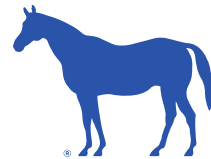


TECH INTERNSHIP PILOT PROGRAM

Budget, Finance and Economic Development Committee

June 23, 2026

Erica Rogers, Director of Agriculture Development



LEXINGTON

Background: Tech-Driven Opportunity

- **Economic and Workforce Development in the Tech Ecosystem: 2025 TEConomy**
Partners consultation and study recommended four strategies for growing Lexington's tech and tech-enabled workforce
- **Strategy 2:** Grow tech employment by prioritizing connections among educational institutions, students, workers, and employers
- **Pre-funded in FY2025:** \$90,000 to begin Strategy 2 implementation



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Grow tech employment by prioritizing connections among educational institutions, students, workers, and employers.



Focus: Linking tech employers and students

- **Goal:** Boost linkages between employers and college students in tech-oriented fields to help retain talent and meet industrial demand
- **TEconomy Partners Recommended Approach:** Explore development of a new tech-focused internship program
- **Proposed Implementation:** Pilot program offering partial wage reimbursement to Lexington employers hosting tech-based internships for qualifying students at local universities and colleges

Program Design Development

- **Spring 2026:** 15+ collaborative planning discussions with internal and external stakeholders including Council partners, staff, college and university representatives, tech employers, industry groups, etc.
- Gathered input on tech internship environment and experiences to ensure pilot program is maximally beneficial for students and employers



Proposed Structure

- Selected employers eligible for reimbursement of up to 50% of wages for up to 2 tech-based intern positions
 - Reimbursement not to exceed \$15/hour and \$3,000 per intern
 - Internships must be at least 120 hours (equivalent to 20 hours/week for 6 weeks)
 - Should result in roughly 30 – 40 interns participating in pilot
- Work sites must be based in Lexington with in-person work requirement
- Students must be enrolled full-time at eligible university or college and within 2 years of the planned culmination of their degree
- Flexible to accommodate true **technology** internships (software, hardware, digital services) and **tech-enabled** internships (using technology to enhance or optimize operations, services, or products)

Proposed Structure

- Rolling application beginning in July and continuing until fund exhaustion
- Employers apply for reimbursement by providing overview of internship including duration, duties and tasks, and pay rate
- MOAs with employers = no direct LFUCG employment
- Up to \$5,000 reserved for networking events or educational activities as recommended by TEConomy Partners to develop community and deepen connections for students
 - Launch event, networking breakfast, project pitch night, etc.
 - Dependent on participation level and timing

Proposed Structure

- Selected employers request monthly reimbursement by submitting invoice with intern timesheets and paystubs
- **Reporting:** Employers submit report at beginning and end of internship period evaluating experience and growth of interns' skills
- **Data Gathering:** Interns also surveyed directly to evaluate experience and monitor long-term progress and placement
- Reports and surveys remain confidential; used only for internal program evaluation

Pilot Program Promotion

- Direct application through Economic Development website
- Distribution of flyers including QR code linked to website
- Program information sent via email to Council and 30+ economic development partners and stakeholders involved in planning process
- Educational and industry partners share opportunity directly with students and employers

Questions?



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