



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 18-320, **Version:** 3

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**TO:** Mayor and Members of City Council

**THRU:** Douglas J. Hewett, City Manager, ICMA-CM

**FROM:** Jay Reinstein, Assistant City Manager  
Barbara Hill, Director, Human Resources Development  
Mark Brown, Senior Customer Programs Officer, PWC

**DATE:** October 1, 2018

**RE:**  
**ICON (Innovative Career Opportunities Now) Youth Internship Program Update**

**COUNCIL DISTRICT(S):**  
All

**Relationship To Strategic Plan:**

Goal II: Diverse and Viable Economy

**Executive Summary:**

The ICON (Innovative Career Opportunities Now) program, previously referred to as STEM, has been in place since May 2016. The program recently completed its third year and has increased participation from:

2016: 14 students placed at the City and PWC

2017: 23 students placed at the City, PWC and private sector locations

2018: 38 students placed at the City, PWC and private sector locations

ICON is the Cumberland County Schools' Career and Technical Education Work-based learning (WBL) program platform funded by the City of Fayetteville, Public Works Commission and several private sector employers. Work-based learning is an educational approach utilizing the workplace to provide students with the competencies and skills that allow them to connect school experiences to real-life work activities through career exploration, exposure to the real workplace and achievement of work readiness skills. This program also has a Career Shadowing and Students at Work Week components.

The ICON committee comprised of City, PWC, Cumberland County Schools, NC Works staff along with Councilmembers Tisha Waddell and Larry Wright, have recommended several program enhancements for 2019 that include:

- New mission statement
- Hiring pre-requisites
- Job Fair
- New interview structure
- Hiring organization commitments
- New program timeline

City Council approved \$25,000 in the FY19 budget to be matched by an additional \$25,000 in CDBG funds. It costs approximately \$2,000 to fund each student for 6 weeks at 32 hours per week.

The September, 2018 Greater Fayetteville United Social Capital Survey showed low community perceptions for young adults entering the workforce (10% Excellent or Very Good) The ICON program directly addresses this need.

### **Background:**

In May 2016, Cumberland County Schools approached Councilmember Larry Wright and former Councilmember Kirk deViere about sponsoring a youth internship program previously funded through workforce development. City Council identified \$26,000 for one year only. A \$500 subsidy for up to ten local businesses to encourage youth employment opportunities were included in years two and three. Employer and intern experiences have been overwhelmingly positive.

Each year the program has grown with increasing job placements and increasing student interest. In 2018, over 150 students expressed interest in an ICON internship, with 38 students hired as interns. The program has outgrown our format and the ICON team is recommending changes to improve the program outcomes and to better align the program to meet the community and Council expectations for helping Fayetteville young adults prepare to enter the work force and introducing them to career opportunities in Fayetteville.

The team is recommending several program changes aimed at increased student training, increased private sector participation and increased integration with the City's long term strategic hiring needs. The recommended Mission Statement for the ICON team is:

*The draft mission of the Joint City of Fayetteville/Public Works Commission Internship Program is to increase the economic vitality of Cumberland County by supporting, training and hiring high school, post high school and college interns and full time employees from Cumberland County to provide a high quality workforce to meet the employment needs of the City, PWC, the local business and non-profit Cumberland County organizations through collaboration with Cumberland County Schools, FTCC, Cumberland County NCWorks and the local business and non-profit organizations.*

The recommended program structure is a job fair with significant required training and involvement for the students. These include:

- Resume Training
- Work Force Preparation Training
- Interview Skills Training
- Attend Employer Presentations Regarding Career Opportunities

- Participate in Multiple Individual Job Interviews

In addition, the program would take several steps to increase private sector involvement. These include:

- Provide a student resume book prior to interviews
- Increase funding from Cumberland County NC Works for Internships
- Employer education on hosting successful internships
- Increased employer outreach

The team recommends integrating the ICON program with the City's, PWC's and the private sector's long term hiring needs by matching ICON placements with corresponding college intern and full time City employment needs. Examples of this include police and fire department minority hiring, engineering, information technology hiring in an increasingly technology driven world, PWC electric lineman and engineers, public service staff and management hiring. The team believes that providing clearly defined career paths for our local youth will significantly increase the long term retention of local youth in the Fayetteville economy and contribute to the economic growth of the community.

This increase in scope of the ICON program requires an increase in resources from both the City and PWC to support the program at the appropriate level to ensure success. The increased resources will take several forms:

1. Increased Staff Involvement in Program Management, Student Training and Intern Selection
2. Use of City and PWC Facilities to Host Events

City and PWC Budget to Fund:

- Printing
- Student Food and Beverage at Training and Job Fair Events
- Third Party to Manage Program Payroll
- Increased Number of ICON Positions at the City and PWC
- Corresponding College Intern and Full Time Positions Dedicated to Successful ICON Interns

The team will provide periodic updates to Council on the ICON program progress.

### **Issues/Analysis:**

Identifying private sector partners to provide meaningful work for the six week program has been a challenge. For a program to reach a larger number of youth the private sector will also champion this effort. The City is working closely with NCWorks to identify additional WIOA funding to support this program. The support of City and PWC staff is vital to the success of the ICON program. The team appreciates the Council's current support and looks forward to continuing the program to enhance its value to the community.

### **Budget Impact:**

In FY19, \$25,000 has been budgeted in the general fund with an additional \$25,000 CDBG match for a total of \$50,000.

**Options:**

Continue existing ICON program model without any program changes

Continue existing ICON program model with recommended changes

Do not continue the ICON program and provide direction to staff

**Recommended Action:**

Staff recommends that City Council continue the ICON program with recommended structural changes

**Attachments:**

ICON Update pwpt

ICON video