

DES internship program helps refresh IT workforce in state government



Outstanding program gains national recognition

The Department of Enterprise Services (DES) information technology (IT) internship program is going strong and producing great results.

The internship program, developed by the Enterprise Technology Solutions (ETS) division in 2011, recruits current college students majoring in the IT field to gain valuable work experience and also receive college credits. The internships last a minimum of three months, but 90 percent of students continue past this requirement by staying up to 15 months. The longer the students stay, the more work experience and credits they acquire.

The program helps replenish the state's IT workforce. In the past three years, 15 graduates who participated were hired by state agencies. In all, this internship program with state colleges and schools has helped prepare 36 students for IT careers.



University of Washington-Tacoma student Kyle Sessions, ETS Intern Coordinator Jim Sampson, Former intern and current employee Alex Tate and DES Human Resources Consultant Don Chavez at the UW-T career fair.

Intern program highlights

- ✓ 100 percent of former interns who secured a job after completing our program and graduating college were hired in an IT position. That compares to the national trend of 27 percent of college graduates working in a job closely related to their major.
- ✓ The program has been featured in several national publications, and DES IT internship coordinator Jim Sampson was recognized by national publication "Government Technology" as one of the Top 25 Doers, Dreamers & Drivers for 2014.
- ✓ The partnership between DES and South Puget Sound Puget Sound Community College was highlighted as a best practices model for schools and colleges during the 2014 Washington State Student Services Commission biannual conference.
- ✓ This program aligns with state goals of promoting a diverse, inclusive, and culturally competent workforce.

A win-win-win

- Students gain valuable work experience.
- The state gains valuable assistance with projects during the internships – students serve more than 2,000 customers across multiple agencies in the state and the Governor's Office.
- The citizens we serve gain because we can better avoid gaps in service by hiring new IT talent when positions become vacant, such as when people retire.

Where are they now?

Of the 15 program graduates who were hired by state agencies:

- 10 are at Department of Enterprise Services
- 2 are at Labor & Industries
- 3 are at Consolidated Technology Services

"It's important to prepare a pool of skilled applicants because many state workers are eligible for retirement within the next five years." - DES IT Internship coordinator Jim Sampson