

## Program Proposal: First Fridays Street Festival Series

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### Program Overview

The **First Fridays Street Festival Series** is a rotating monthly street festival designed to activate Oak Park's business districts on the first Friday of July, August, September, and October from 6-10p. The series will rotate across four key business districts: Chicago East, Madison, Southtown, and Pleasant, transforming each location into a vibrant community space for residents and visitors. The festival will feature live entertainment, local business participation through vendor tables, and various community-driven activities, fostering both neighborhood connections and local economic growth.

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### Program Goals

1. Strengthen relationships between neighborhoods and business districts, leveraging special events to enhance community engagement, economic vitality, and neighborhood cohesion.
  - **Program Contribution:**
    - The First Fridays Festival will foster relationships between Oak Park's business districts and its surrounding neighborhoods by creating a regular community gathering that encourages participation from diverse residents.
    - The event will emphasize inclusion, racial equity, and sustainability by offering accessible, family-friendly entertainment, food vendors, and opportunities for businesses to engage with attendees.
    - By rotating through different districts, the festival will build cross-neighborhood connections, stimulating interactions that bridge the diverse communities of Oak Park.
2. Support the Village's Economic Vitality Strategy by growing Oak Park's nighttime economy and strengthening local businesses.
  - **Program Contribution:**
    - The festival's nighttime scheduling will encourage residents and visitors to explore Oak Park's restaurants, retail stores, and service providers after hours, boosting local spending and enhancing the district's visibility.
    - The inclusion of vendor booths and promotional opportunities for local businesses will create direct economic benefits by attracting foot traffic and encouraging patronage.
    - With the Village's support, the festival can become a cornerstone of Oak Park's broader effort to revitalize its evening economy.

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## Program Structure

- **Dates:** First Fridays of July, August, September, and October
- **Locations:** Rotating across four business districts:
  - **July:** Chicago East
  - **August:** Madison
  - **September:** Southtown District
  - **October:** Pleasant
- **Activities:**
  - **Entertainment:** Each event will feature live music performances, street performers, and family-friendly activities.
  - **Vendor Participation:** Local businesses will be invited to set up tables to engage with attendees, offering special promotions and selling goods/services.
  - **Community Engagement:** The festival will incorporate community-driven activities such as interactive games, art installations, and nonprofit booths to further connect attendees with Oak Park's vibrant local culture.

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## Business Participation and Benefits

Local businesses within each hosting district will be integral to the success of the festival. Participation benefits include:

- **Vendor Tables:** Businesses can set up vendor booths along the street to directly engage with the public, sell products, and promote their services.
- **Increased Foot Traffic:** The festival's structure is designed to attract residents and visitors alike, providing a significant opportunity for businesses to gain exposure and drive sales.
- **Community Engagement:** The festival offers a platform for businesses to actively contribute to the local community, building goodwill and loyalty with residents.

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## Community Impact

The First Fridays Street Festival Series will have a long-lasting impact on Oak Park's neighborhoods and economy by:

- **Strengthening neighborhood-business relationships:** By offering a recurring event that moves between districts, the festival will serve as a bridge between local businesses and the neighborhoods they serve, enhancing community relationships.

- **Enhancing the local economy:** The nighttime economy will benefit from increased foot traffic and extended hours for local businesses, encouraging spending and stimulating growth.
- **Promoting inclusivity and diversity:** The festival will be an accessible, family-friendly event, offering a diverse range of activities that celebrate Oak Park’s values of equity and community connection.

## Budget Overview

A budget will be required to support key aspects of the event, including: The budget includes costs for entertainment, event marketing and promotion, and the rental of tables and chairs to accommodate participating businesses. We are requesting the Village’s support in waiving street closure fees, in addition to providing 75% of the cost to do these events. Which will further ensure the success of the event and minimize the financial burden on the Chamber of Commerce.

Item	Estimated Cost per Event	Total (for 4 events)
<b>Start-up Costs</b>	\$5,000 (One time expense)	\$5,000
<b>Entertainment</b>	\$5,000	\$20,000
<b>Event Marketing/Promotion</b>	\$2,000	\$8,000
<b>Tables and Chairs</b>	\$2,500	\$10,000
<b>Traffic Control Costs</b>	All costs to be covered by the Village.	0
<b>Public Safety Costs</b>	All costs to be covered by the Village.	0
<b>Total</b>		\$43,000
<b>Chamber Commitment</b>		\$10,750
<b>Village Commitment</b>		\$32,250 plus all traffic and public safety costs

## **Conclusion**

The First Fridays Street Festival Series aligns with Oak Park's broader goals of creating vibrant, diverse, and connected neighborhoods while strategically fostering economic vitality. With the Village's support, this initiative will become a signature series of community events, reinforcing Oak Park's reputation as a thriving, inclusive, and culturally rich community.

## Program Proposal: Oak Park Black & Latine Business Support Network

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### Program Overview:

The Oak Park Black & Latine Business Support Network is designed to create a robust support system for Black and Latine-owned businesses, using a two-track cohort model that targets both new/emerging and established businesses. Grounded in the theories of *Community of Practice* (Wenger, 1998), *Adult Learning Theory* (Knowles, 1984), and *Inclusive Economic Development*, the program creates a dynamic learning and networking environment that fosters sustainable business growth, belonging, and professional development.

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### Program Goals

#### Primary Goals

##### 1. Support and Retain Black & Latine Businesses

This goal focuses on providing targeted educational and networking opportunities to address the unique challenges Black and Latine-owned businesses face, ultimately helping them succeed and remain in Oak Park.

- *Theory Applied: Community of Practice* – This approach views business owners as learners who benefit from shared experience. By forming a community of Black and Latine business owners, participants can support each other and learn collaboratively.
- *Application:* The cohort structure and shared sessions foster collaboration, mutual problem-solving, and exchange of knowledge between participants, allowing them to learn from both experts and peers.
- **Measured by:** Business license renewals and qualitative feedback about progress in business operations and growth.

##### 2. Foster a Sense of Belonging Within the Business Community

A key challenge for minority-owned businesses is often a sense of exclusion from the broader business community. The program is designed to create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

- *Theory Applied: Inclusive Economic Development* – By intentionally creating spaces for Black and Latine business owners, the program supports marginalized groups and addresses the systemic challenges they face in building a business.
- *Application:* Sessions specifically address the barriers of doing business in predominantly white environments (PWE), reinforcing that Oak Park is an inclusive space. Regular networking and peer engagement help business owners build connections and feel integrated into the broader community.
- **Measured by:** Pre- and post-program surveys assessing changes in participants' sense of belonging and integration within the business ecosystem.

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## Secondary Goals

### 1. Empowering Black and Latine Professionals as Experts

Each session will be led by Black and Latine Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), offering both practical knowledge and role models for participants.

- *Theory Applied: Adult Learning Theory* – Knowles' theory emphasizes that adults bring their experiences into the learning process and learn best when they find immediate relevance in the material. Having SMEs from similar backgrounds ensures that learning resonates with participants' lived experiences.
- *Application*: Black and Latine SMEs provide culturally responsive teaching, connecting with participants through shared challenges and opportunities, and offering practical tools that can be applied immediately to business issues.
- **Measured by**: Attendance and engagement levels during sessions, along with participant feedback on the relevance and effectiveness of SMEs.

### 2. Position Oak Park as a Supportive Hub for Black and Latine Businesses

This goal is about building Oak Park's reputation as an open, welcoming, and resourceful community for minority-owned businesses.

- *Theory Applied: Inclusive Economic Development* – A welcoming environment isn't just about local resources; it's about actively making space for Black and Latine business owners in every aspect of the community.
- *Application*: The program includes sessions on navigating Oak Park's economic infrastructure and using local resources effectively, positioning the village as an ally to minority business owners.
- **Measured by**: Increased business presence from Black and Latine-owned companies, as tracked through local business registrations and participation.

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## Program Structure & Content

**Program Duration**: 8 months

**Cohorts**:

- **Track 1**: Micro & Emerging Businesses
- **Track 2**: Established Businesses

**Cohort Structure (Based on *Community of Practice* and *Adult Learning Theory*):**

Each cohort will have structured learning opportunities, combining practical lessons with peer engagement. The cohort model ensures that participants build a community, where learning is supported by shared experience and peer-to-peer problem solving.

**Track 1: Micro & Emerging Businesses**

**Session Frequency**: Half-day sessions, held monthly on the second Saturday.

### **Session Flow (Built Around *Adult Learning Theory*):**

- **9:00 - 10:00 AM | *Topic Introduction & Peer Exercise:***

The session starts with a brief introduction to the day's topic, followed by a peer activity to get participants thinking about how the topic applies to their business.

  - *Application:* Peer exercises promote experiential learning, where participants solve real problems with input from their peers. This process engages learners early and ties new material to their current business challenges.
- **10:00 - 11:00 AM | *SME Presentation:***

Black and Latine SMEs present on key business topics, offering practical advice and insights.

  - *Application:* These presentations are designed to be highly relevant, with SMEs focusing on real-world business scenarios. This builds credibility and relatability, keeping participants engaged.
- **11:00 AM - 12:00 PM | *Work Session:***

Participants are given the opportunity to apply new concepts in real time, using their own business as a case study. SMEs and facilitators are available to assist.

  - *Application:* Adult learners benefit from immediate application of concepts. This work session ensures that participants are not only hearing the theory but implementing it in their business plans.
- **12:00 PM - 1:00 PM | *Lunch & Networking:***

Networking over lunch strengthens bonds within the cohort and builds the peer-to-peer support system that extends beyond the program.

  - *Application:* Networking is a key element of *Community of Practice*, encouraging shared experiences, advice exchange, and professional connections that contribute to a lasting business community.

### **Core Topics (Designed Around Business Fundamentals and *Inclusive Economic Development Principles*):**

1. **Navigating Oak Park's Economic Vitality Infrastructure**
  - How to access village resources and collaborate with local institutions.
2. **How to Do Business in a Predominantly White Environment (PWE)**
  - Navigating cultural dynamics and leveraging unique business strengths in a PWE context.
3. **Marketing for Emerging Businesses**
  - Focus on resource-light marketing strategies that build brand presence.
4. **Human Resources**
  - Building a small, capable team and developing leadership skills.
5. **Accounting & Finance Basics**
  - Financial literacy tailored for new businesses, including managing cash flow and securing funding.
6. **Communications: Brand Storytelling**
  - How to craft an authentic, compelling business narrative.
7. **Operations: Scaling Your Business**

- Practical steps for growing and scaling, from managing inventory to expanding customer base.
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## **Track 2: Established Businesses**

**Session Frequency:** Evening sessions, held monthly.

### **Session Flow (Based on *Community of Practice* and *Adult Learning Theory*):**

- **6:00 - 6:30 PM | *Networking*:**  
Informal networking opens each session, allowing established business owners to share challenges and ideas.
  - *Application:* This session creates space for peer-to-peer learning, a key tenet of *Community of Practice*, helping participants develop trusted relationships with their peers.
- **6:30 - 7:30 PM | *SME Presentation*:**  
Presentations delve into advanced topics, focusing on business scaling and operational efficiencies.
  - *Application:* SMEs are selected for their experience in managing larger, more complex businesses, providing participants with real-world insights on scaling and maintaining sustainable growth.
- **7:30 - 8:00 PM | *Networking*:**  
Closing with another networking session reinforces the learning and encourages participants to continue sharing resources and ideas outside the formal sessions.

### **Core Topics:**

1. **Navigating Oak Park's Economic Vitality Infrastructure**
    - Advanced insights into how to engage with village government and local institutions for business growth.
  2. **Getting Your Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Certification**
    - The process and benefits of becoming a certified MBE.
  3. **Advanced Marketing Strategies**
    - Exploring new platforms and approaches to expand brand reach.
  4. **Human Resources: Talent Retention & Leadership**
    - Strategies for retaining top talent and fostering a strong workplace culture.
  5. **Financial Planning for Growth**
    - Advanced financial management, including securing capital for expansion.
  6. **Communications: Managing Business Reputation**
    - Strategies for maintaining and enhancing a business's public image.
  7. **Operations: Scaling & Expanding Your Business**
    - How to scale operations, increase efficiency, and enter new markets.
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## Evaluation & Measurement

### Quantitative Metrics:

1. **Business License Renewals:** Tracking renewals to assess the program's impact on business retention.
2. **Event Participation:** Attendance records, cohort completion rates, and engagement levels.
3. **Belonging Survey:** Pre- and post-program surveys to measure shifts in participants' sense of belonging and community integration.

### Qualitative Metrics:

1. **SME Feedback:** Participant evaluations of SME effectiveness, relevance, and delivery.
2. **Participant Success Stories:** Regularly capturing and sharing success stories to highlight program impact and best practices.

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### Budget:

Category	Description	Estimated Cost
Program Development	Initial development of curriculum and materials, including SME recruitment	\$5,000
Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)	Compensation for Black and Latine SMEs (8 sessions per cohort, 2 hours per session)	\$8,000
Program Coordinator	Part-time coordinator to manage the program logistics, communication, and participant support	\$25,000
Marketing & Outreach	Promotion of the program through digital ads, social media, print materials, and local newspapers	\$5,000
Venue Rental	Renting space for monthly sessions (assumes \$500 per session for 16 sessions)	\$4,000
Food & Beverage	Catering for each session (lunch for Micro & Emerging cohort, light refreshments for Established cohort)	\$8,000
Participant Materials	Workbooks, training materials, and other resources for participants	\$2,000
Technology & AV Equipment	Costs for presentation equipment, online communication platforms, and technical support	\$2,500

Networking Events	Additional networking mixers or end-of-program celebration (venue, catering, promotion)	\$5,000
Program Evaluation	Surveys, data analysis, and reporting on the program's impact	\$2,000
Miscellaneous	Unexpected costs or contingencies	\$2,500
Total Estimated Cost		\$69,000
Chamber Commitment		\$0
Village Commitment		\$69,000

**Conclusion**

The Oak Park Black & Latine Business Support Network leverages best practices in community-building, adult education, and inclusive economic development to support the growth and retention of minority-owned businesses. By using a cohort model, led by relatable SMEs, the program builds a vibrant *Community of Practice* that fosters both immediate business growth and long-term professional networks.

# Oak Park NEXT (Navigating Employment and eXperience Training): Youth Internship Program Proposal

## Program Brief

Oak Park NEXT (Navigating Employment and eXperience Training): Youth Internship Program is a workforce development initiative created to support Oak Park businesses by connecting them with local youth residents aged 14-21 for paid, educational internships. The program serves as a vital resource for businesses experiencing staffing shortages while providing students with early career exposure, hands-on skills, and insight into potential career pathways within Oak Park. Managed by the Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce, this pilot program spans two 2025 cohorts, positioning Oak Park as a community invested in youth empowerment and local economic development.

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## Program Eligibility

To ensure alignment with The Village of Oak Park's goals, eligibility requirements for the program are as follows:

- **Student Residency:** Eligible participants must either attend a District 200 or District 97 school (Oak Park-River Forest High School or feeder schools) or, for those in college or attending private schools, maintain a primary residence in Oak Park while studying out of the area.
- **Age Requirement:** Program participants must be between the ages of 14 and 21. Middle school students aged 14 may apply, but all individuals under 16 will require a work permit to participate.
- **Academic Standing:** Students must be in good academic standing and able to meet behavioral expectations, confirmed through school records or references.

These criteria ensure that the program specifically benefits Oak Park's local youth, fosters a strong connection to the community, and aligns with the educational and workforce priorities of Oak Park.

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## Program Structure

- **Timeline:**
  - **Summer 2025 Cohort:** May-August 2025
  - **Fall 2025 Cohort:** September-December 2025
- **Capacity:** Each cohort will consist of up to 20 students, with the selection process aimed at balancing student interest with the staffing needs of local businesses.
- **Internship Parameters:**
  - **Compensation:** Internships will be paid at \$15.00 per hour.

- **Work Hours:** Interns will work up to 20 hours per week.
  - **Educational Component:** Businesses are required to dedicate at least 25% of internship hours to teaching interns about business operations, including departments such as marketing, finance, and management.
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## Program Goals, Objectives, and Metrics

1. **Goal 1: Business Support**
    - **Objective:** Provide staffing assistance to Oak Park businesses by placing pre-vetted interns based on need and job fit.
    - **Metric:** Measure the number of participating businesses, track business satisfaction scores, and evaluate staffing relief outcomes through monthly feedback surveys.
  2. **Goal 2: Youth Employment Experience**
    - **Objective:** Equip interns with essential work readiness skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, while providing career exposure.
    - **Metric:** Conduct pre- and post-program surveys to measure skill development, including self-assessment ratings on job readiness and overall satisfaction with the experience.
  3. **Goal 3: Talent Retention**
    - **Objective:** Introduce young Oak Park residents to local career opportunities and encourage long-term career consideration within Oak Park's local economy.
    - **Metric:** Track intern retention within the program, record feedback on interest in local employment, and conduct follow-up surveys six months post-program to gauge long-term interest in Oak Park jobs.
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## Methods

1. **Recruitment & Selection:**
  - **Engagement with Schools and Community Organizations:** Partner with District 200 and District 97 to distribute information on the program, hold information sessions, and provide guidance in the application process.
  - **Structured Application and Interview Process:** Create a streamlined application process, followed by structured interviews to assess intern qualifications and match their skills and interests to the right business placements.
2. **Business Engagement and Training:**
  - **Outreach to Local Businesses:** Use Chamber communications to engage local businesses in need of staffing support and introduce them to the benefits of hosting an intern.

- **Supervisor Training Sessions:** Host training workshops for supervisors, focusing on skills for mentoring interns, conducting evaluations, and supporting interns' professional growth.
3. **Data Collection & Reporting:**
    - **Surveys and Checkpoints:** Use digital tools to administer bi-weekly surveys and collect feedback from both interns and business supervisors.
    - **Mid-Program and End-of-Cohort Evaluations:** Complete detailed evaluations of program outcomes, covering both qualitative and quantitative metrics, to provide comprehensive insights to the Village of Oak Park.
  4. **Continuous Improvement:**
    - **Feedback Analysis:** After each cohort, assess all feedback and performance data to identify key success factors and areas needing adjustment.
    - **Program Adaptation:** Adjust cohort structuring, business training materials, or program communication based on feedback to ensure continued growth and alignment with community needs.
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## Program Administration & Responsibilities

The Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce will oversee all aspects of program management, focusing on a seamless, supportive experience for interns and businesses. The Chamber's responsibilities include intern and business vetting, ongoing program monitoring, and outcome reporting to the Village.

## Key Administration Components

1. **Intern Vetting and Placement:**
  - **Eligibility Verification:** Ensure applicants meet age, academic, and residency requirements. School transcripts or equivalent documentation will confirm academic standing.
  - **Interest and Skills Assessment:** Conduct interviews with applicants to align their skills, interests, and career aspirations with business needs. This assessment process will also help identify opportunities for skill development.
  - **Diversity Considerations:** Strive for a diverse intern cohort that reflects Oak Park's community demographics and interests, including students interested in a variety of career paths, industries, and skill levels.
2. **Business Vetting and Training:**
  - **Business Assessment:** Screen participating businesses to ensure safe, positive work environments, conducting site visits and interviewing current employees where applicable.
  - **Training for Supervisors:** Provide business supervisors with training on internship best practices, including mentorship techniques, the importance of educational engagement, and guidelines for maintaining intern well-being.

- **Educational Commitment:** Require businesses to allocate at least 25% of internship hours to training on fundamental business operations, such as marketing, finance, or management, ensuring students gain insight into the functional workings of their placement.
3. **Monitoring and Support:**
- **Regular Check-Ins:** Schedule bi-weekly check-ins with interns and business supervisors to assess relationship quality, task alignment, and satisfaction.
  - **Surveys and Feedback Collection:** Administer bi-weekly surveys to interns and supervisors to measure engagement, job satisfaction, and educational value, with a focus on identifying areas for improvement.
  - **Program Liaisons:** Designate Chamber staff as dedicated program liaisons to provide on-demand support, guidance, and problem resolution for both interns and business participants.
4. **Marketing and Reporting:**
- **Promotional Outreach:** Utilize local schools, social media, Chamber channels, and partnerships with community organizations to promote the program and maximize awareness among eligible students.
  - **Outcome Reporting:** Develop quarterly reports for the Village of Oak Park to provide updates on program metrics, including intern progress, business satisfaction, and the achievement of program goals.
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## **Business Selection Criteria with Quantitative Metrics**

To ensure the best outcomes for both interns and businesses, Oak Park NEXT will select business participants based on the following quantitative metrics:

1. **Positive Work Environment**
  - **Safety Standards:** Businesses must maintain a safety score of at least 85% based on an initial site visit checklist evaluating cleanliness, hazard mitigation, and adherence to OSHA or local safety regulations.
  - **Employee Satisfaction:** Participating businesses must have an employee satisfaction rate of at least 75%, measured through an internal survey or third-party feedback (where available).
  - **Past Internship/Employment Experience:** Businesses that have hosted interns or young employees in the past will be required to demonstrate an intern satisfaction rate of 70% or higher from prior programs.
2. **Capacity for Mentorship**
  - **Mentor Availability:** Businesses must allocate at least one dedicated mentor for each intern, with no mentor assigned more than two interns simultaneously.
  - **Mentor Experience:** Selected mentors must have at least two years of professional experience in their field, ensuring they can offer relevant guidance and insights.

- **Mentorship Hours:** Businesses should commit at least 5 hours per intern per month specifically to mentorship activities, including skills coaching, career discussions, and performance feedback.
3. **Educational Value**
- **Training Commitment:** Businesses must commit to spending at least 25% of internship hours (approximately 5 hours per week) on structured training sessions focused on key business functions such as marketing, finance, customer service, or operations.
  - **Skills Development Opportunities:** Businesses should provide a list of at least three new skills or competencies that interns are expected to gain during their placement, aligned with industry standards.
  - **Project-Based Learning:** Businesses should identify at least one substantial project per intern that can be completed within the internship period, ensuring hands-on learning beyond routine tasks.
4. **Internship Role Clarity**
- **Job Description Completeness:** Businesses must submit a detailed job description with specific roles, responsibilities, and learning outcomes, meeting a job clarity score of 90% based on an internal rubric assessing detail, clarity, and relevance.
  - **Skills Alignment:** Businesses are encouraged to provide positions that align with the interns' skills and career interests, aiming for a skill match rate of 80% based on the intern's initial skills assessment.
  - **Position Availability:** Businesses must demonstrate that they can provide the required 20 hours per week for each intern over the 12-week period, verified by an operations schedule review.
5. **Compensation and Financial Commitment**
- **Payroll Capacity:** Businesses must show payroll capacity to cover the initial 100% payment to interns, with 75% reimbursement processed through the Chamber. Verification of this capacity may include a payroll report or financial statement summary.
  - **Willingness to Educate:** Businesses will be required to sign an agreement acknowledging that 25% of internship hours are dedicated to educational and training components, with agreement adherence monitored through regular check-ins.
6. **Addition Considerations**
- **Community Impact:** Preference will be given to businesses with a demonstrated commitment to community engagement, measured by participation in at least two community events, partnerships, or sponsorships within the last year.
  - **Diversity and Inclusion:** Businesses that actively promote diversity and inclusion within their workforce will receive priority. This can be verified through an internal diversity metric showing a minimum of 30% representation of underrepresented groups within the company or by meeting specific inclusive hiring practices as documented in their hiring policy.

By establishing these criteria, Oak Park NEXT ensures that selected businesses not only provide a safe and educational environment but also contribute meaningfully to intern development and the Oak Park community. Let me know if you'd like to add any further details to these metrics.

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### Budget Overview

<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Intern Compensation &amp; Reimbursement</b>	Summer Cohort (20 interns): \$15/hour x 20 hours/week x 12 weeks x 20 interns x 75% reimbursement rate	\$54,000
	Fall Cohort (20 interns): \$15/hour x 20 hours/week x 12 weeks x 20 interns x 75% reimbursement rate	\$54,000
	<b>Total Reimbursement Costs</b>	<b>\$108,000</b>
<b>Administrative Costs</b>	Chamber Program Administration including: staff time, intern vetting, business training, check-ins, reporting, marketing	\$35,000
<b>Program Marketing</b>	Promotion through schools, social media, and community channels	\$5,000
<b>Materials &amp; Supplies</b>	Program materials, educational resources, and office supplies	\$1,000
	<b>Total Operating Funds</b>	<b>\$41,000</b>
<b>Total Estimated Costs</b>		<b>\$149,000</b>
Chamber Commitment		<b>\$0</b>
Village Commitment		<b>\$149,000</b>

### Timeline

- **January-March 2025:** Recruitment of businesses, school outreach for intern candidates, and application processing.
  - **April 2025:** Finalize intern selection, match interns with businesses, and conduct orientation sessions.
  - **May-August 2025:** Run Summer Cohort with regular monitoring and data collection.
  - **August 2025:** Conduct program evaluation and make necessary adjustments for the Fall Cohort.
  - **September-December 2025:** Run Fall Cohort, finalize outcome data, and submit end-of-program report.
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## **Conclusion**

This pilot program provides a valuable service to Oak Park by equipping young residents with job skills and connecting businesses with motivated, trained interns. Through structured guidance, training, and community investment, Oak Park fosters a sustainable talent pipeline, creating a positive impact for businesses and residents alike. This initiative will lay the foundation for a lasting workforce development program that grows alongside Oak Park's community and economy.