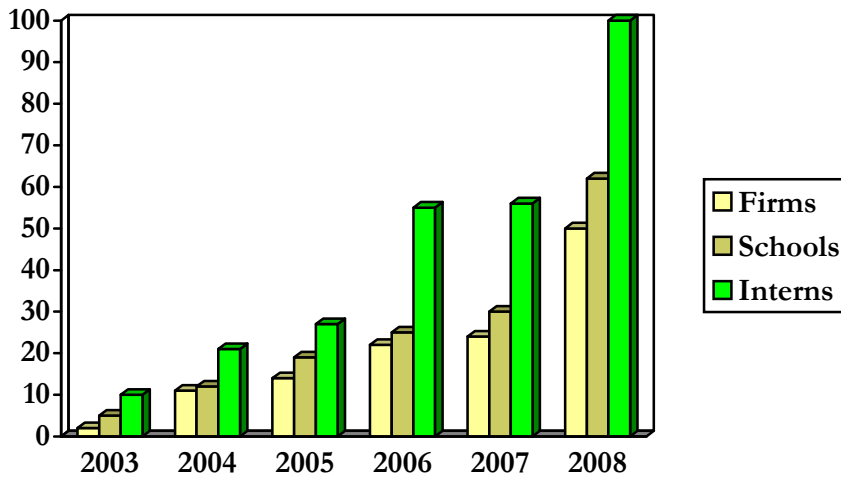


**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
PUBLIC WORKS HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to an estimate by the National Science Foundation, “the shortage of engineers in the United States will reach 70,000 by the year 2010, even though engineers have been trying for decades to persuade more students to join their ranks.”

Since 2003, the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works and MWH, a leading global provider of consulting, engineering, construction and management services in water, natural resources, and infrastructure sectors, have partnered to develop and implement the Public Works High School Internship Program (PWHIP). The goals of the program are: (1) To expose high school juniors and graduating seniors in the City of Los Angeles to career options in architecture, engineering, construction management and environmental engineering; (2) To integrate classroom learning with work-based experience; and (3) To create and encourage student interest in science, engineering and construction management. The main components of this six-week paid internship include job training, educational workshops, field trips, and exposure to a professional work environment.



PROGRAM PARTICIPATION Figure 1

After running a successful pilot program in 2003, MWH and the Board of Public Works enlisted the participation of other private firms commonly referred to as Partners. The program has steadily increased its student and Partner participation rate. In 2008 a milestone was achieved in which 100 students were selected to participate in the program. (see Program Participation Figure 1).

Partner outreach is conducted annually via the Internet, meetings, informational sessions and executive mixers. Partners are provided with a background and overview of the program and the importance of dynamics in a student/employer relationship. Partners complete a Partnership Agreement Form with their commitment to hire a certain number of students and state whether the student will be placed at their firm or other work location. Each Partner is responsible for the interns' pay and generally offer a competitive salary well above minimum wage. Our primary focus in the Board of Public Works has been to serve as the go-between for students and Partners to facilitate the hiring, placement and employment of youth in the City of Los Angeles. Relationships are developed between interns and Partners who serve as mentor to interns. Often times, the Partner has kept in contact with their intern and occasionally employs them during the summer while the students are in college pursuing a higher education.

In an effort to expose more students to engineering, architecture and construction management, some interns are hired through the Partners but placed to work in departments within the City of Los Angeles' Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Sanitation and Bureau of Street Lighting. For the past two years we have partnered with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans District 7). The relationship with Caltrans District 7 has brought a new component of engineering exposure to the PWHIP. This past year, through this joint effort, ten students were placed at Caltrans District 7 in addition to other locations throughout the City of Los Angeles.

The City of Los Angeles and Partners work together to coordinate the training, interviewing and selection of students. In order to be considered for this internship program, students must participate in a Job Skills Workshop sponsored by LA Youth at Work (LAYAW). LAYAW is a subsidiary of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce that provides job skills training to the youth of Los Angeles. Through this program, students receive training on topics such as interview skills, resume preparation, communication, and office etiquette. For the first time and due to the effective outreach made possible through combined efforts with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and Partners, the 2008 PWHIP received well over 250 applications and interviewed over 190 students. To date, this partnership has created internship opportunities for over 250 students in the City of Los Angeles.

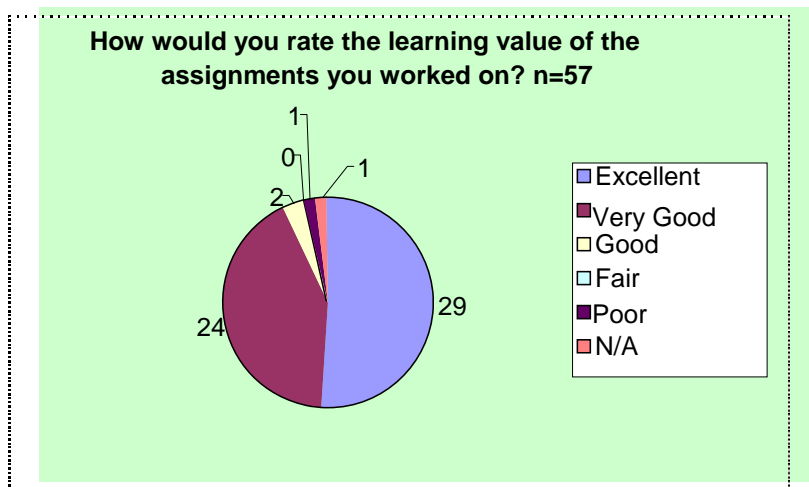
After students undergo a competitive selection and interview process, based on comments provided by interviewers and letter of recommendation, students are placed with Partners. Consideration is given to the students' field of interest (architecture, engineering, environmental, construction management), and then location with regard to accessible transportation options.

The students are assigned to work in the offices of private architecture, engineering, environmental and construction companies. Students who are not selected to participate in this internship program are referred to other job opportunities through LAYAW.

In collaboration with LAYAW, students are prepared to receive a “Work-Readiness Certification” a certificate that reflects the following skills: resume preparation, interviews, customer service, and office etiquette. This allows students the opportunity to validate their readiness to work with employers throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

In addition to offering work experience, the Board of Public Works and Partners organize educational field trips and workshops. The interns’ first day begins with an orientation. During this session interns are brought together to receive information on safety in the work environment, reinforcement of “code of conduct” rules and receive information on the role of public works. Other field trips include a visit to water and wastewater treatment plants, reservoirs, water pumping plants, and engineering project sites that contribute to their overall experience. These field trips are organized with support from Partners, Bureau of Sanitation and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

In 2008 interns were provided with an opportunity to provide feedback on their overall experience in the internship program (See Fig. 2). Note: not all participants responded to our survey.



INTERN FEEDBACK 2008 Figure 2

Overall, student response has been positive. Here are just a couple of student quotes:

“The internship program was fun and insightful. It exposed me to a new career option that I had not considered before. Learning about engineering and seeing the work made me more interested in the field” Nidia Zapon, 2005 Intern

“To say that my internship was a valuable learning experience would be an understatement. It has established for me a firm career path in the engineering field comparatively early on in life.” San Lurie 2008 Intern

The City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works does not have the resources to fund this program. This program is managed with existing staff and sponsorship from our Partners.

This public-private partnership has benefited the City of Los Angeles, Partners and community in many facets. Through the implementation of this program, the City of Los Angeles is able to contribute to the education and career awareness of youth by the exposure of professional career opportunities.

This program is exceptional and unique in that the opportunity provided to students exposes them to a world seldom offered to high school students. This program creates job opportunities and offers life changing exposure and experience.

The City of Los Angeles and Partners have benefited from this program by hiring a qualified group of interns. The long-term benefits include a more diverse pool of candidates and a local technical workforce to hire for full-time employment.

This effort contributes to the development of youth and creates a diverse pipeline of future architects, engineers and construction managers to serve the public works engineering field.