



## Hello Greater Peoria Intern Mixer *Employer/Host Guide*

### What is the GP Intern Mixer series?

Our intern mixers consist of weekly events hosted by companies throughout the Greater Peoria area. All interns and working college students in the area are invited to attend these events as an initiative of our Hello Greater Peoria talent attraction effort. The goal of these events is to have these interns stay or entertain the idea of returning to begin their career in Greater Peoria. We plan to achieve this goal by allowing these interns to network with high-level individuals, learn about diverse companies and career opportunities in the area, and make connections with other interns their age.

### When are the events?

Each event will be held weekly, on Thursday evenings, from 5 - 6:30 p.m. during the months of June and July. Once the mixers end, we'll be working with local businesses to direct interns to patronize a restaurant, bar, or event that may be happening in the community your business is located.

### What is your company responsible for?

- **Planning and hosting** one of our eight Thursday evening intern mixers
- **Providing a venue** on or off your company's campus that can host upwards of **75+ interns**
- Include an **activity or game(s)** for the interns (scavenger hunt, trivia, competitions, etc.)
- Providing **heavy hor d'oeuvres, light snacks, and refreshments** (alcohol optional)
- Providing **prizes** (Company merchandise, local restaurant gift cards, etc.)
- Having a **CEO, or notable organizational leader, or your HR team** lead a brief (10 minute) overview of their career journey and the organizations mission, vision, and what they offer young professionals.

### What is the GPEDC responsible for?

The EDC will provide each company with any support they may need, including:

- **Recruitment of student interns**, all you have to do is execute the 1.5 hour mixer event!
- **Distribution of Promotional Materials** to area colleges, HR professionals of companies that hire interns, social media posts, direct email and text alerts to interns, and general/specific save-the-dates for each event
- Help with obtaining **prizes**, upon request, given at least two weeks notice of help.
- Assisting **set-up and take-down** of the event
- Help in sourcing an **activity** for the interns to participate in



## What are best practices for hosting an intern mixer?

As we head into our third year of intern mixers, we have the advantage of history to glean some best practices to boost engagement with your event and leave interns (your future workforce) with a positive, lasting impression:

- **Interns are hungry creatures**, consider offering some heavy hors d'oeuvres or food to boost attendance and engagement, it's also a great way to support and highlight local eateries and restaurants! Hooray synergistic economic development!
- Consider providing a **beer/cocktail bar**- Some companies provided alcoholic beverages to those interns who were of age, paying mind to having safeguards in place to ensure lawful, safe consumption. While alcohol is optional, **mixers offering cocktails, wine, and beer have demonstrated an average higher attendance than dry mixers.**
- **Post signage** around the event location - not all interns will be familiar with the area, so having plenty of signs that direct interns on both where to park and where to go once they're on foot is beneficial.
- Commit one organizational representative to working the **check-in table**. We allow the first 20 minutes of our event for check-in, since most interns are just getting off work. However, having them check-in is important so that we can provide detailed information on how many interns are attending each event and how many interns are consistently attending these events.
- Have up to 3 people give **opening remarks**- At around 5:30, each company had a brief (no longer than 15 minute) presentation from key staff sharing their journey to the company, what they love about their job/community, and what your company offers young professionals. This is your opportunity to welcome the interns and show off what makes your company and Greater Peoria unique. The interns really do enjoy hearing and learning about each company. Additionally, this time would be a great opportunity to introduce and conduct your intern activity.
- Host a **fun activity**- We do **require** each employer to have an activity or a variety of games to facilitate intern interaction. In the past, we've seen scavenger hunts (Bradley University), interactive trivia games like Kahoot, a variety of games (bags, UNO, jenga, cards, etc), photo booths, minute-to-win-it style games, etc. If you need help brainstorming an activity, we will be able to help you.
- Give out **swag/prizes** - Last year, we had companies give out prizes at the door to everyone who attended, companies that give prizes to the game winners, or companies that raffled off prizes during the event; you are free to pick whichever scheme you'd like. Prizes included everything from gift cards to company merchandise.
- Play **background music** - having music playing in the background can help with the flow of the event.
- Keep them **standing**- having our interns stand instead of sit facilitates more mingling, but that being said, they will probably be standing for the opening remarks so we recommend keeping your opening remarks short to disrupt the flow of conversation as little as possible, while still showcasing your company. The less sitting and talking to students- the better.

