

## **10 Reasons Why Making the Firefighter's ABCs Diversity Honor Roll or being an Intern is Important.**

Our economy is changing daily, and with it, the talents, skills, and experience needed to be a part of that growth cycle are too. The job market is a competitive one, and often that is a tough learning curve for recent graduates. This is a big reason behind the growth of applied learning and internship opportunities becoming a key part of the college experience for all students.

According to dictionary.com, an internship is defined as “any official or formal program to provide practical experience for beginners in an occupation or profession.” The most important element of internships is that they integrate classroom knowledge and theory with practical application and skills developed in professional or community settings. They also bring a wealth of benefits to students, both while completing a degree and when seeking a career path post-graduation.

### **Why should you intern?**

1. **Application of education and career exploration.** Internships are a great way to apply the knowledge from the classroom to real-world experience. Learning is one thing, but taking those skills into the workforce and applying them is a great way to explore different career paths and specializations that suit individual interests.
2. **Gain experience and increase marketability.** Having an internship gives you experience in the career field you want to pursue. Not only does this give individuals an edge over other candidates when applying for jobs, it also prepares them for what to expect in their field and increases confidence in their work.
3. **Networking.** Having an internship benefits you in the working environment, and it also builds your professional network. There is a 1 in 16 chance of securing a job by connecting with people, so networking is critical. Internships provide a great environment to meet professionals in the career field you want to pursue, as well as other interns who have similar interests.
4. **National Data.** According to a National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) survey, more than 56 percent of graduating seniors reported taking part in at least one internship. Of those respondents, 56 percent were paid, while 44 percent were unpaid. Seventy-two percent of those unpaid internships were credit-bearing.
5. **Professionalism.** Internships can provide students with the soft skills needed in the workplace and in leadership positions. In a LinkedIn Skills Report, 57% of people rated soft skills as being more important than technical skills. Skills, such as communication, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork can all be learned through an internship and utilized beyond that experience.

6. **Learn how a professional workplace operates.** Depending on your major, you may read about how organizations thrive and function in textbooks, hear from guest speakers who talk about organizational structures, or dive into case studies about workplace culture, but nothing compares to living the actual experience. Internships help students learn all about workplace culture, employee relations, and leadership structure, which should help them onboard in their first professional job with more ease than if they haven't had professional experience.
7. **Build your resume.** Most organizations and jobs that you apply to following graduation want employees to have some sort of professional experience, even for entry-level jobs. In the event that you are a finalist for a position and haven't had an internship experience but the other finalist has, you may lose out on a job opportunity, so make sure you at least have one internship on your resume before leaving college to give you a leg up on the competition.
8. **Gain professional feedback.** Not only will you be helping out the organization you intern with, but they'll help you out too. While professors and teachers will prepare you for the theoretical side of your field and hands-on projects, internships provide opportunities for receiving feedback from someone who works in your desired field on a daily basis.
9. **Learn from others.** It might seem common sense – you're interning to learn skills, after all – but don't forget to purposefully observe others in their job role to learn the ins and outs of different positions. Consider asking your supervisor if you can shadow them for a day, along with other people in your department. Ask to sit in on departmentwide meetings as well. Act like a sponge and soak up all the information you can during your internship – it will benefit you in the long run.
10. **Figure out what you like and don't like.** While everyone probably wants to walk away from an internship feeling excited and passionate about the experience, there's a silver-lining to be found if you didn't enjoy the job: you'll know what you don't like. According to an article from monster.com, "figuring out what type of job you *don't want* while you're interning can help prevent you from accepting an ill-fitting job when you graduate."

Simply put do something to make yourself a better candidate for the Fire Service or EMS Field.

Why not build your networking pool while at the same time exposing others to this great career.

Yes, if you mentor twenty diverse youth, ten being female and ten being male from anywhere in the United States or Canada you can make the ["Firefighter's ABCs Diversity Honor Roll"](#).

[Why not start now, and once you make the Honor Roll place it on your resume.](#)

[www.FirefightersABCs.com](http://www.FirefightersABCs.com)