



# WorkLearnOHIO



OHIO CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE

**The Problem:** “Ohio is consistently losing 10%-40% of its College Graduates to other States.”<sup>1</sup> Among 4-year institutions, Ohio is a net exporter of college graduates at a rate of 12%.<sup>2</sup>

**The Mission:** Facilitate retaining more of our college students post-graduation, to ensure they build their families and futures in Ohio, and improve the quality of Ohio’s college graduates by affording increase work-based learning opportunities.

**The Answer:** Create a public-private partnership to connect Ohio college students with Ohio-based employers to facilitate internships, externships, and co-ops.

**Making an Impact:** Indiana has a similar effort, with an annual line item in their state budget, but they only connect 1,000 students annually. Because Ohio has so many more college students, the scale needs to be bigger. We believe that 10,000 internships or more is the correct scale.

**How it Works:** Through a state grant awarded in a competitive, open bidding process, a 501(c)(3) public-private partnership will serve as a platform to connect students from colleges and universities across Ohio with employers in their area who can provide local, paid work-based learning opportunities. Studies have indicated a higher retention rate for those students who connect with employers in their field before graduation.

The 501(c)(3) will have a board of directors comprised of private employers, economic development leaders, and workforce development professionals, supported by connections to higher education institutions and government officials.

Students will be paid a minimum of \$15/hour for the duration of their work-based learning experience. Employers will pay a small administrative fee to cover operational costs of the program.

**The Request:** A one-time state investment of \$18 million, competitively bid as a grant, to establish the program and cover initial expenses. As success creates a virtuous cycle over time and demonstrates a positive impact not only on the career success of students but college graduate workforce retention, funds to operate the 501(c)(3) and cover expenses will be generated by the administrative fee and sought from philanthropic and private sector partners across Ohio and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> “Should I stay or go? College Students talk about making Ohio home or leaving,” Akron Beacon Journal, Feb 13, 2022

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/09/09/films-assigned-college/>