

# The Business Case for Internships and Other Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Emily V. Webb

Vice President of Education and Workforce Development

Virginia Chamber of Commerce

# The Chamber's Blueprint Virginia 2030

Encourage additional work-based learning opportunities that help students explore potential career and connect classroom instruction to experiential learning

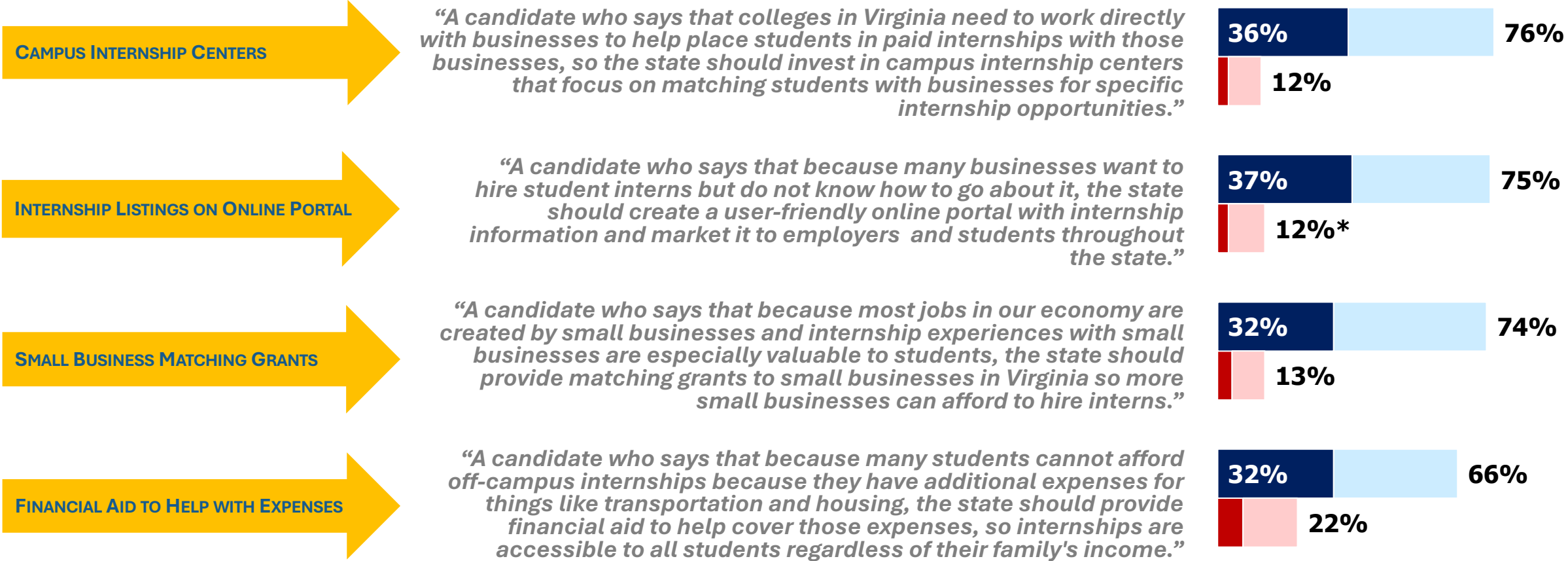
Provide every young Virginian access to an affordable talent pathway degree or credential program that includes a paid, for-credit internship or other work-based learning experience with a Virginia employer

Expand work-based learning opportunities for Virginia students, employers, and educational institutions through the initiatives of the Virginia Talent and Opportunity Partnership (V-TOP)

Expand access to “Earn & Learn” and credentialing programs that require a high school degree but less than a four-year or even two-year degree

Ensure work-based learning opportunities like internships and apprenticeships promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

# Virginians are more likely to support legislative candidates who support strategic investments to make internships available to all students.



\* Denotes Rounding  
 Source: Virginia Business Higher Education Council



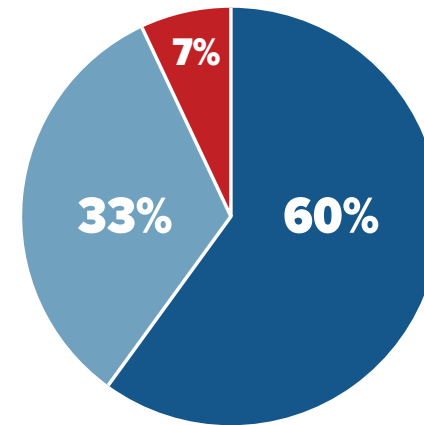
# Why are internships and WBL important?

- The #1 concern of Virginia businesses is access to necessary and qualified talent
- 97% of business leaders support the expansion of work-based learning opportunities
- Employers view internship experiences as the most influential factor in tough hiring decisions
- Internship experiences are a top recruiting strategy for employers and students with the highest return on investment

# The Importance of Paid Internships

- Unpaid internships make it difficult for those who rely on a paycheck to participate in work-based learning opportunities
- Paid internships lead to more job offers and higher paying jobs
- One year after graduation, students who completed a paid internship earn \$3,000 more than those who didn't have one.
- For businesses, paid internships attract more candidates and creates incentives for interns

**Figure 3.3A.** Virginia should increase the paid internship opportunities available to students because it will help students pay for college as well as prepare them for their career.



**Strongly Agree**  
**Somewhat Agree**  
**Disagree**

	<b>Total Agree</b>	<b>Total Disagree</b>
GOP	95%	5%
Dem	95%	5%

Source: Virginia Business Higher Education Council



# The V-TOP Partnership

- The Virginia Chamber Foundation serves as a partner with SCHEV and the Virginia Business Higher Education Council (VBHEC) on supporting and promotion of V-TOP
- The partnership with SCHEV and V-TOP began in 2020, with VBHEC joining in the partnership in 2023
- Our current contract focuses on employer awareness and engagement, best practices research, and website and communications support

# VIRGINIA EMPLOYER READINESS TOOLKIT

A Blueprint to Develop Quality  
Internship Opportunities for  
Virginia's Talent Pipeline



A RESOURCE OF THE



VIRGINIA  
TALENT +  
OPPORTUNITY  
PARTNERSHIP

CREATING PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONS

VISIT

[VirginiaTOP.org](http://VirginiaTOP.org)



[@VirginiaTOPorg](https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaTOPorg)

## V-TOP Employer Engagement

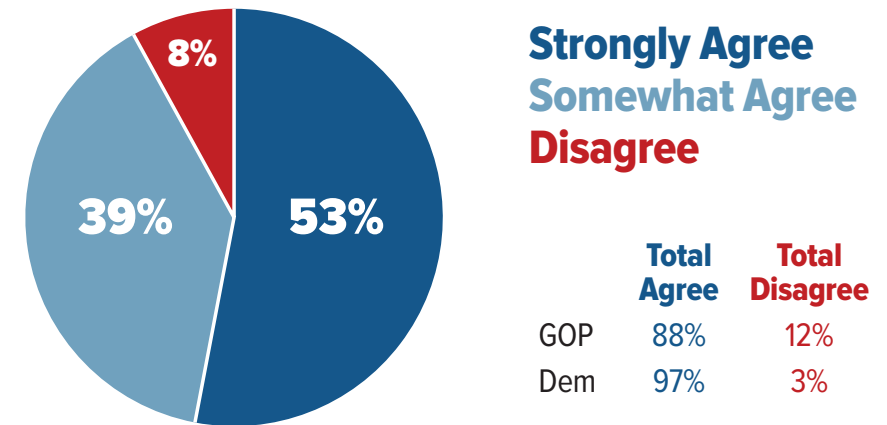
- Employer Readiness Toolkit and Video Series
- Promotion of V-TOP and the importance of internships to Chamber members
- Collaborate with local chambers, including hosting information sessions with small business members
- Build Awareness of Staffing Agency Services & Matching Funds Program
- Celebrate Virginia's Top Employers for Interns through Virginia Intern Day



# Cultivating Further Business Engagement

- Continue to provide matching funds to small businesses and provide flexibility on utilizing the staffing agency for internship placement
- Provide new funding for a coordinated marketing campaign to attract and retain talent and promote internships, apprenticeships, and WBL
- Consider expanding who can draw down the matching funds to allow non-profit organizations to receive these funds
- Develop a statewide internship portal that is integrated into the already underway Department of Workforce Development and Advancement portal
- Provide financial incentives to businesses to hire their interns for full-time employment

**Figure 3.3B.** It is important the state of Virginia invests in the Innovative Internship Program which increases the number of paid internships, co-op programs, and other work-based learning opportunities available to students attending Virginia's colleges and universities.



Source: Virginia Business Higher Education Council

# Additional WBL Recommendations

- Encourage greater career exploration in elementary and middle school
- Change high school graduation requirements to allow for WBL within the school day
- Invest in the Virginia Community College System to expand CTE programs and equipment for high demand industry sectors
- Consider the creation of a parallel initiative to promote apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities
- Provide more “Earn and Learn” training opportunities for adults looking to upskill or reskill, especially people with disabilities and justice-involved individuals

# The Business Case for Internships and Other Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Emily V. Webb

Vice President of Education and Workforce Development

Virginia Chamber of Commerce