

1 **Texas Interns Unite! National Intern Day with a Texas Twist Annual Conference**
2 **Discussion Paper**

3 **Background**

4 In 2016, Governor Greg Abbott established the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative to evaluate
5 local economic activity and workforce challenges to develop innovative approaches in meeting
6 the state’s workforce objectives. In its report to the governor, the Tri-Agency recommended the
7 establishment of the Texas Internship Challenge to significantly increase the number of high
8 school and college internships.

9 Since June 6, 2022, TWC has held daylong events to highlight internship models, including
10 Texas Interns Unite!, InternAbility, Rally in the Valley, and Power in the Pines. These events
11 provide information about internship opportunities to high school juniors and seniors, college
12 and university students, and employers.

13 These statewide initiatives emphasize the importance of offering internship opportunities to
14 students. The Texas labor market needs a strong workforce with employable skills and relevant
15 certifications or degrees that are not available without appropriate training and internships.
16 Offering access to courses, certifications, and work-based learning, these initiatives access
17 untapped talent pools.

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19 The conference platform will promote reinforcing knowledge and skills through work-based
20 learning. Work-based learning provides students with real-life work experiences and enables
21 them to apply acquired skills to develop their employability.

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24 **Proposal**

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26 TWC will work in partnership with other stakeholders on hosting an in-person internship
27 conference for Texas employers, high school students, college students, and University students
28 focused on internship opportunities and work-based learning. The conference will be linked to
29 National Intern Day each July.

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31 The internship conference will include presentations and panels dedicated to available internship
32 connection programs (TX Internship Initiative, TX Internship Challenge, TX Works), internship
33 opportunities and sessions tailored to employers and interns based on relevant, real-world, and
34 best practice application. Students and employers will be highlighted during the presentations or
35 panels. One session may be tailored to employers and the second to interested interns and
36 students.

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38 TWC will coordinate the panels and guide panel discussions focused on attracting potential
39 employers and promoting internships/work-based learning for students.
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1 TWC and its partners will promote the benefits of internships. Interns/Students and employers
2 will be highlighted during the presentations or panels. TWC's work will include:

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- 4 • securing a venue and guest speaker(s),
- 5 • conducting conference outreach,
- 6 • producing attendee packets, and
- 7 • providing other related materials.

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9 **Decision Point**

10 Staff recommends committing \$150,000 in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
11 and/or Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds depending on final
12 determinations.