

AOL and Year Up™

THE YEAR UP ORGANIZATION PROVIDES GUARANTEED SUCCESSFUL INTERN MATCHES, GIVING AOL A FIXED-PRICE, COST COMPETITIVE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE ENTRY-LEVEL TALENT ON A RISK-FREE TRIAL BASIS.

After over 25 years, AOL Inc. (AOL) is still very much a pioneer and is in the business of making the Internet better – period. Through innovation and creativity, they have raised the bar for high quality content and media advertising online. AOL leads with a network of premium and niche content sites, and an extensive offering of world-class tools and platforms. With the imperative to provide innovative products and valuable services to multiple customer lines, AOL looks for skilled talent to join their workforce of over 5,000 – particularly among technically savvy youth. Since partnering with the outside organization Year Up, AOL has been able to draw talent from a previously untapped pool of vetted, trained, diverse, and enthusiastic young people who come to them first as interns.

Business Outcomes

- » Successful entry-level recruitment strategy
- » Reinforce diversity strategy
- » Pipeline of skilled and vetted talent
- » Risk-free talent exploration

Student/Employee Impact

- » Gain corporate experience
- » Earn college credit and stipend
- » Establish a career pathway

Year Up™

- » Corporate internship
- » Technical training
- » Career entry opportunity
- » Over 10,000 participants



High-Tech Companies Need Technically Skilled Talent Pool

One of the difficult challenges for many employers is finding skilled entry-level talent. According to AOL Senior Technical Director Maureen Jules-Perez, AOL "looks to attract the best talent and wants this to include young people with applicable abilities and the will to succeed." Since 2007, AOL has partnered with Year Up to build a pipeline of future talent and develop a career pathway for these employees.

AOL annually contracts with Year Up for a specific number of interns based on their organizational needs. When the young people show up for their six-month internship, they have already completed six months of rigorous classroom training that includes the essential technical skills needed to meet AOL's basic skill requirements. They begin their internships with the expectation that further internal training will quickly make them productive, contributing members of technology teams in areas such as IT, network operations, desktop support, and operations analysis. AOL supervisors find Year Up interns to be "smart people who want to learn," and they vie for incoming candidates.

“The Year Up interns come to AOL with a strong desire to succeed and a foundation of technical skills to build on. This is an investment in our local communities and the digital future.”

– **Maureen Jules-Perez, Senior Technical Director & AOL/Year Up Internship Program Lead, AOL**

Leveraging the Investment

Once interns are on board, AOL makes strategic investments in these young people that mirror the Year Up experiences of “High Support, High Expectation.” AOL created the “Year Up Success Program” that taps managers to provide interns with a range of developmental experiences based on three well-defined pillars: mentoring, training, and consistent feedback.

The internship period allows AOL to observe the interns’ hard and soft skills, and at the same time, the interns are able to explore potential careers at AOL. AOL considers the sponsorship fee, approximately \$24,700 per intern, to be a competitive cost for access to a skilled talent pipeline.

At the end of the internship period, graduates who prove to be a good match for available openings may well be offered entry-level positions with annual salaries beginning at \$35,000. As full-time employees, the young people gain access to AOL’s online training portal, AOL University, which provides instructor-led training and thousands of learning resources.

AOL has extended the Year Up partnership to their Dulles, Baltimore, and New York City offices and is currently fielding inquiries from their San Francisco, CA office.

A Partnership that Serves Multiple Constituencies

In their partnership with Year Up, AOL has found a diverse pool of skilled and highly-motivated young people who are proving to be a significant source of vetted, entry-level workers.

During the first six months of rigorous classroom training at Year Up (National Capital Region), interns are co-enrolled at Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), earning 18 hours of college credits. Interns also earn a weekly stipend to offset living expenses during the entire year. Although most of the interns come from difficult life situations, the majority make the most of their Year Up training and develop the skills and connections needed to embark on a path to economic self-sufficiency.

After the training period, Year Up “guarantees” AOL a successful intern match that comes at no risk beyond the one-time fee. Year Up then communicates closely with AOL throughout the program participants’ internships. For example, when AOL noted that interns needed basic skills in LINUX systems, Year Up quickly integrated the LINUX training into the curriculum.

To date, AOL has worked with over 85 interns and has converted many Year Up interns to full-time employees and plans to continue that practice.

Background Information

Year Up is a one-year, intensive training program that provides urban young adults 18-24 with a unique combination of technical and professional skills, college credits, an educational stipend, and a corporate internship. Year Up operates in Arizona, Atlanta, Baltimore, Bay Area, Boston, Chicago, Jacksonville, the National Capital Region, New York, Philadelphia, Providence, Puget Sound, and South Florida. Each site partners with a post-secondary institution to award up to 24 college credits to students for work accomplished during the six-month classroom training period. Over 10,000 young adults have been served by the Year Up experience and 85% of graduates are employed or attending school full-time within four months of completing the program, with employed graduates earning an average of \$15/hour (\$30,000/year). In the National Capital Region, Year Up partners with NVCC and The Community College of Baltimore County to create an on-campus learning experience for interns.

For more information, please visit:
www.yearup.org

For more information about Northern Virginia Community College, visit www.nvcc.edu

For more information about The Community College of Baltimore County, visit www.ccbcmd.edu

For more information about AOL, visit www.aol.com

SECTOR: Global web service provider
EMPLOYEES: 4,500+
HISTORY: 25+ years

ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS PROJECT

The project is catalyzing a national effort to “flip the switch” on employer demand for opportunity youth - young adults ages 16 to 24 who are out of school and work. The project works to harness the power of the private sector so that employers play an active role in developing new sources of skilled talent.

For more information, please visit:
www.employmentpathwaysproject.org

“We are really satisfied with Year Up, particularly their special care of their interns both during the selection process and throughout their internship. As a result, we have already hired 2 Quality Assurance associates after their six month internship period and starting in August we will be running a 24/7 International Tech Support pilot project with five interns provided by Year Up.”

– **Otto Toth, Chief Technology Officer, Huffington Post**

Personal Story

At 16 years old, Canvas Richardson was working at a grocery store in Washington, DC. She was trying to figure out a way to better support her family and further her education, as she knew there was more opportunity beyond just working at a grocery store. When she heard about Year Up while attending a college prep class, she felt a renewed sense of confidence in her future.

Although she was only 17 years old, Canvas was accepted into the Year Up program at its northern Virginia location and after six months of classroom instruction in the IT track at Year Up, Canvas earned an internship with AOL. Canvas proved to be an asset to AOL, and at the end of her internship she was offered a full-time position with the Corporate Systems Technology team.

Canvas is currently a Senior Systems Analyst on the Corporate Systems Human Resources team at AOL. She has performed highly at AOL for nearly 7 years now and says she’s thankful to AOL for providing continuous mentoring, training, support and welcoming environment. She credits Year Up with instilling in her the professional and technical skills required to thrive in a corporate environment. In her own words, “Year Up and AOL have honestly changed my life! I don’t know where or who I would be if I didn’t have such an opportunity.”

Canvas’ current manager, Deanna Crowe, Sr. Technical Manager, commented that “Canvas has been a great asset to our team and works great with our Business users. She is always willing to take on new work and learn new skills.”