

Tuesday, December 1, 11:00–11:45AM PST

HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIPS - RESEARCH

BRIEFING & FORWARD FROM ANDREW FRISHMAN



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Project Overview

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, American Student Assistance wanted to understand the current and future state of high school internships among students and businesses:

- **Are high schoolers aware of and interested in completing an internship before graduation? Why or why not?**
- **Do companies offer internships at the high school level? Why or why not? If so, what are some benefits, challenges, and outcomes of the program? If not, what may lead to the creation of a high school internship offering?**

This presentation will address these questions and note the important role technology can play in connecting high schoolers to opportunities and address challenges related to high school internships perceived by businesses.



Project Overview



840 students completed a 10-minute online survey asking about their interest in and perception of high school internships. The survey aired nationally in April 2020.



Representatives of 596 companies nationally (working in human resources or directly with recruitment) completed a 10-minute online survey asking about their organization's history with and perception of high school internships. The survey aired nationally in May 2020.



24 human resources representatives completed in-depth interviews to describe their company's experience or lack thereof with high school internships. Interviews were completed in April and May of 2020.



Insight Summary



Many high schoolers are **interested in completing an internship** despite **not being particularly aware** of internship opportunities, especially in their communities. While completing an internship, students want to gain skills and experience as well as to explore career fields across a variety of industries.



Internships for high school students are **somewhat available**, with opportunities in many different industries across the United States. Companies offering high school internships do so for these **altruistic** and **strategic** purposes. However, companies note **challenges** with timing, transportation, recruiting, and work content that either **complicate or preclude** an internship experience.



Schools are currently an important **partner** in the high school internship process. Students would turn to school resources to learn more about internships, while companies rely heavily on their relationship with schools for recruiting and vetting high school interns.



Implications

Now is the moment to transform and expand high school internship programs through technology: the virtual internship experience

Transform the internship experience:

Meet students where they are already spending their time – online – to help them research opportunities and see the utility of a pre-graduation internship

Expand access to opportunities:

High potential for efficacy, because students are amenable to virtual internships

Create expanded work opportunities for high schoolers in digital space

Address perceived challenges pertaining to high school interns:

Potentially easier for schools to coordinate with students and businesses (e.g., to arrange and verify credit hours via online interface)

Mitigate perceived logistic challenges like hours, transportation, and liabilities

Students and High School Internships

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Student Interest in Internships

Student Interest in Internships (Top 2 Box)

General	During Year	Summer
79%	66%	76%

Females are a larger proportion of students interested in internships*



White students are a smaller proportion of students interested in internships*



Student Interest in Internships

Students are **interested in internships** to gain **skills** (66%), to gain **experience** (65%), and to **explore career fields** (52%).



Students are willing to consider local internships to gain skills and experience, to explore, and for community, academic, and financial reasons:

Reason	Example
Skills and Experience	"I've never done [an internship] before and I might get good experience out of it."
	"I believe this would be beneficial for me to get exposure in a work environment and learn."
Career Exploration	"I would like to learn more about career paths in this area before I go to college."
Community	"It's a chance to give back to my community."
	"I don't have to travel far."
Academic	"To put something on my college application."
Financial	"So I can get some work experience and make some money while I'm at it."

Students Want To Intern At All Kinds of Businesses





Students Not Interested in Internships

Not Until College

33% of students are don't think they need an internship experience until college



Not Interested

30% of students are just not interested in having an internship experience



No Time

25% of students they do not have the time to complete an internship experience



Other Reasons

"There isn't anything around me."
"It's a little dangerous in my area."

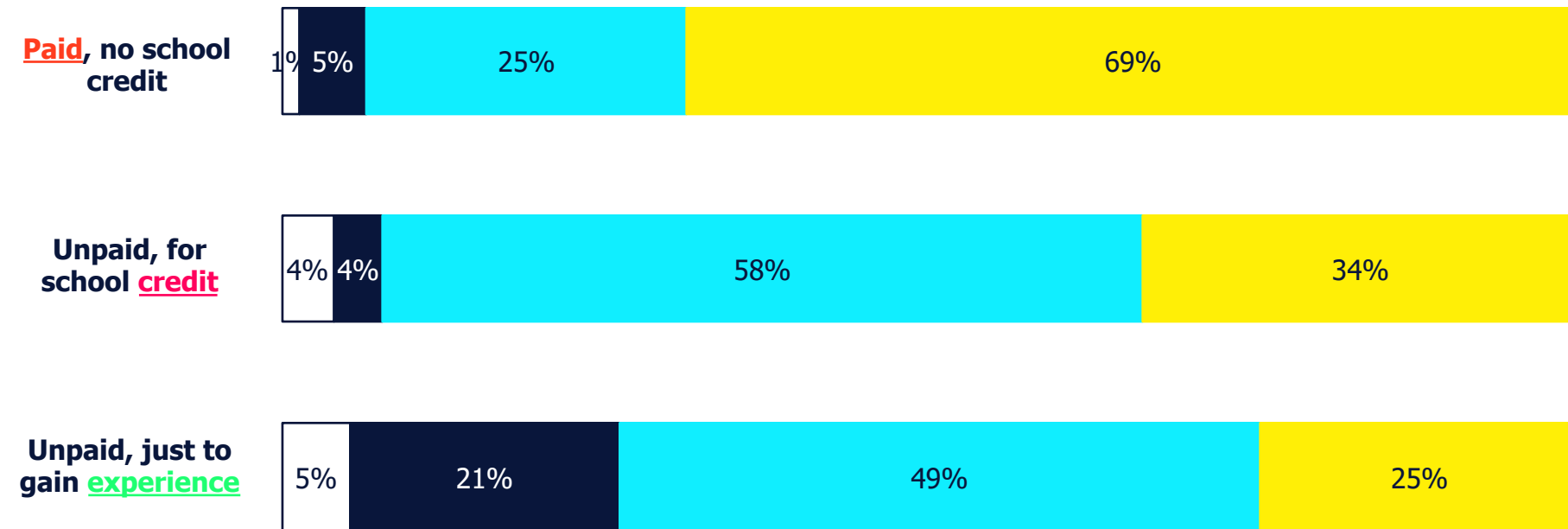


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Student Interest in Internships: COVID-19 Snapshot

Student Interest in Internships

☐ Not at all interested
 ☒ Not very interested
 ☒ Somewhat interested
 ☒ Very interested



n=77 (those who have not graduated high school and have not completed an internship already)

ASA asked 111 9th-12th graders about their internship experience and interest during the COVID-19 pandemic. 91% of students in grades 10+ had not completed an internship.



Most Important in Choosing Internship:

50% experience
 45% pay
 5% school credit

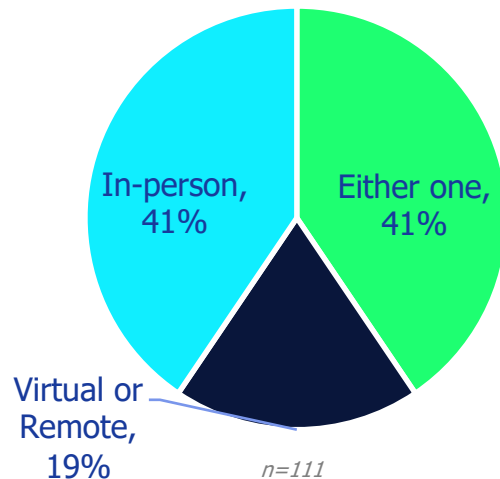
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Student Interest in Internships: COVID-19 Snapshot

While they want to stay **safe** from Covid-19, most students feel they will **not get the full value** of the experience – and worry they will **not be able to form good relationships** – if they do a **virtual** internship.

Most Desirable Internship Location

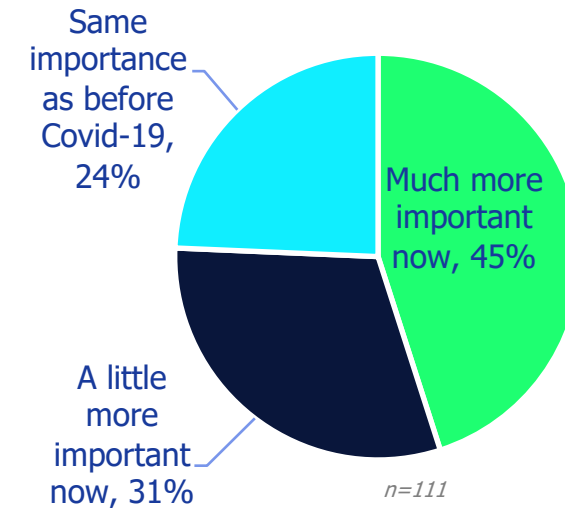


"Advantages are safety and convenience but there is definitely a barrier that prevents you from getting the **full experience**."

- 11th Grade Male, CA



Covid-19 Impact on Importance of Virtual Internship



QD3 If you were to choose an internship today, which of these would be most desirable to you?
QD4 Compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic, how much more important is it to you that an internship allows you to work remotely instead of going into the workplace?
QD5 What do you think are the advantages (or disadvantages) of doing a virtual or remote internship remotely where you did not have to go to a job site?

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Student Awareness of Internships



Only 34% of students have heard of available internship opportunities.

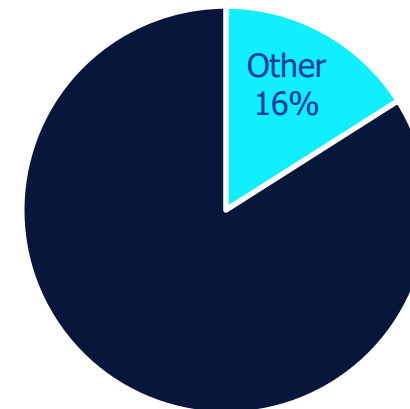
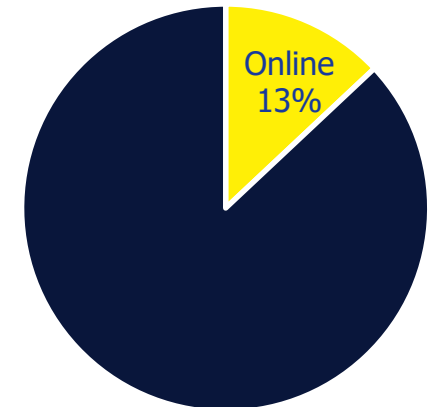
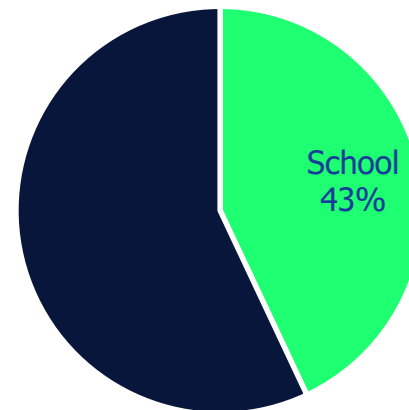


When they have heard of an internship, it is primarily through a **school counselor or teacher** as opposed to **online**.



To learn more about internships 60% of students would turn to the **internet**, 54% would go to a **school counselor**, and 47% would go to a **teacher**.

Where Students Have Heard About Internship Opportunities



Companies and High School Internships

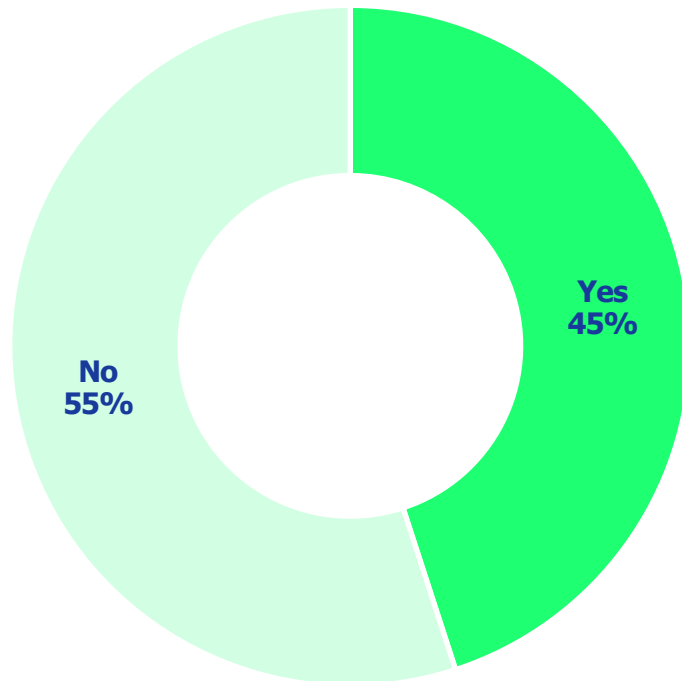
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High School Internships Are Offered By Less Than Half of Companies Nationwide



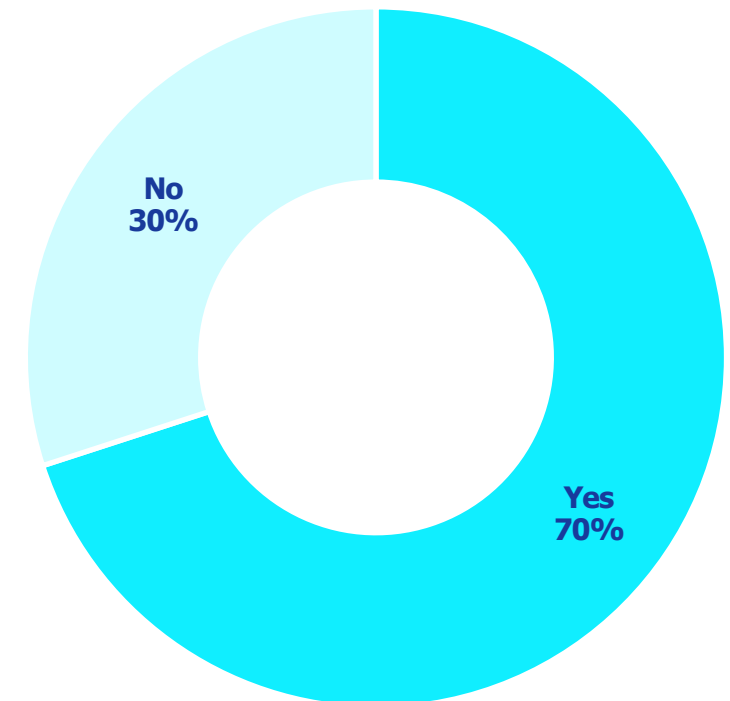
Percent of Companies Offering High School Internships



Undergraduate internships are more prevalent (offered by **70%** of companies nationwide) than **high school internships** (offered by **45%** of companies nationwide).

93% of companies that offer a **high school internship** ALSO offer an **undergraduate internship**.

Percent of Companies Offering Undergraduate Internships



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Snapshot: Companies Offering High School Internships

45% of companies offer high school internships. Companies offer internships for a variety of reasons: to **fill employment needs**, to get **specific help**, as part of **business strategy**, to **build employee capacity**, and for **altruistic reasons**.

Most Popular Reasons Companies Offer Internships (Top 2 Box)	% of companies
Help students develop skills	91%
Find future employees	89%
Help employees develop leadership skills	89%
Brand advocacy/visibility	88%
Give back to community	88%



"It keeps us **in touch with the younger generations** which bring **new points of view** despite the lack of experience."

"Internships to high school students are extremely valuable...to the organization for allowing interns to **assist hands on special projects** and **employees train them, evaluate performance**, and...**expose them to many subject and practice areas**. It is a mutually beneficial work arrangement, and also allows our organization to **give back to local community**."

"Through the high school internships we are able to offer **a life-long path for individuals to grow** into leadership within our organization."

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Recruiting Interns

Companies use the **internet**, **relationships and activities**, **school relationships**, and **proxies/other resources** to recruit interns.

"Yeah, we do not actively post our, our internship positions we, we just recruit from our relationships...we're thoroughly in **intertwined relationship[s] with all our high school[s]** so they understand it's a cycle." (17)

"...So we have those types of **relationships with the schools** where we commonly get students from particular schools because we know that they have certain programs..." (18)



Recruitment Source	% Using
Relationships with school districts	63%
Relationships with universities	51%
Employee referrals	43%
Social networking sites	41%
Career section of website	36%
Job fairs	35%
Recruitment firms	28%
Internship sites	31%
Industry job boards	24%
Regional job boards	23%
National job boards	21%
Industry print materials	17%
Other	<1%

Q25. How does your organization find and hire high school interns? Please select all that apply.
Q26. Which of the following do you consider when recruiting for high school interns?
N=271

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Internship Program Features: Experience

Intern Work Experience Timeframe:



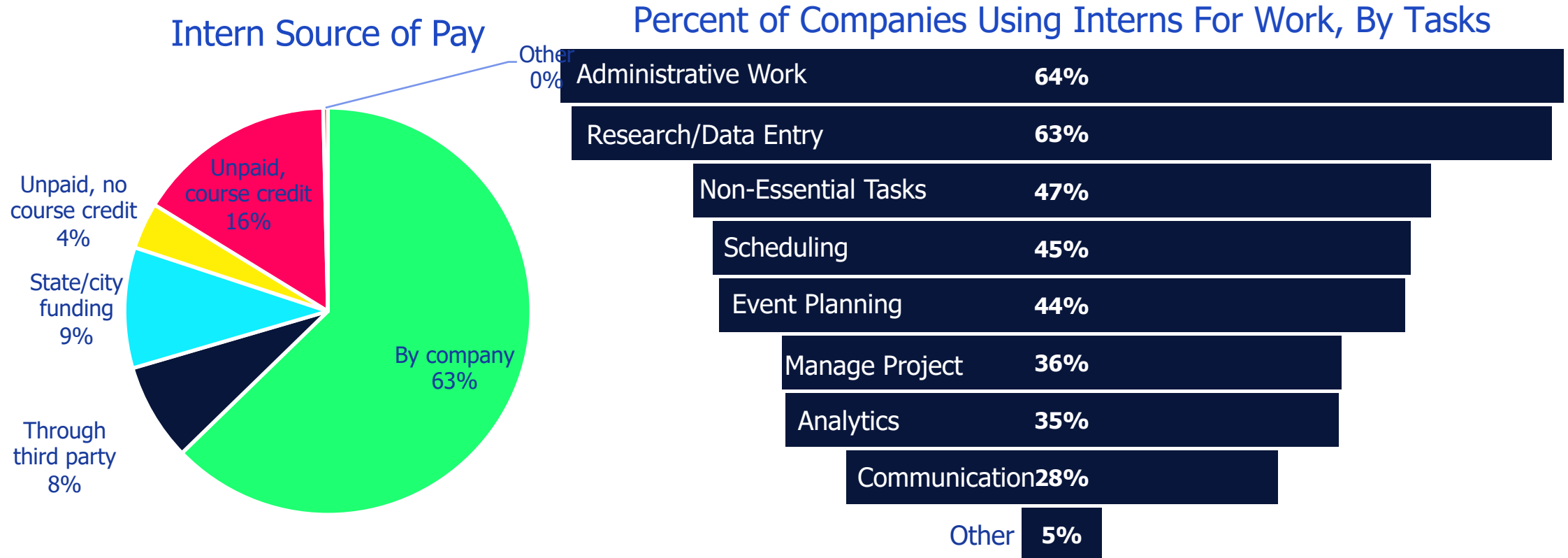
Intern Recruitment Criteria*:





Internship Program Features: Experience

High school interns are predominantly paid by companies, and used primarily for administrative work or research/data entry tasks.





Internship Program Features: Practices



82% of companies say that they have a set of “**best practices**” for their high school internship program. Some popular best practices of successful internships include:

Broad Exposure to Organization

“...they had components that they did **in every department**. They... shadowed employees and then they got assignments...” (19)

Concrete Takeaways

“...we bring them all together to, to do **professional development** with them.... at the end, the students had to **write a paper** about their experience” (22)

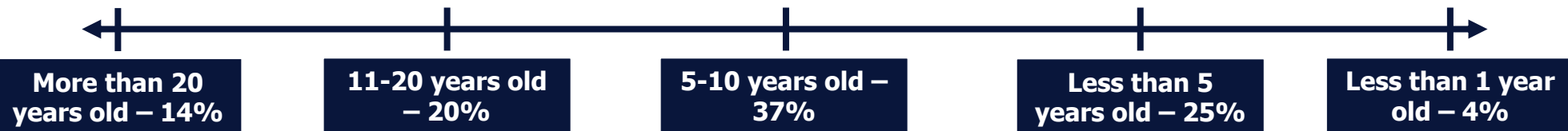
Meaningful Work

“And so we, we **don't** want it to be one of those things where all they do is **make copies and bring coffee** to somebody” (16)

Evaluations and Check-Ins

“...And then at the end of the internship, there's a **one on one evaluation**... And then we have a meeting to go over the evaluation” (19)

Program Age:





Snapshot: Companies Not Offering High School Internships

55% of companies do not offer high school internships. Companies offer internships for a variety of reasons: because there is **no business need**, because there are **no resources to support an intern**, for reasons having to do with the **experience of the job**, because **high schoolers** aren't suited to the job, for **liability** issues, and for **budgetary** reasons.

Most Popular Reasons Companies Offer Internships (Top 2 Box)	% of companies
No work well-suited for high school interns	67%
Work is above the skill level of high school students	64%
No supervisory staff for high school students	61%



"There are **no tasks** that would be **suitable for a high school-aged student** at our organization."

"No **motivational incentive** to dedicate resources in that arena. Would rather **invest in employee training** resulting in advancements."

"Too dangerous and would **increase our insurance rates**."

"Still growing as a company to make enough **profit margin** to offer such things as internships."

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Perceived Logistic Challenges



Transportation

"The single...largest challenge that we have ... is transportation...Not every student has reliable transportation. Not everyone has a bus close to their home first mile last mile issues are significant challenge..." (17)



Timing

"During the school year, it's tough for high school students to have internships...aware, because by the time they can actually get to the facility...that's actually when the clinical day is wrapping up and we don't have a lot of opportunities on the weekends." (18)



Recruiting

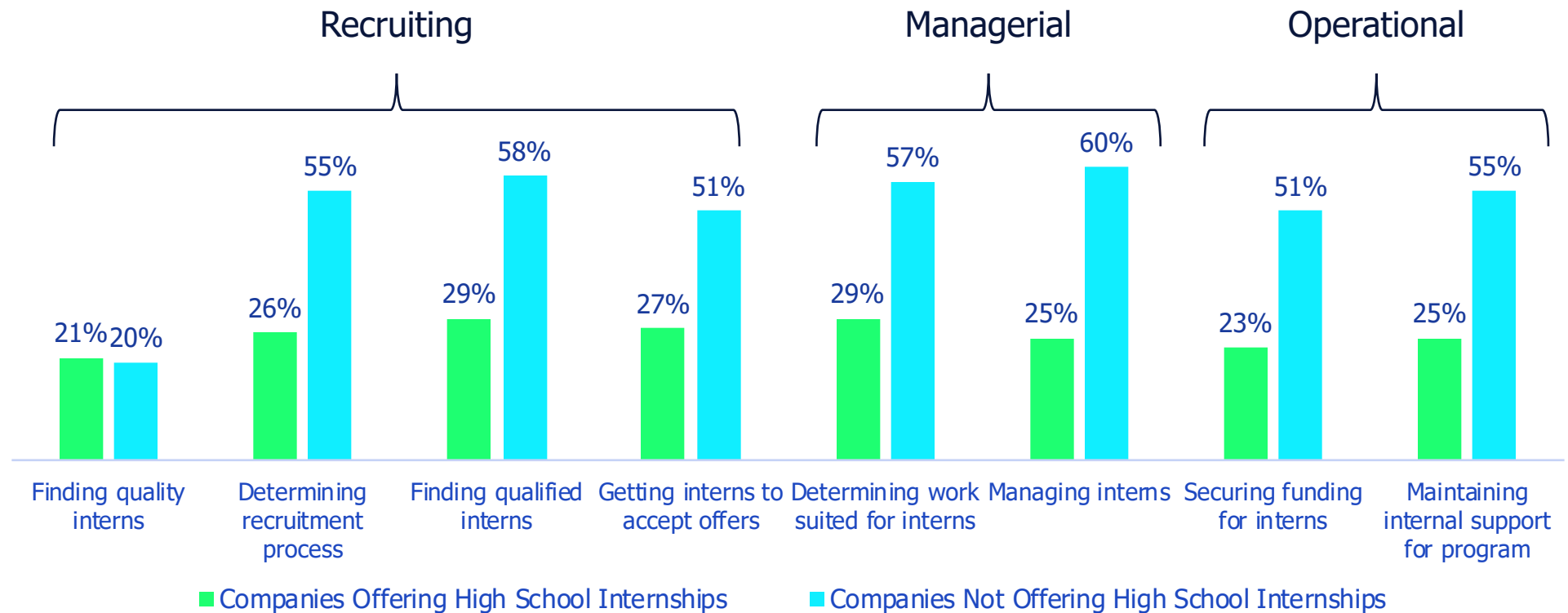
"I always have trouble recruiting. It's, it's just difficult to find, you know, especially the past three years with the economy, the way it is and the unemployment rates so low. It's been very, very difficult to find people." (13)



Challenges: Perception and Reality

With one exception, **companies not offering high school internships** perceive internship-related tasks to be **more difficult** than they are **actually viewed to be** by **companies that offer high school internships**

Top 2 Box Actual vs. Perceived Difficulty, by Internship Offering Status



Q24/Q38: How difficult you believe it is/would be for your company to find the quality of high school interns you desire?

Q23/Q37: How easy or challenging do you think your organization finds/would find each of the following?

N=596

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Implications

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Transform the internship experience:

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Expand access to opportunities:

High potential for efficacy, because students are amenable to virtual internships

Create expanded work opportunities for high schoolers in digital space

Address perceived challenges pertaining to high school interns:

Potentially easier for schools to coordinate with students and businesses (e.g., to arrange and verify credit hours via online interface)

Mitigate perceived logistic challenges like hours, transportation, and liabilities

Virtual Internships: A Reality



Policy Recommendations

- Establish **guidelines for providing academic credit in high school** for internship work experience and **change graduation requirements** where necessary.
- Create **dedicated funding streams** or **financial incentives for employers** to expand paid internship opportunities to younger students.
- Establish **statewide internship coordination** systems.
- Encourage greater **private sector investment**.
- **Remove barriers to virtual experiences.**

Resources

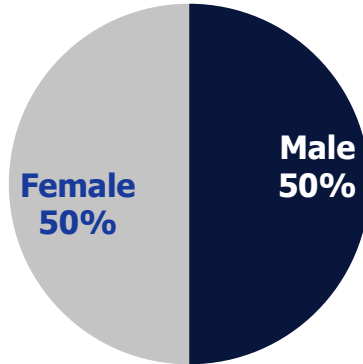
- ASA's Advocacy Work (including Internships): <https://www.asa.org/advocacy/>
- ASA's Research: <https://www.asa.org/research-insights/>
- ASA's News and Views: <https://www.asa.org/news-views/>



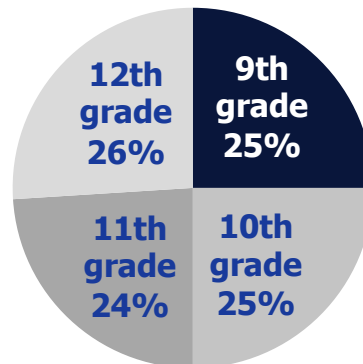


Student Demographics

Gender of High School Students



Grade Level Distribution of High School Students



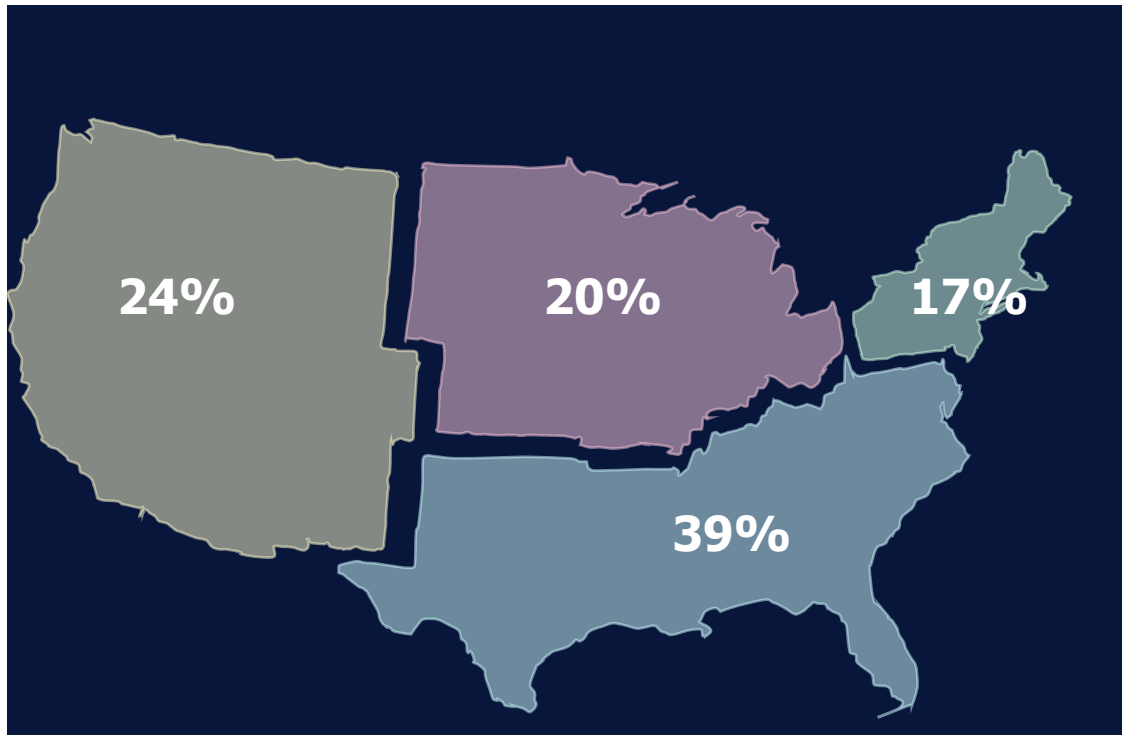
Race	Percent of Sample
White	46%
Hispanic	25%
Black	24%
American Indian/Alaska Native	3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	12%
Other	3%
Did Not State	2%



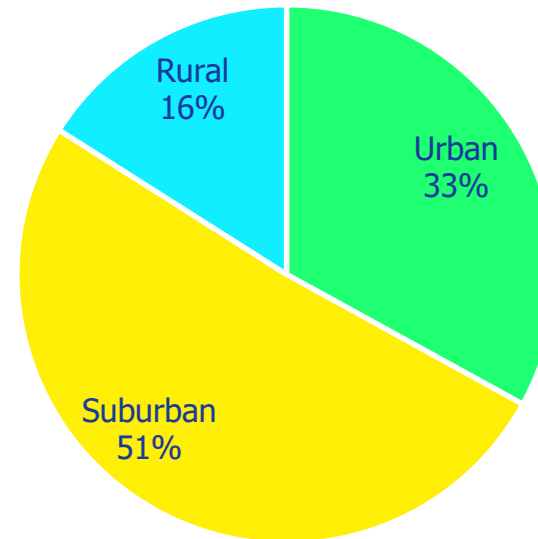
Student Regional Demographics

Students are proportionally dispersed across U.S. Census regions (Northeast, South, Midwest, and West).

The majority of students (51%) are from **suburban** areas; students living in **urban** areas (33%) outnumber those living in **rural** areas (16%) by 2:1.



Percent of Students Living in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Areas



Q1. In what state do you live?
Q2. What kind of area do you live in?
N=840

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Statistically Significant Differences in Student Subpopulations

- GENDER
 - Male students are statistically significantly less interested in having a part-time job than female students ($p=0.01$)
 - Female students are statistically significantly more interested, on average, than male students in pursuing an internship ($p=0.01$)
 - Female students are more likely to consider a local internship than male students ($p=0.00$)
- AREA
 - Students who are suburban are more likely to say they are pursuing part-time employment for money than urban or rural students ($p=0.03$)
- RACE
 - White students are statistically significantly more likely than non-white students to be interested in an internship ($p=0.01$)
 - White students are statistically significantly more likely than non-white students to report that they have no time for a part-time job ($p=0.02$)

Statistically Significant Differences in Student Subpopulations

- GRADE

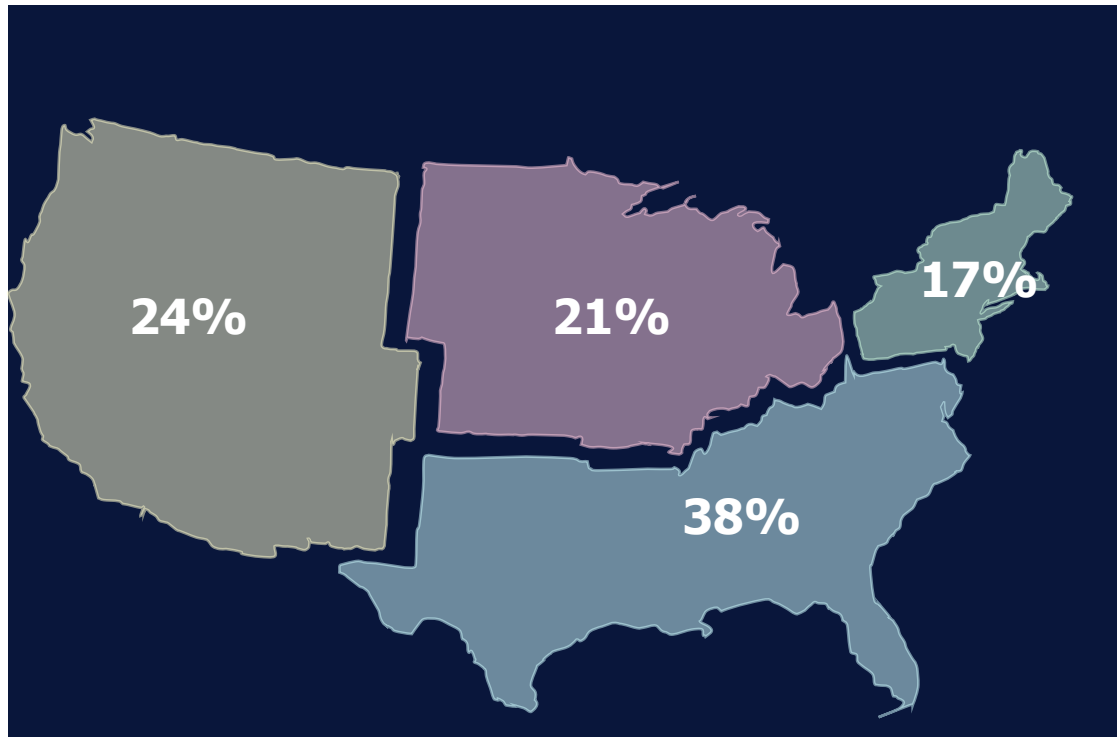
- Older students (grades 11 and 12) are statistically significantly more likely to be employed than younger students (grades 9 and 10) ($p=0.00$)
 - Older students are also more likely to say they are employed to make money, gain experience, and acquire skills, but this is likely the result of their higher incidence of employment
- Older students are statistically significantly less likely to have struggled to find a job than younger students ($p=0.00$)
- Older students are statistically significantly more likely to consider a local internship than younger students ($p=0.02$)



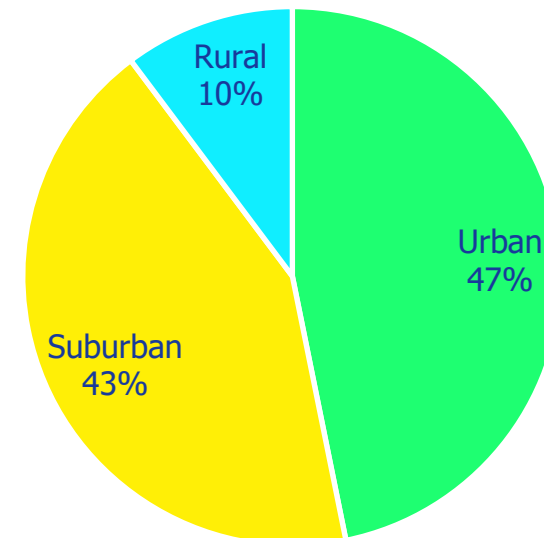
Firmographics – Quantitative Study

Firms are proportionally dispersed across U.S. Census regions (Northeast*, South, Midwest, and West).

Firms in suburban (43%) or urban* (47%) areas outnumber firms in rural areas about 4:1 and 5:1, respectively.



Percent of Students Living in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Areas

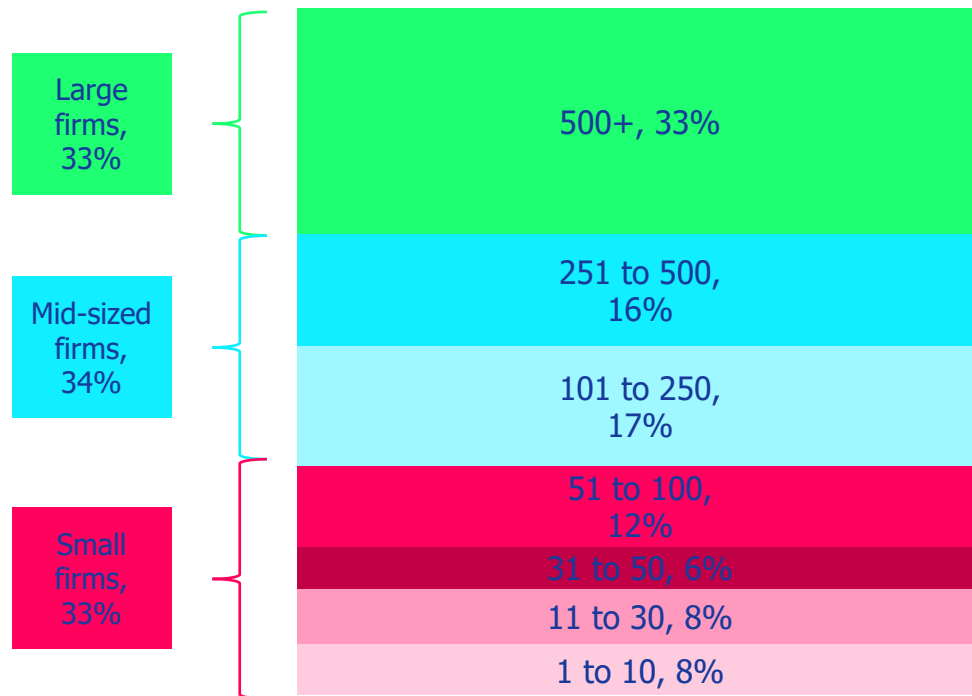


*Firms located in New England and in urban areas are statistically significantly more likely to offer high school internships than firms located elsewhere.



Firmographics – Quantitative Study

Firm Size Distribution (Number of Full Time Employees)

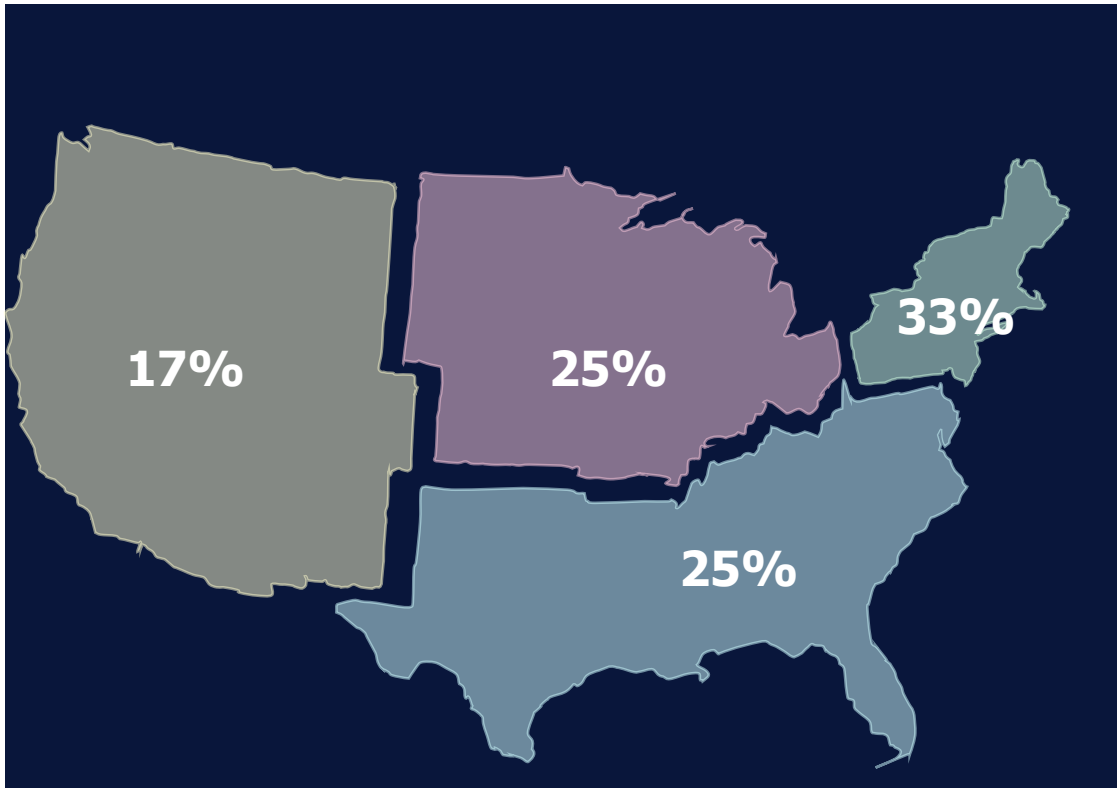


Industry	Percent of Sample
Agriculture	1%
Arts/entertainment	4%
Construction	8%
Education/health care	17%
Finance/real estate	7%
Information	6%
Manufacturing	11%
Other services	4%
Professional/scientific/management	14%
Public administration	4%
Retail trade	9%
Transportation/utilities	2%
Wholesale trade	1%
Other*	13%

*Other industries include information technology, human resources, nonprofits, telecommunications, and social services



Firmographics – Qualitative Study



Representatives of **24 firms** were interviewed. Of those 24 firms,

- 50% **offer high school internships**, the other 50% **do not**
- 33% of firms are located in the **Northeast**, 25% in the **Midwest**, 25% in the **South**, and 17% in the **West**
- 29% of firms have **less than 100** full-time employees, 25% of firms have between **101 and 500** full-time employees, and 46% have **more than 500** full-time employees

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Firmographics – Qualitative Study



A variety of industries are represented by firms in the sample, including biotech, manufacturing, construction, information technology, education, and healthcare.

Firms located in urban and suburban areas are overrepresented in the study; only 2 representatives claimed they worked in a “rural” area.

Q3. Which best describes your company's overall size?

Q8. Which best describes your organization's industry?

N=600 11/24/20