



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: Tuesday, April 7, 2026.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. Contact [Gage Harter](#) with any questions.

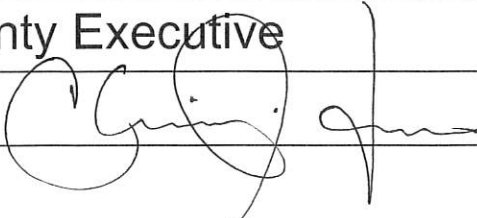
PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Prince William County
Program Title: PWC Internship Program
Program Category: Communications and Community Outreach

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Christopher Shorter
Title: County Executive
Signature: 

Prince William County Internship Program Marketing Campaign

Executive Summary

To build the future workforce of public service, Prince William County launched a comprehensive, multi-platform marketing campaign to promote the countywide internship program. Beginning in 2024, the Office of Communications and Engagement partnered with the Office of Human Resources to design and implement a full-scale campaign aimed at reaching college students, increasing awareness and inspiring the next generation of public servants.

Rather than relying on traditional recruitment methods, the team implemented a targeted, student-centered strategy designed to meet students where they are, including the creation of a dedicated Instagram account for the internship program. As part of an innovative content approach, the Office of Communications and Engagement tasked their intern with developing materials that could be used both during the internship and year-round. This not only provided the intern with valuable real-world experience in campaign development, but also equipped the Office with content for the platform. Together, these efforts transformed how the county promotes internship opportunities and positioned public service as a meaningful and impactful career path.

The results show that the marketing campaign successfully cut through the noise, reached the intended audience and inspired students to apply. More importantly, the campaign helped communicate the value of public service and provided students with meaningful opportunities to gain real-world experience while contributing to work that directly impacts Prince William County residents.

The Challenge

The Prince William County Internship Program launched in 2024 as a new initiative designed to provide college students with hands-on experience in local government. However, reaching the intended audience presented a significant challenge. College students are exposed to a constant stream of content and opportunities, making it difficult for government internships to stand out. Plus, most college students are not engaging directly with local government.

Traditional recruitment methods such as job boards, websites and email announcements were not enough to effectively reach younger audiences. Additionally, many students were unaware that Prince William County offered paid internships with meaningful, hands-on work experience across multiple departments.

The Office of Communications and Engagement recognized that a strategic, targeted marketing campaign was necessary to cut through the noise and capture student attention. The campaign needed to clearly communicate the benefits of the program, highlight the value of public service and demonstrate how students could make a meaningful impact through their work.

The Office also recognized that it was a great opportunity to get its intern involved, providing an opportunity for the intern to get real-world experience while providing content the County could use in marketing the program.

Implementation

The Office of Communications and Engagement developed a comprehensive, multi-channel marketing campaign in partnership with the Human Resources Office.

The campaign included:

- Dedicated internship webpage
- Press releases and media outreach
- Social media campaign
- Dedicated internship Instagram account
- Student testimonial videos
- Parent testimonials
- Promotional commercials
- Branding and design toolkit
- Flyers and posters
- Social media graphics
- Sample outreach messaging
- College and university media toolkit
- Strategic partnerships with educational institutions

Each component worked together to create a cohesive and consistent campaign, branded specifically with a modern design while maintaining the County's overall brand standards.

Strategic Messaging

The campaign focused on three key messages:

- Paid internship opportunities
- Meaningful, hands-on work experience
- Opportunity to make a difference in the community

Student testimonials and visuals helped demonstrate real-world impact and allowed prospective applicants to see themselves in the program.

Partnerships and Outreach

The campaign expanded reach through partnerships with local colleges and universities. A media toolkit was distributed to partners, allowing them to promote the internship program through:

- Career centers
- Email newsletters
- Social media
- Student organizations
- Academic departments

This approach significantly expanded outreach and strengthened engagement with the target audience.

Results

The marketing campaign delivered measurable and sustained growth:

Application Website Traffic

- 2024: 12,029 hits
- 2025: 17,717 hits (47.3% increase)
- 2026: 19,569 hits (10.5% increase)

Overall increase from 2024 to 2026: **62.7%**

Applications Submitted

- 2024: 231 applications
- 2025: 318 applications (37.7% increase)
- 2026: 495 applications (55.7% increase)

Overall increase from 2024 to 2026: **114.3%**

In 2026, 495 applications were narrowed to 256 qualified candidates, demonstrating both increased interest and improved applicant quality.

These results demonstrate that the campaign successfully increased awareness, expanded reach and generated strong engagement with the target audience.

Why This Matters

The Prince William County Internship Program is more than a recruitment effort. It is an investment in the future of public service. By reaching students early in their careers, the program introduces them to meaningful work that directly impacts residents and communities. Interns gain

hands-on experience, develop professional skills and see firsthand how local government improves quality of life. At the same time, Prince William County builds a strong talent pipeline, strengthens workforce development and cultivates the next generation of public servants.

Model for Other Localities

This campaign provides a replicable model for other local governments by demonstrating:

- Potential projects for interns
- Targeted audience engagement
- Multi-platform communications
- Authentic storytelling
- Strategic partnerships
- Measurable results

Other localities can replicate this approach to strengthen their workforce pipeline and increase engagement with students.

Conclusion

Through strategic collaboration, innovative messaging and a comprehensive marketing approach, the Office of Communications and Engagement transformed how Prince William County attracts student talent. The campaign cut through the noise, reached students where they are and communicated the value of public service in a compelling way.

The result was more than increased applications. It was the creation of a sustainable recruitment model that continues to grow year-over-year and helps build the future workforce of Prince William County. By connecting students with meaningful opportunities to serve, the County is inspiring the next generation of leaders committed to making a difference in their community.

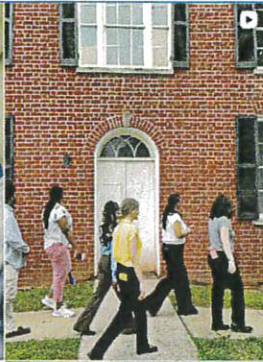
Examples

Instagram Handle: @pwcgovinterns





With Prince William County, you're actually doing work that you can see is making a difference."
 - Previous 2025 intern



Real Intern Tasks / Projects

Libraries

- ✓ Created a personalized display
- ✓ Coordinated community events
- ✓ Updated the Management and Government Information Center Database



Real Intern Tasks / Projects

Office of Community Safety

- ✓ Created educational material about issues such as domestic violence and assault
- ✓ Assisted with Community Safety Symposium planning
- ✓ Co-moderated a panel in the symposium



There's really no other internship quite like it.



APPLICATIONS

Real Intern Tasks / Projects

Office of Elections

- ✓ Launched community outreach



WEEK

Real Intern Tasks / Projects

Communications & Engageme

- ✓ Managed the Intern Instagram