



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FCPS, Fairfax County Government Joint Project Results in Paid Internships for Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) will be eligible for paid job opportunities through the Make it Work program as part of a partnership with the Fairfax County Government. Funds will come from a \$25,000 Innovation Grant awarded to the Fairfax County Department of Human Resources by the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) and Cooperative Personnel Services Human Resource Consulting.

The program will provide paid job opportunities to high school students with disabilities, thereby allowing them to gain valuable work experience and training.

FCPS career and transition services (CTS) within the Office of Special Education Instruction has been working closely with the Fairfax County Department of Human Resources to develop, prepare for, and initiate nine internships for students with disabilities. To date, grant activities have afforded a unique opportunity for collaboration between CTS and Fairfax County through:

- Joint training for county government agency representatives offering the internship positions. Training content included program procedures as well as strategies for interviewing, interacting with, and supervising students with disabilities.
- Reviewing student resumés for internship positions.
- Interviewing potential student interns.
- Processing student interns to become county government temporary employees.
- Collaboration between internship office supervisors and FCPS job coaches to train students on the job.
- Evaluation of student interns.
- Ongoing and consistent communication between Fairfax County human resources staff members, internship office supervisors, CTS central staff members, and CTS teachers and staff members to ensure student and grant success.

This type of collaboration between FCPS and Fairfax County Government is unprecedented. While providing students with disabilities with new and exciting work experience opportunities, it is also providing the county government access to dependable and capable future employees. Sherry Rowe, the chief of the Fairfax County Government employment division and author of the grant, summarized the program in an IPMA-HR press release: "The goal is to train students in the mastery of entry-level job skills by using business standards to promote learning and helping students maximize transferrable skills toward positive employment outcomes."

Internship sites include the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, capital facilities; community services board, infant and toddler connection; community services board, human resources; Department of Administration for Human Services, alcohol safety action program; Department of Housing and Community Development; Department of Vehicle Services; Health Department; Neighborhood and Community Services, James Lee Community Center; and the Fairfax County Police Department, personnel resources and recruiting.

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