Tips on Finding Your Own Internship or Training Position

Although every J1 Intern or Trainee must come through a U.S. Department of State designated organization, such as ICES, it is acceptable and even helpful for you to research and find your own internship or training opportunity. As long as the offer meets the qualifying standards, the internship or training experience can still be facilitated by the U.S. designated organization (ICES).

Here are some pointers to help you get started.

* Plan ahead and start early

  ✓ Start your planning at least one year ahead of the time you hope to intern or train.

* Use personal connections to network

  ✓ Consider anyone you know who has lived or worked in the U.S. or knows someone who does or has.
    - Family and friends
    - Coworkers
    - Professors
    - Employers - past or present

  ✓ Collect contact info for anyone that might be able to help you.

  ✓ If you go on vacation to the US, try to visit companies you might be interested in working for - possibly set up an informal interview.

* Research companies that do business in your country

  ✓ US companies that do business in your country might be interested in your help learning about and understanding the country/culture.

  ✓ Make a list of ways you could benefit the culture of their business in the US to be better able to market in your home country.

  ✓ Ask contacts that work at the branches in your country if they can help arrange an internship in the US.
• Social Networks

✓ Make sure your Facebook page (and any other social media presence) is clean and professional. Companies will often check. You can lose an opportunity over an inappropriate photo or posting.

✓ Become a Facebook fan of American companies that are in your field of interest. You can learn more about the company. Internships could possibly be listed on their page.

✓ Set up a Twitter account and follow the top US companies in your field. You can learn more about the companies and may even learn of internship opportunities. A responsible, intelligent reply to a tweet by the company could potentially open up a dialogue.

• LinkedIn Profile

✓ LinkedIn is a professional social site.

✓ If you don’t have a LinkedIn profile, create one. This is basically your online resume. Make it as complete as possible. Consider getting professional help.

✓ Once you are set up, you can contact companies directly and also search for internship opportunities.

• Student membership in a professional association

✓ Consider getting a student membership in a professional association for your field of study or occupation, if available.

• Search Engines

✓ You can use search engines to look for opportunities, but remember, you are not looking for a job. You are looking for an internship or trainee position. This program is not the stepping stone to a job in the U.S. Federal regulations are very strict on this point.

✓ Here are just a few sites to explore.
  ▪ LinkedIn.com
  ▪ Indeed.com
  ▪ Glassdoor.com
  ▪ Chegg.com

✓ You can also research sites that are specific to your field of study or career field.