



2026 WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

NOMINATION FORM

APPLICANT:

City of Plano

Name of Community or Workforce Board

Amber Zuckerman, Director

Contact Name and Title

azuckerman@plano.gov

682-220-9992 / cell 214-929-8105

Email Address

296,718

Telephone Number

Community Population (as of the most recent census or as officially marketed)

Esmeralda de la Cruz

TEDC Member Name (TEDC membership is held by the individual, not the organization)

SUMMARY and INSTRUCTIONS:

Please attach a brief description of the workforce development initiative. Within this description, address the award criteria of Innovativeness, Transferability, Community Commitment and Leverage, Measured Objectives and Secondary Benefits. Please provide the start date of the project and completion date, if applicable.

The program or initiative is to be for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2025. Please provide measurable results for that 12-month period. The workforce development initiative can be a long-term project, however, it must show measurable results within the award year.

Important Information:

- The submittal must be the application page and four conventionally formatted 8.5" x 11" pages. Therefore, no more than five (5) pages in total for the award submission. Any award submissions that exceeds the five-page limit will be disqualified.
- The project or program may not have been submitted previously for a TEDC Workforce Excellence Award.

Please submit this completed nomination form and your project summary via email to Crystal at crystal@texasedc.org on or before 5:00 PM, Friday, May 8, 2026. You may also submit up to five (5) photographs of your workforce project as separate jpeg or png files.

Application Fee: There is a \$100 fee to apply for the TEDC's Workforce Excellence Award. An invoice will be generated upon receipt of the application.

City of Plano/Plano Mayor's Summer Internship Program (PMSIP) TEDC Workforce Excellence Award Submission

Established in 2014, the Plano Mayor's Summer Internship Program (PMSIP) is a city-led, privately funded workforce development initiative designed to bolster the local talent pipeline while preparing Plano ISD students for long-term career success. To date, PMSIP has placed more than 1,000 students in paid internships across local businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies.

PMSIP expands access to early career experiences by providing rising juniors and seniors in Plano ISD with structured, paid, eight-week "earn-and-learn" experiences. Through intentional design, the program connects education to industry – equipping students with real-world skills while helping employers engage and develop future talent.

Many students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, lack access to meaningful professional experiences that prepare them for college and careers. PMSIP bridges this gap through hands-on work experience, targeted professional development, and mentorship, expanding access to opportunity and supporting long-term economic mobility.

By strengthening the region's talent pipeline, PMSIP delivers value for both students and employers. Participants gain critical workplace experience and professional networks, while businesses build early connections to emerging talent. In doing so, PMSIP reinforces Plano's position as a leader in workforce innovation and economic development.

The program operates through a collaborative public-private model, administered by the Plano Improvement Corporation in partnership with the City of Plano, Plano ISD, and a broad network of corporate, nonprofit, and community partners.

INNOVATIVENESS

PMSIP distinguishes itself through a highly structured, scalable workforce model that intentionally integrates preparation, placement, onboarding support, community engagement, and professional networking, delivering a comprehensive, end-to-end workforce development model.

City-Led, Not City-Funded Model:

PMSIP is strategically led by the City of Plano and fully funded through private-sector investment, demonstrating how municipalities can drive measurable workforce outcomes without reliance on taxpayer funding.

Mandatory Workforce Training Pipeline:

The first 300 applicants complete a comprehensive Intern Prep Day focused on financial

literacy, workplace communication, resume development, and interview readiness—ensuring employers engage with prepared, workforce-ready candidates from day one.

Centralized Job Fair Matching System:

PMSIP replaces traditional hiring with a structured Job Fair model, where students complete multiple pre-scheduled interviews—more than 800 conducted in just five hours in 2025. Employers rank candidates, and PMSIP facilitates final matches based on mutual fit, creating an efficient, equitable process that maximizes access and drives stronger placement outcomes.

Intern Orientation Day:

All selected interns participate in a mandatory, pre-internship Orientation Day designed to ensure they enter the workplace prepared, confident, and aligned with employer expectations. Through interactive sessions and peer engagement, students receive practical guidance on workplace etiquette, communication, time management, and professional conduct, along with exposure to industry expectations around presentation and professionalism. This experience equips students to contribute effectively from day one, strengthening both student performance and employer experience.

Discovery Days Expansion Model:

Launched in 2025, Discovery Days is a structured, employer-hosted career exploration experience designed for students not placed in internships through PMSIP's competitive process. These one-day engagements provide behind-the-scenes access to local companies through site tours, hands-on activities, and direct interaction with professionals across a range of industries. Students gain exposure to workplace environments, career pathways, and in-demand skills, while building confidence and expanding their professional networks. Discovery Days ensures that all participants—regardless of placement outcome—benefit from meaningful workforce engagement and career development opportunities.

TRANSFERABILITY

PMSIP is intentionally designed as a replicable and scalable workforce development model that can be implemented by municipalities of varying sizes. Its standardized framework—including application processes, workforce training curriculum, employer engagement strategies, and centralized matching methodology—enables efficient replication while maintaining program quality and consistency.

The program's funding structure, which leverages private-sector investment rather than public funding, further strengthens its adaptability, allowing communities to implement the model without placing additional burden on municipal budgets. Its privately funded model further strengthens adaptability, allowing communities to implement the program without placing additional burden on municipal budgets.

PMSIP is already gaining traction as a model for replication, with multiple cities across Texas and nationally engaging with program leadership to explore implementation. This growing interest underscores the program's viability as a turnkey solution for communities seeking to strengthen their talent pipelines and workforce development strategies.

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT AND LEVERAGE

PMSIP is powered by strong, sustained community investment and public-private collaboration. In 2025, the program leveraged almost \$300,000 in private funding to underwrite student wages at nonprofits, workforce training, and program operations, demonstrating a highly effective model for aligning private capital with public workforce goals.

Anchor partners include Capital One, JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, The Boeing Company, NTT DATA, Liberty Mutual, NexPoint, Catalyst Brands, and Atmos Energy, among others. These partners engage through hiring interns, underwriting nonprofit placements, and supporting program delivery.

Approximately 98% of employers return annually, reflecting the program's value in developing emerging talent and strengthening workforce pipelines. In addition, community volunteers contribute nearly 600 hours annually by reviewing resumes, conducting mock interviews, providing student mentorship, and participating in program-related activities.

This model multiplies impact by aligning private investment with public leadership, enabling scalable workforce outcomes while minimizing reliance on municipal funding.

MEASURED OBJECTIVES

PMSIP delivers measurable workforce and economic development outcomes, including talent pipeline development, workforce training, and direct financial investment in the community:

In 2025, we:

- Placed 87 high school interns in paid internships across 45 organizations
- Injected approximately \$200,000 into the local economy through student wages
- Received 300 applicants, with 137 students waitlisted, and 274 individuals completing workforce readiness training
- Celebrated a 100% internship completion rate
- Achieved 98% employer satisfaction rate
- Collaborated with 66 community partners to provide not only funding, but also training, mentorship, and in-kind support
- Engaged 90 volunteers contributing 577 hours of service, representing an estimated value of \$20,073.83

Approximately 70% of participating students indicate plans to live and work in Plano following postsecondary education, supporting long-term talent retention and workforce sustainability.

Employers consistently report strong outcomes, with many returning annually and extending additional employment opportunities to interns, further reinforcing PMSIP's role in building a sustainable local talent pipeline.

SECONDARY BENEFITS

PMSIP generates significant secondary economic development benefits that extend beyond direct workforce outcomes. For employers, the program serves as a strategic recruitment and talent identification tool, providing early access to emerging talent and strengthening long-term hiring pipelines. At the same time, it creates meaningful opportunities for existing employees to develop leadership and management skills through mentoring and supervising interns, supporting internal talent development and retention.

PMSIP also aligns closely with corporate social responsibility priorities, enabling companies to invest in workforce development, education, and economic mobility while making a measurable impact in the community. The program intentionally expands access for students from low-to-moderate income (LMI) backgrounds, ensuring broader participation in early career opportunities and contributing to a more inclusive and future-ready workforce.

To further support long-term talent retention, PMSIP launched an Alumni Advisory Subcommittee in 2025, focused on maintaining connections between former interns, employers, and the local business community. As this network grows, it will provide ongoing engagement opportunities, including professional networking and industry exposure, reinforcing North Texas as a destination for emerging talent.

CONCLUSION

The Plano Mayor's Summer Internship Program represents a high-impact, scalable workforce development model that aligns public leadership with private investment to deliver measurable economic outcomes.

By connecting students to meaningful work experiences and employers to emerging talent, PMSIP strengthens the local talent pipeline, supports economic mobility, and advances regional workforce development priorities.

Its proven results, strong community investment, and replicable design position PMSIP as a leading model for workforce excellence and economic development innovation in Texas and beyond.