In Guide](#), and feel free to share a digital version with the intern and their coach, so everyone is on the same page about the interns' progress.
- Don't be afraid of giving timely, constructive feedback, using the [Feedback Formula](#).

❑ Allow your interns to attend other meetings or events

- These are great ways for your interns to receive exposure to all parts of your company, to get to know others in the company and to learn about the various career paths available to them.
- Feel free to assign them a task for these events (e.g., note-taking, etc.).

❑ Choose one of the following engagement activities for your intern(s), and get it scheduled:

- Have the intern attend or watch a pre-recorded professional development session and discuss the experience afterward.
- Include the intern in other team activities, lunches, team building, etc.
- Schedule some "downtime" where you and the interns can chat more informally, for interns to ask questions about your career trajectory or get advice on their next steps after high school.
- Allow the intern to interview or have a Q & A session with other staff members.



**FEEDBACK
FORMULA**



Maintaining Momentum: Best Practices continued

❑ Reach out to the YouthForce team early and often

- If you have any issues during your experience, reach out to your YouthForce point of contact right away.
- You will receive calendar invitations for Zoom “office hours”. These are times throughout the week for you to hop on a call with YouthForce staff to share any concerns or questions that have come up.
- We love to hear about the positive things the interns are doing throughout their internship. Don’t be afraid to share some good news!
- Don’t hesitate to reach out with any questions, ideas, and feedback on how to make this experience most impactful. We are here to support you and ensure a successful internship for both you and your interns, and we love feedback.

❑ Integrate Skill Building Practices

Experienced supervisors understand the importance of skill building as an integral part of the internship experience. Offered below are some steps that provide a comprehensive approach to skill development.

- **Reveal Targeted Skills** – identify the most crucial skills for each task or project and communicate these to the intern
- **Establish Performance Evidence** – set clear expectations and explain what success looks like
- **Focused Activity Design** – make sure the activities/tasks you’re asking interns to complete, align with the target skills and performance evidence you communicated to them
- **Reinforce Expectations** – make this a part of regular check-ins
- **Assess Using Feedback** – refer back to the performance evidence you already established while assessing their performance and when providing feedback
- **Magnify Recognition** – recognize the intern for doing things right to positively reinforce behavior
- **Explore Meaning Making** – highlight how the projects/tasks fit into the company’s larger work AND how the skills the intern is developing can be applied in future scenarios or jobs.

A note about feedback: One of the most critical components to growth is delivering and receiving effective feedback. Feedback that is honest, consistent, evidence-based, and action-oriented has proven to be a contributing factor to student success. We HIGHLY recommend all supervisors familiarize themselves with and utilize [MHA Lab’s Feedback Formula](#).

**Watch this quick
video to learn more!**





Maintaining Momentum: Digital Timesheets

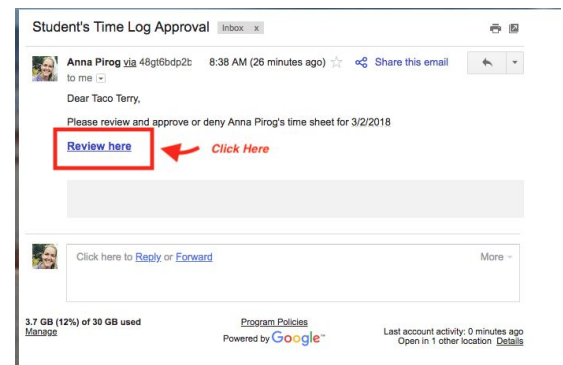
Digital Timesheets: ImBlaze

As part of our internship program we use a timekeeping platform called ImBlaze. ImBlaze allows our students to search, request, and track their internship interests and activity as well as clock in and out for their shifts.

How To Approve Your Intern's Time

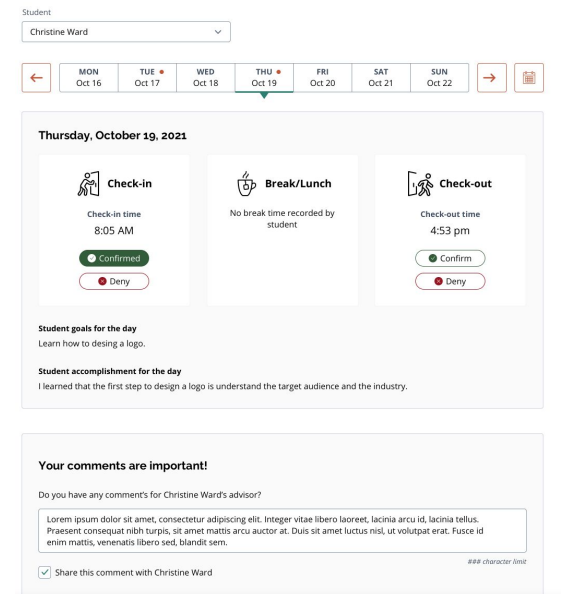
Approve hours – Every Friday at 5pm PST/7pm CST you will receive an email asking you to confirm your interns' time sheets, as well as provide any comments and requests to the the YouthForce staff:

- All interns will be required to clock-in and out on their internship days.
- If you are hosting more than one intern, you will need to approve hours for each intern separately.
- When you click the "review here" link sent through the email, you will be taken to a page that shows you the day and time the intern checked in and out. On this page you can toggle between your different interns (if you have more than one), confirm or deny their hours, as well as leave comments or questions for the intern or the YFI team.



Other Considerations

- It's imperative that we capture accurate attendance data to ensure fidelity and accountability with our internship program.
- If there are any discrepancies, alert both the intern and the YFI Staff. We can manually edit intern hours and re-submit to you for approval.
- Interns should check in and out for breaks every day.
Federal law requires that any employee under the age of 18 MUST take an unpaid 30-minute break when they work more than five consecutive hours. Students must log those breaks into ImBlaze. Please help us to ensure that we are in compliance with this by double-checking that the intern entered their break.
- If you are able to see a timesheet for anyone who is not your intern, please let us know right away!





Finishing Well: Closing Out the Internship

❑ Capstone Presentations

During the final week of the internship, interns are expected to complete a Capstone Presentation in front of an audience of their supervisor and other members of your company.³ This should be scheduled during the first meeting and reconfirmed a few weeks before the presentation.

The presentation will be a compilation of what the interns have completed during their internship and include their final reflections and lessons learned. This presentation should include a slideshow and can be produced collaboratively among the group of interns with each adding input and creativity and also being responsible for a portion of the oral presentation (if applicable).

EXAMPLE PRESENTATIONS



Capstone Presentations should include the following elements (plus any additional components outlined by you):

- Introductions and overview of the interns' roles and accomplishments during the internship.
 - Guiding questions: Who are you (name, school, etc)? What company are you placed at? What projects did you contribute to? What did you accomplish?
- Deep dive into major projects/deliverables/tasks the interns worked on during the internship.
 - **Note: This section should be the primary focus of the presentation**, but it often looks different for each internship placement (since work assignments/projects vary). Supervisors should provide additional guidance to their interns about what to include and focus on in this section, as well as industry or company norms for presentations.
 - Whenever possible, your intern(s) should include photos, screenshots, or links to completed projects or deliverables in their slides. During the presentation, the interns should walk the audience through the end products and the process (when appropriate).
 - If each intern completed different projects or tasks, they will each have their own section. If the interns collaborated on a project collectively, each intern should speak about their individual contributions to the overall project.
- Key takeaways and reflections from this opportunity.
 - Guiding questions: What did you learn through this experience? What skills did you learn or improve? What surprised you the most? What are you most proud of accomplishing during your work-based learning opportunity?

Interns should submit the final version of the PPT/Slides 1-2 business days before the presentation, so you have time to evaluate their work and prepare feedback for their exit interview. As you're listening to the final presentation, adjust your feedback plan as needed

³ Optional - If you'd like, you can record the presentation or invite the YouthForce staff or coaches to sit in



Finishing Well continued

❑ The Hireability Assessment

At the end of the internship, you will be prompted to reflect on your interns' performance in the core [12 Hireability Skills](#), as well as 3 internship sector-specific technical skills:

1. Complete the Employer/Supervisor Hireability Assessment found at www.workingimpact.org,
2. Check your email for a youth-friendly scorecard – **this is your exit interview feedback tool!**
3. Print a copy of the scorecard for your intern.
4. Complete Steps 1–3 for each of your interns. [Preview the questions on the Hireability Assessment & View and Example Scorecard.](#)

❑ Exit Interview

Our goal is for each intern to experience a mini-performance review where you identify their strengths and areas for growth. This brief exit interview should take place with your intern during the last day or week of their internship. It is an opportunity for you to give your intern feedback (**share and use the Hireability Assessment Scorecard!**) and ask them questions about their experience.

❑ Complete the Program Feedback Survey

The YouthForce Internship Feedback Survey is a holistic feedback survey that we ask all supervisors to complete to help us improve our program. We will send you a link during the last week of the program. Topics will include:

- ❑ Your overall experiences with your YouthForce intern(s),
- ❑ The training and support from YouthForce staff,
- ❑ YouthForce communication
- ❑ Suggestions for the future of YouthForce Internships. The YouthForce team will send you a link to the survey from the YouthForce team at the end of the internship.

❑ Closing Ceremony

YouthForce NOLA produces a closing ceremony at the end of the program to celebrate all of the hard work and collective success of our interns. This event is for everyone who makes this program a success: interns, families, employers, schools, and other partners. We will select an intern and employer partner as speakers in addition to other community members involved in our work. You will receive an invitation with event details during the program.



Additional Resources & Links

Links

All of the tools referenced throughout the Toolkit, plus additional resources for employers, can be found at <https://www.youthforcenola.org/yfi-employers> or via the direct links found below:

- [YFI Curriculum Overview](#)
- [Internship Playbook Summaries](#)
- [First Day Checklist](#)
- [Weekly Supervisor & Intern Check-In Guide](#)
- [The Feedback Formula](#)
- [The Internship Skills Core \(AKA Hireability Skills\)](#)
- [Hireability Assessment and Sample Scorecard](#)
- [Cooperative Learning and Group Dynamic Resources](#)