



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: Friday, April 3, 2026.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. Contact [Gage Harter](#) with any questions.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____



James City County

Virginia Association of Counties (VACo)

Achievement Awards 2026 Submission

General Services Internship Program

Submitted to

Virginia Association of Counties (VACo)

Achievement Awards

gharter@vaco.org

Attn: Gage Harter, VACo Director of Communications

James City County General Services Department

107 Tewing Road

Williamsburg, VA 23188-2639

June 30, 2026

Executive Summary | James City County General Services Internship Program

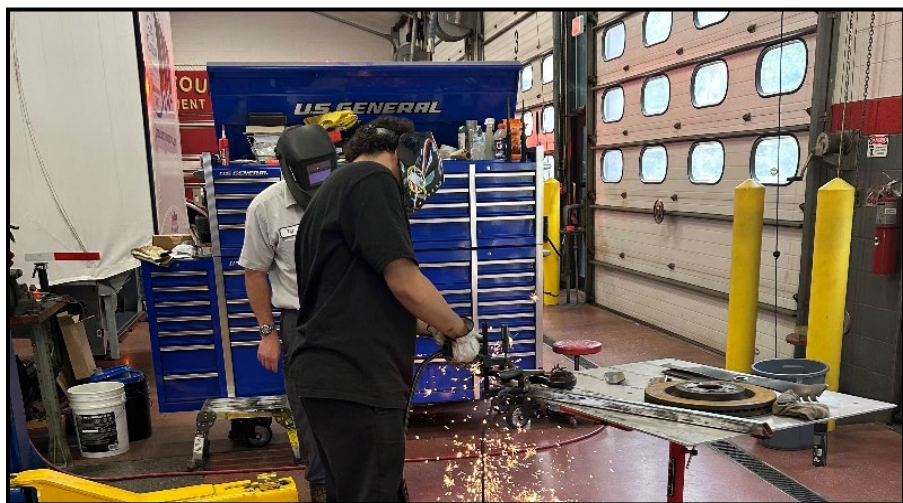
The Internship Program is a strategic response to a nationwide shortage of skilled trades workers and paraprofessionals. Facing longer maintenance response times, rising reliance on contractors, and a shrinking talent pipeline, JCC created a “grow-your-own” workforce model that invests in the community.

Developed in partnership with Williamsburg-James City County Schools, to offer two internship pathways: a Trades Wheel rotation and a paraprofessional track in fields such as engineering, sustainability and accounting. Interns gain hands-on technical training, safety instruction, soft-skills development, and exposure to public service operations.

Interns leave with licensure-applicable work hours, practical experience, and professional references, while the County benefits from improved visibility as an employer of choice, and a sustainable pipeline for hard-to-fill roles.

The program is intentionally low-cost averaging \$4,150 per intern. Compared with the cost of recruitment, turnover, and contracted services, the return on investment is significant. Partnering with WJCC Schools provides real-world learning without requiring the school division to build new facilities. The model is scalable, and replicable with clear structure, strong partnerships, defined safety and training standards, and a mentorship driven approach. The program offers a blueprint for other localities seeking effective solutions to workforce shortages.

Like many communities across the nation, James City County (JCC) is experiencing a growing shortage of skilled trades workers and paraprofessionals in fields such as engineering, sustainability, and accounting. Retirements, competition with the private sector, declining enrollment in vocational programs, and a shrinking pipeline of new graduates have all contributed to significant hiring challenges. General Services has felt these impacts across HVAC, electrical, plumbing, fleet and automotive services, general maintenance, custodial



Everett Rodriguez, WJCC student, Automotive Intern, welding components of the exhaust system.

services, landscaping, solid waste, stormwater management, engineering, and accounting.

The General Services Internship Program was

developed in partnership with the Williamsburg-James City County

Schools (WJCC) Department of College & Career Readiness, which coordinates career and technical education (CTE) opportunities through New Horizons Regional Education Center (NHREC). The program offers two pathways: a “Trades Wheel” rotation and a paraprofessional track. The Trades Wheel exposes students to multiple disciplines, including electrical, HVAC, plumbing, automotive and fleet services, landscaping and grounds maintenance, custodial operations, stormwater management, and solid waste. Students may rotate through all areas or focus on the disciplines that best match their interests. Paraprofessional interns typically

specialize in a single field such as accounting, sustainability or engineering. Interns work 20-24 hours per week for twelve weeks. Trades Wheel interns are supervised by Master Trades professionals, and paraprofessional interns receive guidance from credentialed experts in their fields. All participants take part in operations and staff meetings, required safety training, computer and software skills development, public service interactions, soft-skills training, and a structured onboarding process. Trades interns receive additional hands-on instruction in diagnostics and repair, tool use, troubleshooting, work-order documentation, and the appropriate use of personal protective equipment.

Despite being a new initiative, the program's impact is already evident. General Services hired one intern directly into a full-time skilled trades position following graduation, and all interns contributed meaningfully during their placements. Interest in the program has grown significantly. We had 65 students apply for the spring cohort, from



Leelaje Mullings, WJCC student, HVAC Intern, gaining experience in HVAC systems.

which four were selected through a competitive process. The program has increased the visibility of James City County as an employer of choice in the skilled trades and paraprofessional fields. In addition to the benefits provided to students and the County, this program also offers significant value to our trade's technicians. Technicians collaborate with interns, enhance their leadership skills, facilitate project prioritization, and model industry best practices. Even when full-time positions are not immediately available, interns leave with documented work hours that support licensure requirements and a formal letter of recommendation from their supervisor.

The benefits extend beyond workforce development. JCC’s partnership with WJCC Schools has created hands-on learning opportunities without requiring the school division to build dedicated lab spaces, saving both money and resources. The program has become a sustainable talent pipeline for hard-to-fill positions and has generated strong community outreach as interns promote their experiences among peers.

Program Costs

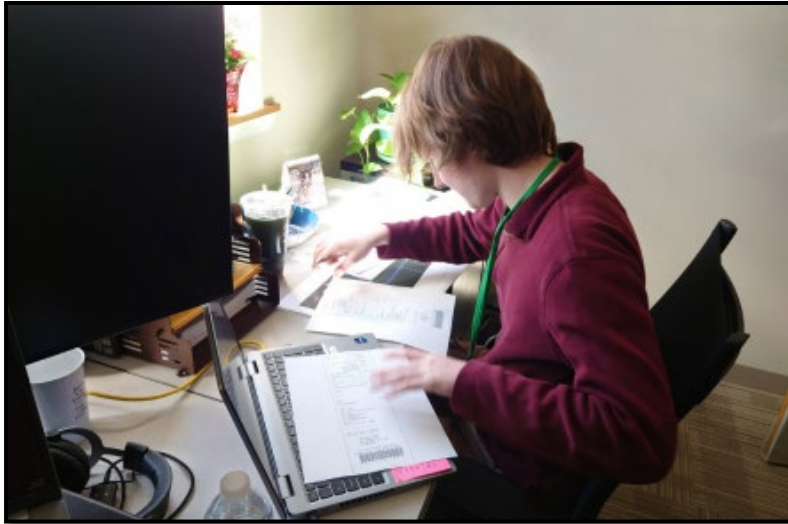
The General Services Internship Program is intentionally structured to be low-cost and high impact. Intern wages are \$16.89 per hour, with most interns averaging 20 hours per week for 12 weeks, resulting in \$4,054 in wages per student. Uniforms cost \$60 per intern and personal



Brock Bealer, WJCC student, Automotive Intern, replacing an engine oil cooler and driveshaft.

protective equipment approximately \$40; these items are retained by the County and reused as appropriate. Students are responsible for purchasing steel-toe boots, typically costing between \$40 and \$100. The County’s total estimated cost per intern is approximately \$4,154. JCC invested \$12,462 in FY2025 and anticipates spending \$16,616 in FY2026. Considering that one intern has already been hired into a full-time position, the return on investment is significant when compared with recruitment costs, turnover, and contracted labor.

Partnership With WJCC Schools



Eomer Knecht, WJCC student, Budget Intern, assisting with data analysis, learning about operating and capital budgeting, invoice and credit card processing.

The internship program provides major community benefits by creating a pipeline of future skilled trades professionals and enhancing educational pathways for WJCC students. Interns receive on-the-job training from certified professionals, accumulate hours

that may count toward state licensure, explore career opportunities in public service, and earn pay while gaining experience. The program supports WJCC's commitment to strengthening career and technical education pathways by offering hands-on learning aligned with NHREC coursework. This partnership effectively creates a lab environment inside County operations, helping students validate their career interests before graduation and offering meaningful opportunities for those not pursuing a traditional four-year college degree.



Mykyle Scott, WJCC student, Electrical Intern, assisting with electrical work.

A Replicable Framework for Other Communities

James City County's experience offers a practical and scalable framework for other localities seeking to address skilled workforce shortages. The first step involves identifying critical staffing needs across trades and paraprofessional roles and collaborating with department supervisors to determine appropriate internship duties and safety expectations. Establishing strong relationships with high school career coaches, CTE coordinators, and regional vocational programs is essential to ensuring alignment with existing coursework and maximizing student interest.



William Swan, WJCC student, HVAC Intern, assisting HVAC in performing preventative maintenance.

A clear internship manual helps articulate expectations, dress code requirements, safety standards, daily procedures, and program structure. Students receive this information both in writing from the manual, but also through a robust onboarding session, where they go over all these details and more on their first day. The Trades Wheel model allows departments to share the responsibility of hosting interns while giving students exposure to multiple disciplines. A mentorship-focused approach increases student confidence

and long-term career interest, while starting with a small cohort allows the program to grow sustainably over time. Tracking measures such as participation rates, conversion to hires, and student satisfaction creates compelling evidence for continued investment and potential grant support.

Recruiting students is strengthened by maintaining a consistent presence at high school career fairs, informational sessions, and other school-sponsored events. These outreach efforts allow County staff to share firsthand experiences, build relationships with students, and ensure the internship remains visible and accessible to a diverse pool of applicants.



Representatives from James City County Human Resources attending a WJCC career fair.

Next steps

Since the program has been so successful and we have seen tremendous uptick in applications, General Services plans to partner with the JCC Economic Development Department to bring this framework to the business sector to further partnerships between JCC, WJCC, businesses and the community to offer these students meaningful internships, gain real world experience and obtain careers right here at home.

Conclusion

James City County's General Services Internship Program demonstrates how local governments can address critical skilled trades shortages by investing in the community and partnering strategically with public schools. The initiative strengthens the workforce pipeline, expands educational opportunities, and reinforces the County's commitment to professional development and public service. Early successes including the hiring of the program's first intern illustrate its value and potential. With its simple, affordable, and scalable framework, the program serves as a model for other localities and businesses seeking innovative and sustainable workforce solutions.



Working towards a Career in the Trades? Try a paid Internship!

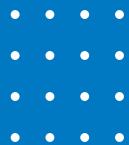
James City County is committed to the development of trade careers. By partnering with us in our internship program, you will have hands-on exposure with highly skilled experts. Participating in one of our Internship areas, may also help you gain work hours necessary for certification in your chosen trade field.



Partnering with you, for your success



The General Services Department of James City County is responsible for building, maintaining and operating County facilities, grounds and programs in a manner that is efficient, environmentally sound and responsive to the needs of our internal and community-based customers. We value Teamwork and high-quality workmanship.



jamescitycountyva.gov/738/General-Services

✉ general.services@jamescitycountyva.gov

☎ (757) 259-4080



Trades Internship Program

General Services Department



Experience you can use

- Achieve lifelong job skills
- Learn & practice safety protocols
- Participate in operational basics
- Perform under the supportive guidance of a skilled professional in the trade Industry
- Earn \$ while learning
- Gain exposure to specific trade position functions
- Classroom knowledge to real job experience

Is this for you?

Find out more!

Trade Areas of Focus

Automotive Maintenance
Custodial Services
Facilities Maintenance:
Building
Electrical
HVAC
Plumbing

Solid Waste Services

For complete trade internship information and job descriptions check us out online.

Limited Positions & Next Steps!

Available Internship opportunities
will be posted **Mid May**
Apply Online!



Our Vision for You

- **Work along side professionals** and Master tradesman committed to providing safe hands-on instruction
- **Paid** Internship
- **Monday - Friday** Schedules
- **Up to 40 Hours** per week
- **Flexible Program Schedule** to allow you to work while continuing your classroom education
- Earn the **hands-on Hours** necessary for certification

General Services

Administration •107
Facilities Maintenance •113
Fleet and Equipment •103
Grounds Maintenance •113



107 Tewning Road



Request for Intern

(to be completed by **Division Supervisor**)

A limited number of intern positions are available, based on funding availability. For a General Services division to be considered to host an intern, this completed form must be submitted 90 days prior to internship semester start date. Requests are reviewed in the order received.

Requesting Division: Select

Date of Request: 3/17/2026

Internship Semester: Choose Semester

Supervisor: Click or tap here to enter text.

email: Click or tap here to enter text.

A. Internship Details:

- 1. Internship Job Title/Job Description:** Select
- 2. Supervisor/ Mentor assigned to oversee the Intern:** Click or tap here to enter text.
- 3. Purpose & Rationale: Why is an intern needed?** Click or tap here to enter text.
- 4. Preference for available workdays/hours:** for example: Any weekday 7:30 am to 3:30 Click or tap here to enter text.
- 5. What are the learning objectives?** Click or tap here to enter text.
- 6. Describe specific tasks, special projects & project goals.** Click or tap here to enter text.
- 7. Compensation:** Select
- 8. Desired education level?** Preferred Education Level

Requesting Division Supervisor Signature

Date

B. Approvals:

Is there available funding for this intern position? Yes/No

HR Specialist Approval Signature

Date

GS Department Director Approval Signature

Date