LADDERS FOR LEADERS

IMPACT REPORT

— 2025

www.laddersforleaders.com

Our Vision

We envision a community of empowered students who are equipped to make successful decisions after high school.

Our Mission

It is our mission to connect high school students to careers through education, training, and impactful internships.

MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER/CEO

What an honor it has been to create and lead this fabulous organization! As I reflect on 2025, I am filled with deep gratitude and pride for what we have accomplished together at Ladders for Leaders. This year marked a powerful season of growth, innovation, and impact. We did not just expand our programs, we strengthened pathways that are changing the lives of students and families across our community.

In 2025, we served more students than ever before through Ladders for Leaders University and our paid internship programs, connecting young people to real career pathways in various industries.

These experiences are more than résumé builders. They provide income, confidence, mentorship, and a vision for what is possible after high school, especially for students who might not otherwise have access to professional networks or paid career opportunities. One of the most meaningful parts of this year has been seeing students step into their potential. We watched interns gain certifications, earn wages to support their families, and discover career paths they had never imagined. These moments remind us why this work matters, and why now is the time to build on our past success.

None of this would be possible without the collective commitment of our partners, employers, educators, donors, volunteers, and staff. Your belief in our mission allows us to continue removing barriers and opening doors for students who are ready to work, learn, and lead.

As we look ahead, our focus remains clear: to scale our impact, strengthen industry partnerships, and create sustainable pathways that prepare students for long-term economic mobility. The demand for career-connected learning continues to grow, and with your support, we are ready to meet that need.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are bridging the gap between education and industry, one student at a time.

With gratitude,
LaKissa Bright

PROGRAM DIRECTOR OVERVIEW

The 2024-2025 Internship season brought Ladders for Leaders new opportunities to broaden our outreach in the Austin, Texas area. Our Interns came from 29 different high schools in over 6 area-wide school districts.

This Summer we had the privilege of working with 25 different business partners, 13 of which were newly acquired for the 2025 Intern season. We increased our interns by 51% for a total of 97 interns compared to 64 interns in the previous year. The growth was not possible without the support of our grant partners, sponsors, board members, and staff.

Thank you all!

Tanisha Narine

Board of Directors

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VICE PRESIDENT

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TREASURER

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Brian Hernandez

Shymika Stephenson

Our Staff

LaKissa Bright

FOUNDER/CEO

Tanisha Narine

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Shelly Hatch

PROGRAM MANAGER

Ashley Marthol

INTERN

Neha Reddy

INTERN

Madelynn Dean

INTERN

2025 IMPACT

577
Students participated in the LLU Program

365
Students applied to the internship program

169
Students qualified for an internship interview

97
Students awarded an internship

Total Students Served: 577

Intern Total Hours Worked: 10,489

PROGRAMS

LADDERS FOR LEADERS UNIVERSITY

A 4-week program which provides the essential knowledge & expertise required to obtain and be successful in a real-world professional experience. The skills learned from the program will be valuable throughout each participant's entire professional career.

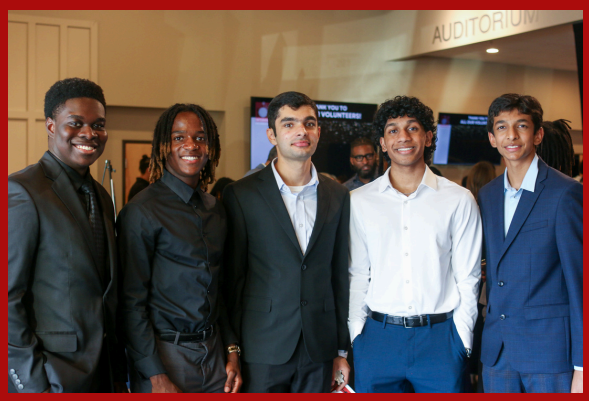
Topics:

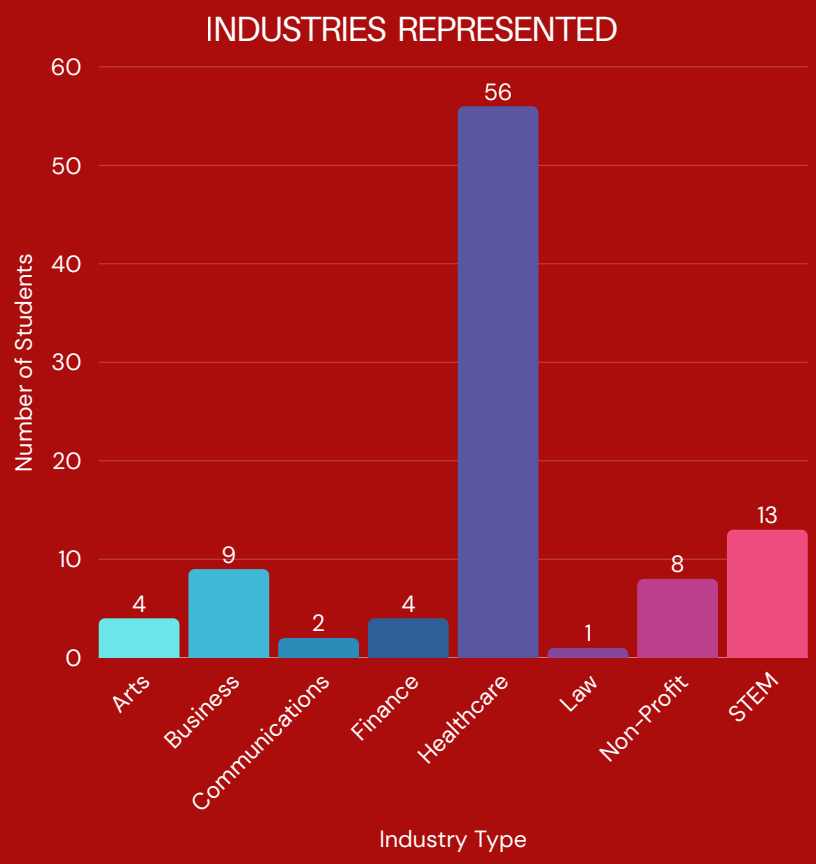
1. Career Path and Transferrable Skills
2. Resume & LinkedIn Workshop
3. Interviewing 101
4. Business Etiquette
5. Personal Responsibility
6. Communications

LADDERS FOR LEADERS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

A program for students with a competitive GPA. Students are matched with a company which aligns with their career interests and compensated for a six-week internship where they work a minimum of 20 hours per week. Special consideration is given to students who attend Title 1 schools, alternative schools or participate in foster care or AVID programs.

2025 IMPACT





2025 DATA:

97
Interns

10,489
Total Intern Hours Worked

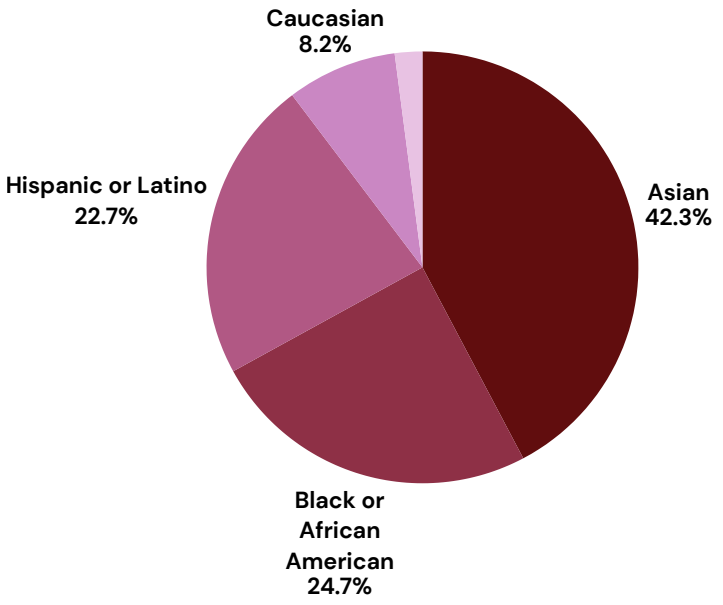
577
Students Trained in Business Skills

$2K
Scholarship Awards

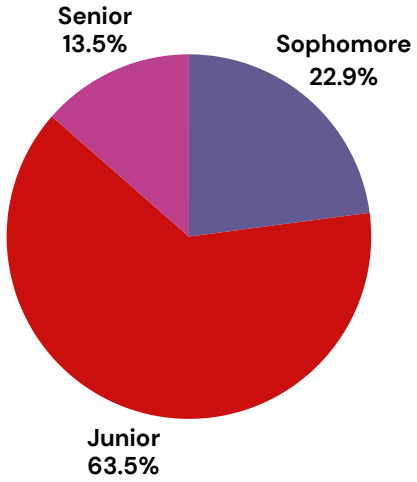
25
Companies Hosted Interns

2025 INTERN DEMOGRAPHICS

Race



School Class Status



Underserved Population

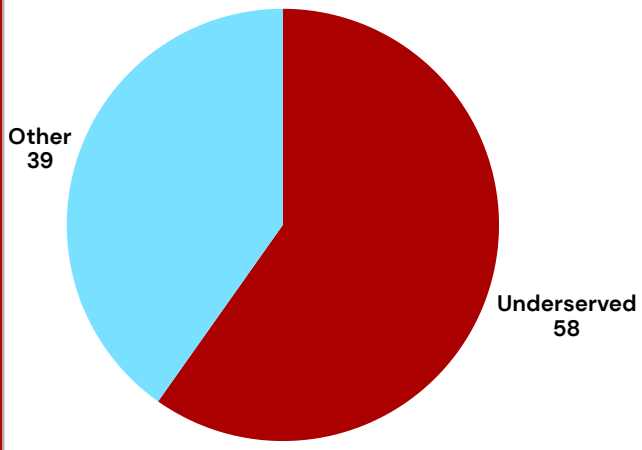
Minorities: 48

Low Income: 34

Total Minorities who are low income 58

Underserved Students

*Minorities and Low-Income

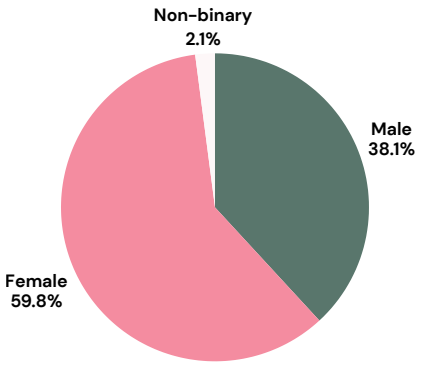


Gender (%)

38.1%
Male

59.8%
Female

Gender

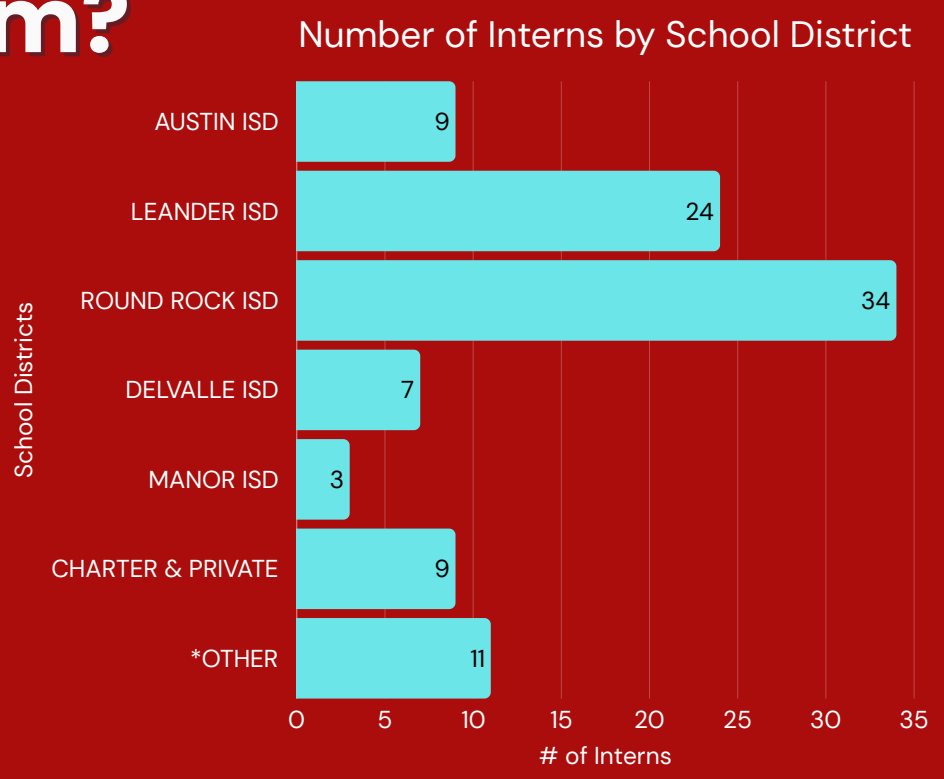


Where are our Interns from?

ROUND ROCK ISD
35%

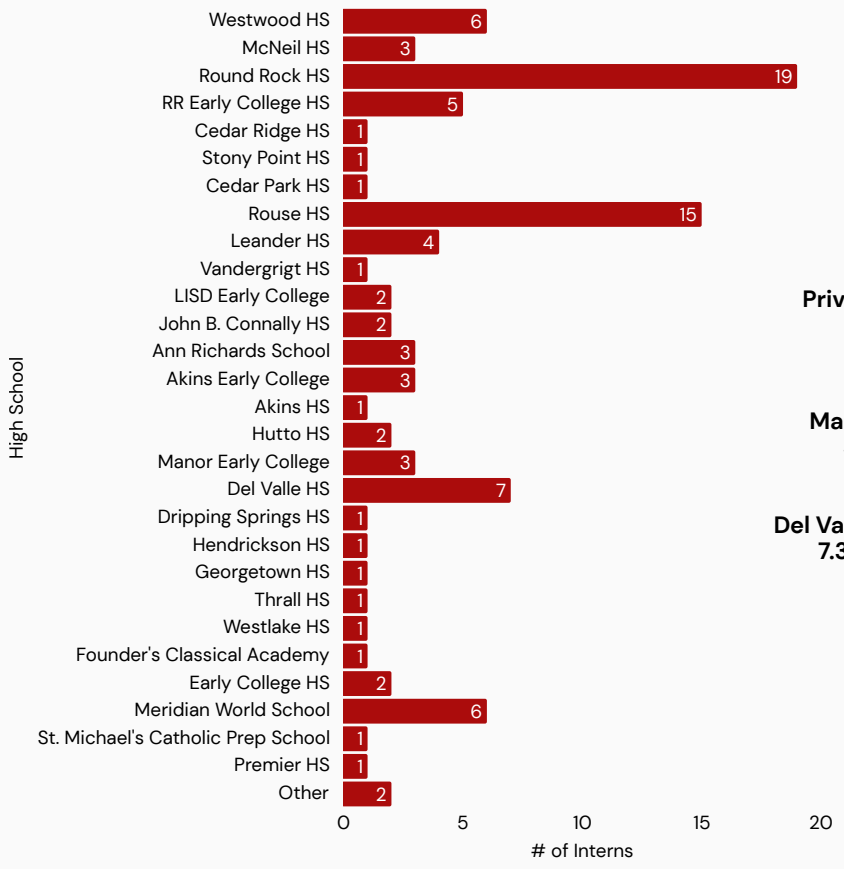
LEANDER ISD
25%

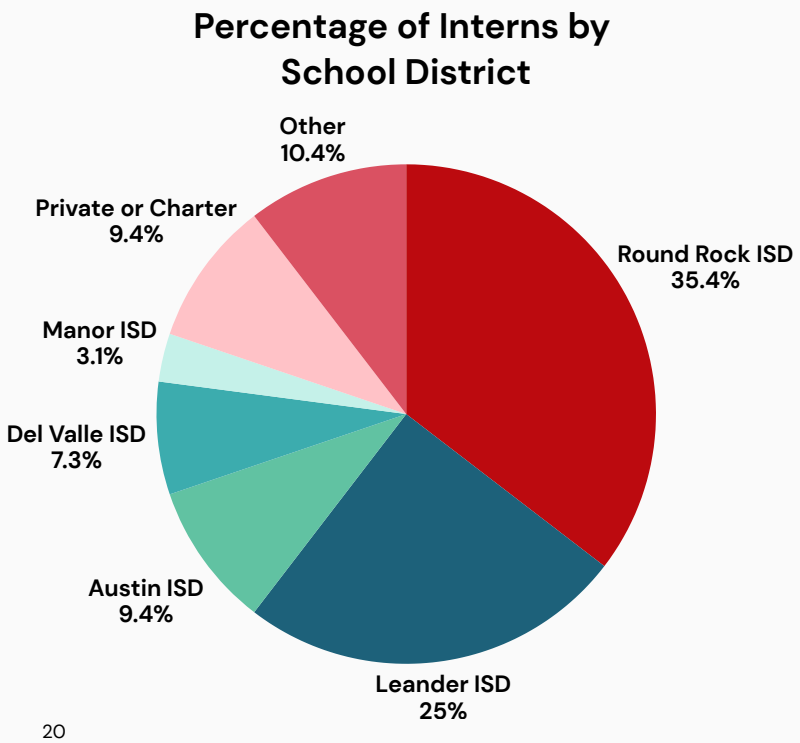
OTHER
40%



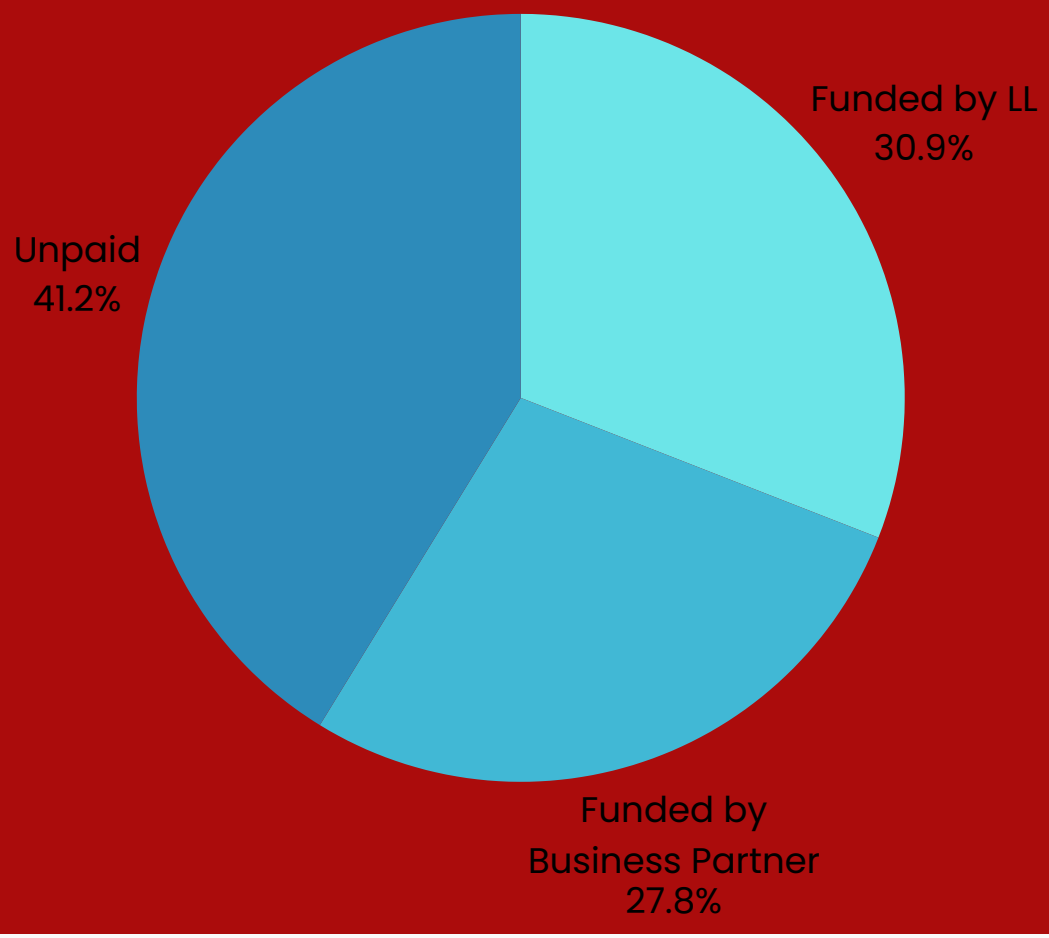
*Other Combined ISD's (Hutto, Dripping Springs, Pflugerville, Georgetown, Thrall, Westlake)

Austin Area High Schools Interns Attended

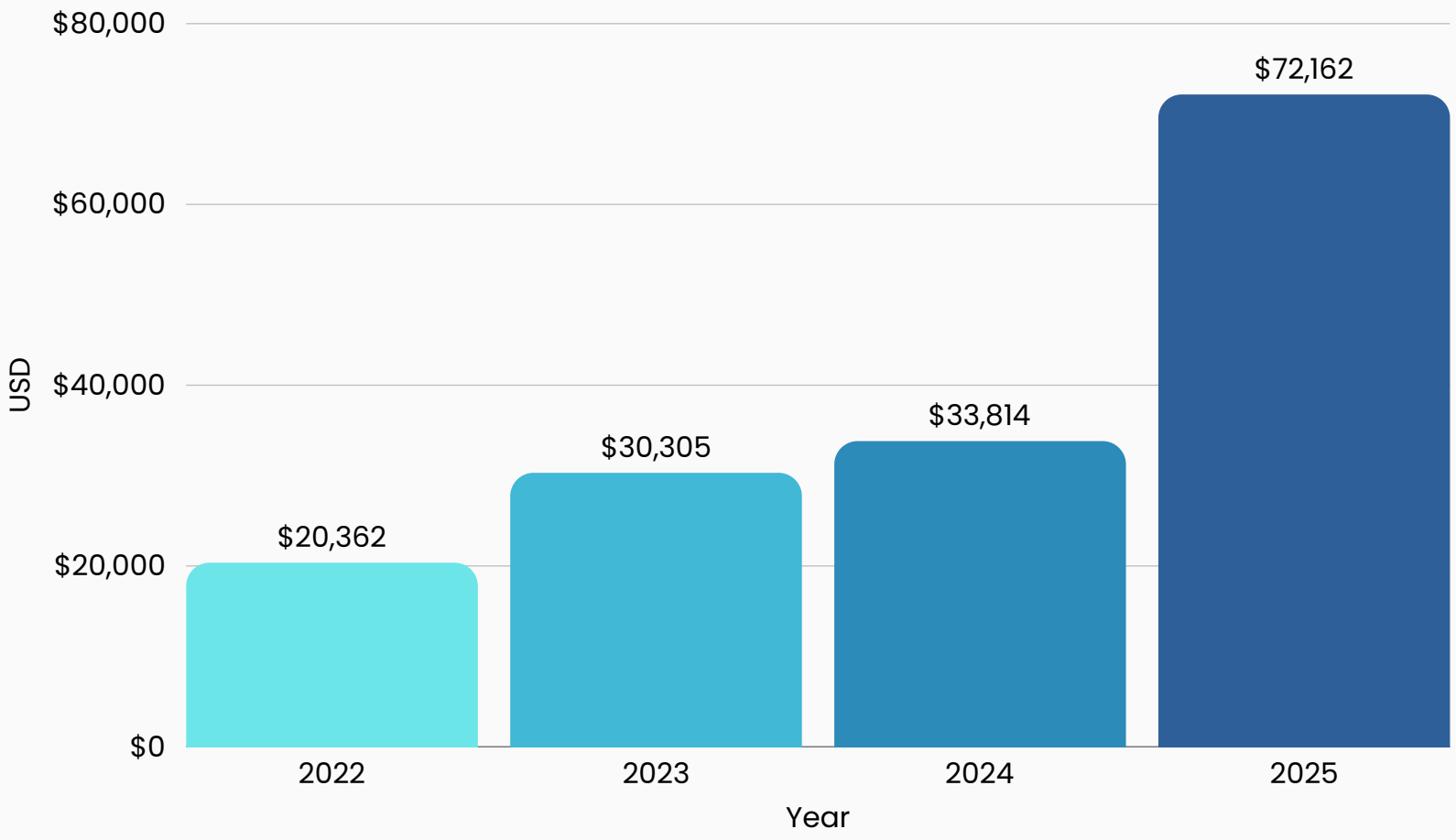




2025 Interns Funded



Intern Wages Paid Over the Years



25 BUSINESS PARTNERS

13 NEW COMPANIES SIGNED ON AS BUSINESS PARTNERS!

- Smokey Mo's BBQ Headquarters
- Brad Morgan State Farm
- Wheelhouse Learning Solutions
- Asterisk Dot Asterisk Technologies
- KUT News
- Northshore Media Productions
- First Texas Bank
- I Live Here, I Give Here
- The Important Work
- My Community Catalyst
- Opportunities Williamson
- Hill Country Community Ministries
- Austin Sister Cities International

RETURNING PARTNERS

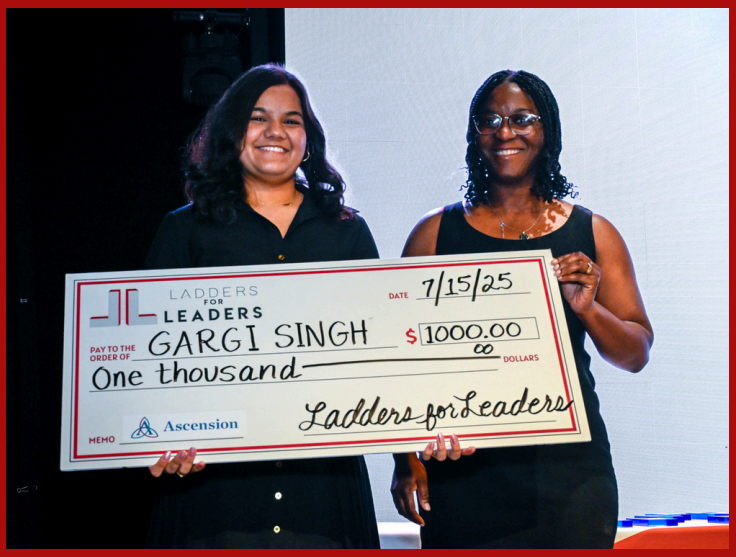
- Ascension Seton
- St. David's Healthcare
- Teravista Wellness
- Georgetown Palace Theatre
- Ladders for Leaders
- Austin Area Technology Movement HQ
- Code Ninjas
- TYREX Manufacturing
- Kona Ice
- The Think Group
- Wilcox Farmer's Insurance
- Andrews-Booker Law Firm

SCHOLARSHIPS SPONSORED BY ASCENSION SETON

Two of our graduating Interns are awarded scholarships

Total Awarded: $2,000

The winners are selected based on videos sharing their internship experience



2025 TESTIMONIALS

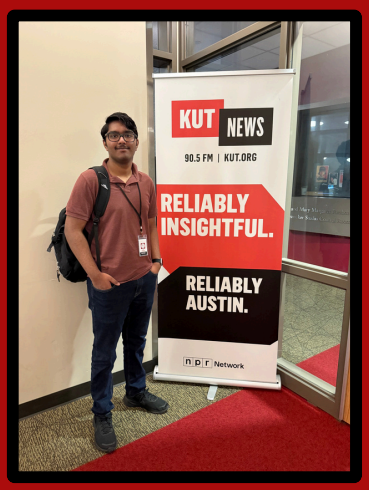
THANK YOU LADDERS FOR LEADERS FOR EMPOWERING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH LIFE-CHANGING OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS - MS. HABIBI, PARENT

ANIKA IS A DREAM INTERN AND I'M READY TO HIRE HER AS MY CEO! SHE'S BRILLIANT, HAS A GREAT ATTITUDE, AMAZING ENTHUSIASM, EXEPTIONAL WORK ETHIC, INCREDIBLY ACCOUNTABLE AND AN ABSOLUTE ROCK STAR WORKER! - DR. MORRISON

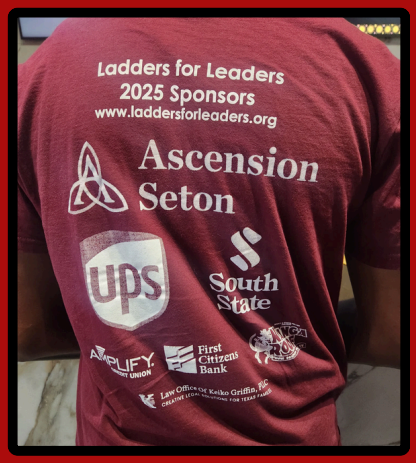
IT WAS REALLY GREAT FOR JORDYN'S SELF ESTEEM TO HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED AND "TAKEN UNDER THE WING" OF SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONALS. ADDITIONALLY, THE EXPERIENCE OF OBSERVING SURGICAL PROCEDURES OF BIOPSIES AND BONE MARROW EXTRACTIONS WAS A RARE AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGE -MS. MEGANS

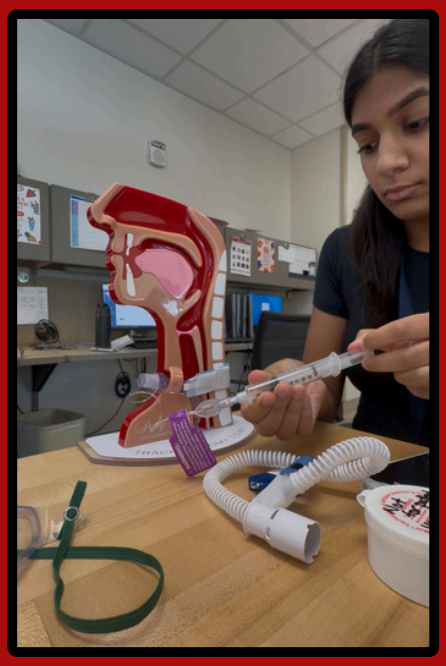
THANKS SO MUCH AGAIN! WE ARE SO HAPPY TO BE PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM AND KATIE IS ALREADY OUTSTANDING EVEN EARLY IN HER TIME HERE. - C. MOORE, RN

LADDERS FOR LEADERS IN ACTION



LADDERS FOR LEADERS IN ACTION





LOOKING FORWARD TO 2026

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Serving as President of the Ladders for Leaders Board of Directors in 2025 has been an incredibly rewarding journey. This year, we reached a major milestone by placing 97 interns – an achievement made possible by the generosity of our donors and the strong partnerships we have built and deepened over time.

While we are proud of this progress, there is still important work ahead within Travis and Williamson County ISDs and the surrounding communities. To meet this moment, we are reimagining our resources to ensure more equitable access and opportunity for all students -and we have some exciting changes in store for 2026.

Thank you to our valued donors, volunteers, and partners. We are deeply grateful for your continued support. I also extend my sincere appreciation to my fellow board members for their passion and dedication, and to our staff and leadership for their outstanding work in building an organization that plays a pivotal role in students' future success.

Let's keep the momentum going -hold on tight, because 2026 is going to be EVEN bigger!

Genail Marthol
Ladders for Leaders, Board President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2025 SPONSORS

Our mission of *Bridging the Gap Between Education and Industry* continues to be possible with the support of our Sponsors and Grant Partners. Their monetary contributions enable our underserved populations to receive payment during their internships

DIAMOND SPONSOR:

Ascension Seton

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2025 SPONSORS

SILVER SPONSORS:

BRONZE SPONSORS:

First Citizens Bank

Perissos
VINEYARD AND WINERY

Law Office Of Keiko Griffin, PLLC
CREATIVE LEGAL SOLUTIONS FOR TEXAS FAMILIES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2025 GRANT PARTNERS

Our Grant Partners keep our mission and vision possible

BANK OF AMERICA

United Way

United Way for Greater Austin

W.D. KELLEY FOUNDATION

Georgetown Health Foundation

ROUND ROCK TEXAS

charles SCHWAB

MLS

Ascension