Service Overview

Backpacks to Briefcases is an innovative program, developed by EDSI, partnering academia, business and government. Through this partnership, Backpacks to Briefcases helps recent college graduates secure internships that will lead to permanent employment opportunities. The program is centered on creating a new pathway to help recent graduates find employment opportunities that channel their earned degrees.

At EDSI, we are passionate about helping recent graduates successfully transition into the workforce in a market where recent studies suggest that:

- Only 51% of recent graduates are employed full-time
- 39% of recent graduates are working in a field very closely related to their degrees

(Source: “Chasing the American Dream: Recent College Graduates and the Great Recession” May 2012)

The impact Backpacks to Briefcases has made in the workforce is immediately recognizable. Its partnered approach has achieved:

- 82% placement into paid internship
- 66% placement into full-time positions

The program generates a tremendous push for workforce development programs. Businesses who need assistance with current projects gain the benefit of a free, qualified intern. Recent college graduates receive the benefit of no longer having to compete against experienced professionals for entry-level positions.

How Do We Do It?

Backpacks to Briefcases employs several methods to achieve the goals of the program:

- Recruit recent college graduates who are unemployed/underemployed and have completed a Bachelor’s degree 6-24 months prior to entering the program
- Provide short-term, project-based internships at area companies (Interns are paid a stipend of $12/hour for 3 months at 32 hours per week ($4,600 total cost))
- Provide job readiness and career coaching for candidates including filmed mock interviews and a networking event

Every enrolled Backpacks to Briefcases participant attends a 5-day intensive training that teaches a multitude of skills in resume writing, interviewing techniques, 30-second speech rehearsal and job search strategies. Filmed mock interviews are performed with each participant in order to identify critical areas for growth and improvement. The week of employment training is concluded with a networking event that connects recent college graduates with area employers.
Employer Benefits

The Job Development team at EDSI recruits employers to attend a catered networking event, matching attendees with qualified college graduates. In the past, Backpacks to Briefcases has achieved a 2:1 ratio of employers to college graduates. This yields a significant opportunity for employers to find the help they need to complete existing projects that may otherwise be cancelled or delayed due to a lack of resources or staffing. Ultimately, this approach allows recent graduates to demonstrate their skills and abilities to perform the required responsibilities and tasks of the job and dramatically increases the likelihood of the employer extending full-time job offers at the conclusion of the internship.

About EDSI

Founded in 1979 and headquartered in Dearborn, Michigan, EDSI (Educational Data Systems, Inc.) is a national workforce development, customized training and consulting company intertwined with one common thread: helping people and companies in transition. EDSI works with public sector, private sector and labor organizations to research, analyze and assess their workforce development needs, leading to the development and implementation of strategies to recruit, hire and/or train current or future workers, and has placed more than 25,000 individuals into unsubsidized employment in the past five years. EDSI has grown to a network that employs more than 400 people across the country and was named to the Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing private companies in America for five consecutive years.

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