



## 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln Questions & Answers (Updated 1/27/2021)

The following are answers to many frequently-asked questions about 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln. If you have additional questions, or need clarification on any of these areas, please contact:

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### **Q1 What is 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln?**

**A1** 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln was created in 2013 as an initiative to give students exposure to the information technology business world while still in high school. The name “1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln” was coined to promote the concept of preparing youth for their first *professional* job; the program seeks out “Champion Employers” who “champion the way” for our community’s youth to access such jobs at an early age. Unlike other typical summer jobs for teens, 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln gives students an opportunity to explore a career in the IT field for which they may not otherwise be able to access as a high school student. Secondly, 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln provides employers an opportunity to seek out qualified candidates for future employment needs.

Since the pilot inauguration, 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln has provided job coaching to over 160 high school students; 33 different employers have participated in our program, resulting in the employment of over 70 high school students in professional information technology internship settings that have yielded some amazing accomplishments. Here are just a few examples:

- Revolutionized how one Champion Employer delivers a typical on-ground medical assisting class to an on-line format through video delivery for all 15 campuses nationwide. (Kaplan University)
- Summer internship turned into ongoing, part-time position. Intern created various websites; managed several databases and various windows servers; independently responds to help desk requests; sets up new equipment for domain use; and provides back-up coverage for IT manager when out of the office. (Region V Systems)

- Developed external customer-facing website (utilizing Adobe and Java Spring framework) that provides financial service information, giving the business the ability to seamlessly update the website without having to engage IT development resources. (Cabela's)

1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln works closely with both participating students and Champion Employers before and during the internship experience to ensure students are well prepared to enter the job site and to assist the Champion Employers with any concerns or challenges encountered during the students' summer employment. Event activities developed and coordinated by 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln include: Champion Employer orientation, workforce readiness training (mock interviews, one-on-one application/resume coaching with students), job fair for students to meet prospective Champion Employers, and a celebration event to commemorate the summer internships.

In 2016, 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln began its collaboration with The Career Academy to expand its efforts to reach employers and students alike. Participating students in 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln must be referred through The Career Academy's information technology programs and/or through one of Lincoln's participating high schools' information technology program and are expected to:

- Participate in a workforce readiness training session that covers employer expectations for interns, such as attire, attendance, attitude, and other expectations when working in a professional business setting.
- Participate in a Mock Interview by LHRMA human resource professionals as well as receive resume feedback.
- Participate in our job fair with Champion Employers (employers who sponsor a paid internship) and adhere to any subsequent application requirements such as a formal interview with the interested employer.

**Q2 Who coordinates 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln?**

A2 The program coordinator for 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln is the Workforce Readiness Committee (WRC), a subcommittee of the Lincoln Human Resources Management Association (LHRMA). The WRC focuses on initiatives that make an impact in the Lincoln community by being a resource to HR professionals and employers as well as helping people of all ages prepare for today's challenging workforce needs. 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln is the WRC's current initiative, providing program coordination from start to finish: community stakeholder involvement, student preparedness (mock interviews, application/resume assistance), hosting a Job Fair, assisting with intern/employer HR issues, and conducting post-intern/employer evaluations.

**Q3 Is there a cost for students to participate in 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln?**

A3 There is no cost to participate, but students are required to attend the job preparedness events listed on Page 7 of this document.

**Q4 Does 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln focus on any specific career fields?**

A4 Yes. 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln currently focuses on information technology-related career fields (e.g., computer programming and networking). This is due, in part, to the high demand for these skills among Lincoln-area employers. Over the years, we have been asked to consider sponsoring students in additional career fields such as health care. We continue to explore these options as our program develops.

**Q5 Are students not enrolled in The Career Academy eligible to participate?**

A5 Yes, as long as the student is referred through a participating high school's or homeschool information technology program; the student must have exposure to IT-related curriculum or demonstrated proficiency in one or more IT fields. Students outside The Career Academy program should have their instructor contact the 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln program chairperson, Micah Lindblad, at [Micah.lindblad@nelnet.net](mailto:Micah.lindblad@nelnet.net) for more information. Because we are a volunteer-run program, our resource limitations make it necessary to have workforce readiness events and our job fair at a single location (these events are held at The Career Academy); students outside The Career Academy setting will need to arrange transportation to these events.

**Q6 Is there a minimum or maximum age for students to participate?**

A6 The WRC recommends that students be at least 16 years of age [or a sophomore in high school] to participate, due primarily to child labor laws that employers must follow. This also increases the likelihood that students may have a driver's license and be able to transport themselves to their summer internship workplace. There is no maximum age, but the student must be enrolled in high school or home-schooled at a high school level.

**Q7 What is expected of participating students?**

A7

- Participate in a 1-hour workforce readiness training session, called ACE IT. The training session will cover employer expectations for interns, such as attire, attendance, attitude, and other areas **(scheduled for February 25, 2021)**.
- Prepare a resume and cover letter.
- Participate in Mock Employment Interview and receive resume feedback from LHRMA professionals **(scheduled for March 4, 2021)**.
- Participate in a job fair **(scheduled for March 25, 2021)**.
- Be prepared to interview with employer(s) at the prospective worksite following the job fair to discuss specific internship opportunities.
- Follow employer directions concerning workplace policies and procedures once they are hired.
- Participate in short evaluation surveys conducted by LHRMA's Workforce Readiness Committee.

**Students who do not complete these required workforce preparedness**

**conditions will not be eligible for a paid internship.**

**Q8 What does a typical internship assignment look like for students who are selected for hire?**

A8 Duties and levels of responsibility will be varied depending on the employer's needs and the skill set of the intern. Here are some examples:

- Assist IT department staff in real-life company projects.
- Direct interaction with company officials and co-workers, giving the student unique exposure to a real-world work setting.
- Work on hardware and software components of PCs, servers, imaging machines, communication devices, and various peripheral devices.
- Troubleshoot common problems with computers and peripheral devices.
- Help Desk and customer service related to IT needs.
- Develop web applications.
- Apply the use of best-practice preventative and reactive maintenance tasks and methods relating to the various technological challenges that occur within an office environment.
- Assist with removal, disposal, or secure destruction of electronic equipment, extinct files.
- Assist with office moves (computer take down and hook ups).
- Assist in the maintenance of various inventories related to electronics documentation.
- Assist with electronic setup needs including screens and projectors, laptops, conference phones, and general assistance with various events.
- Assist in the development and maintenance of databases.

**Q9 Are the internships paid or unpaid?**

A9 These are **paid** internships, with compensation of at least Nebraska's minimum wage. Most employers pay above minimum wage.

**Q10 Are participating students guaranteed an internship?**

A10 No. The cornerstone of 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln is to create real-life experience, both in the interview process and work setting, which includes students convincing an employer to hire them. It is understood upfront that some Champion Employers will not find a suitable intern match. Just like the real world, this could be due to a combination of things like the intern's skill level, interview performance, and student motivation.

**Q11 Why should students participate in 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln?**

A11 Participating in 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln provides an excellent opportunity for students to network with local businesses that have IT job opportunities, helps with career exploration, and provides for real-life work experience. Internship exposure is an excellent resume-building tool as the student leaves high school and prepares for his/her next life goal.

Here are just some examples of the many great experiences our students have had in the

1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln program:

*"Getting a job after the internship is really an amazing perspective on the real world and also a valuable experience that cannot be lost or forgotten. 1st Job-Lincoln gives kids like me an unreal opportunity." (Submitted by student intern)*

*"Thanks so much for doing this! My son participated in it last year and is doing it once again this year. What a wonderful experience to spend time with the various employers, learn firsthand how to develop a resume and conduct yourself in a possible interview. Fabulous program!" (Submitted by parent of student)*

*"The opportunity to work in a professional environment that relates to Andrew's academic passion will help him determine if this job fits his career choice before he begins his college life. It also gives him new skills in networking with other highly trained people in our community to build his personal and professional relationships. I look forward to seeing this opportunity expand into other fields in the future. I would really like to thank everyone involved in this program...wonderful opportunity for our students in Lincoln." (Submitted by parent of student)*

## **Q12 Why should employers participate in 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln?**

**A12** *To date, 33 Champion Employers have been involved with 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln. Becoming a **Champion Employer** provides companies and organizations with the opportunity to provide hands-on learning opportunities for students, direct feedback to educators, and other benefits, which includes:*

- Tapping into students who generate fresh, new ideas.
- Fostering future employment relationships.
- Ability to demonstrate career opportunities to our youth as well as giving students an economic reason to stay, learn, and work in Nebraska.
- Impacting the education of our community's youth through the natural "career counseling" that takes place during the internships.
- Being recognized as a community leader for participation in an innovative initiative that contributes to developing a vibrant workforce for the economic future of our community.

## **Q13 What is required of participating employers?**

**A13** *1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln is intended to provide real-life experience for students in job-seeking activities and performing in the workplace. As such, employers should treat this as they would any employee or intern recruitment and employment process. Specific requirements and recommendations for our program include:*

- Complete our [on-line registration form](#) by **February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021**. Participation does not commit an employer to hire a student intern if there is no match.
- Provide a list of specific IT-related skills or proficiencies that you are seeking, such as programming languages, networking, web/graphic design, mobile development, etc. *This information is given at time of employer registration on-line.*

- Create a compelling job description for your internship, just as you would for any position for which you recruit.
- Participate in our luncheon orientation and Job Fair (approximately 2 hours total) to learn about program next steps and meet students to identify candidates to interview. The WRC recommends that employers bring staff members who may be working with or supervising the intern as well as human resources staff, as applicable. The orientation luncheon is provided at no cost to the employer.
- Internship period: late May – mid-August. A minimum of 20 hours a week is recommended to give the student a rich internship experience.
- Paid internship of at least minimum wage. Historically, the average wage paid to a 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln student was in the \$10-12 range.
- Provide feedback and testimonials to the WRC regarding the experience. This is particularly valuable for educators in learning about market demands that may not currently be addressed by IT curriculum.

**Q14 Is a Champion Employer required to hire an intern?**

A14 No. The focus of 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln is to create a quality experience for both intern and employer, so a good fit is important. If a **Champion Employer** does not find a suitable candidate, there is no obligation to hire anyone. We appreciate feedback that can be passed on to educators concerning what may have been lacking from the candidate pool.

**Q15 Are there resources available to assist employers in operating a successful internship program?**

A15 Yes. We want to help you have a successful internship experience!

- The “Intern Nebraska Program” is now offering grant funding for interns at the high school level. For more information in general, please go to [www.InternNe.com](http://www.InternNe.com). Click here to take you directly to the PDF document about [Nebraska’s Qualified Action Plan](#) for grant funding eligibility. **Apply early as funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis**; certain stipulations apply. You may also contact Rose Baker at 402-471- 1559 or [Ded.InternNE@nebraska.gov](mailto:Ded.InternNE@nebraska.gov). InternNE also has a [resource guide](#) for employers who want to develop a successful internship program.
- LHRMA’s Workforce Readiness Committee has expertise and experience in this area. Each Champion Employer will be assigned a “buddy advocate” who will be available for consultation during the intern’s work assignment.
- As a part of the job fair that Champion Employers are required to attend, the employers will hear a presentation on how to have a win-win internship

experience.

**Q16 What is the schedule for 1<sup>st</sup> Job-Lincoln in 2021?**

*A16*

- November - February: Outreach to prospective students and Champion Employers.
- Friday, February 12: Deadline for students to sign up. Students should see their IT instructor for sign-up details.
- Thursday, February 25: Workforce Readiness Day (“ACE IT”). **STUDENTS REQUIRED TO ATTEND**
- Friday, February 28: Deadline for Champion Employers to sign up. [Click here](#) to register.
- Thursday, March 4: Resume reviews and mock interviews. **STUDENTS REQUIRED TO ATTEND**
- Thursday, March 26: Job Fair. **STUDENTS & CHAMPION EMPLOYERS REQUIRED TO ATTEND**
- April – May: Job offers finalized by employers.
- June 1: Approximate date interns can begin internship.
- June – August: Internship period.
- Thursday, July 15<sup>th</sup>: Celebration Event. **STUDENTS & CHAMPION EMPLOYERS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND**