

IGNITE!

2021-2022 FAQ

What is IGNITE!?

Through the NIU College of Business IGNITE! program, up to five DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation member companies, local start-ups and/or local nonprofit organizations can easily hire NIU College of Business students to assist with professional tasks and projects during the school year. Hiring organizations pay just \$500 for up to 32 weeks of part-time help from August 23, 2021 to May 14, 2022. Students will be paid \$11 per hour. Of that, the NIU College of Business will subsidize \$10.25 per hour with employers covering the remaining \$0.75 per hour.

How do we get involved?

Organizations must submit a position proposal online at go.niu.edu/IGNITE. Position proposals must include clear goals, defined professional responsibilities, projects and developmental opportunities, and general expectations. A College of Business committee will select five proposals to fund for academic year 2021-2022. The deadline to submit a proposal is June 15, 2021.

What are the terms of the student employment?

The students will be hired as regular NIU student workers, thus subject to all criteria, policies, and guidelines set forth by the State, University, and Federal Government.

Current student workers and Graduate Assistants are not eligible for IGNITE! positions.

These include:

- The student is registered for a minimum of 6 credit hours.
- The student meets the cumulative GPA requirements.
 - 2.0 or above for undergraduate, postgraduate and law students
 - 3.0 or above for graduate student
- Student employees may generally work a maximum of 20 hours per week, while classes are in session. During vacation periods while the university is open, students may work up to 25 hours a week.
- Student Employees should be provided one 15-minute break period for every continuous four-hour work period. The 15-minute break period should be preceded and followed by work.

The students will be paid a minimum of \$11/hour.

What is the external organization's share of the wage?

External organizations are asked to pay just \$500 toward the students' wage for the fall semester. This can be paid in one of two ways:

- The organization can hire the student and pay the student \$.075 per hour directly. NIU will pay the balance of \$10.25 per hour directly to the student.

- The organization can donate \$500 to the NIU ELC Angel Fund (approx. 32 weeks * 20 hours per week * \$0.75 per hour). NIU will pay the entire \$11 per hour directly to the student. NIU can generate an invoice, if needed.

Can we pay the student more?

Yes, the organization can supplement the student wage. In this case, NIU will pay \$10.25 per hour and the organization will pay the student \$0.75 per hour plus the amount the organization would like to supplement.

How are students managed?

The organization is responsible for selecting, hiring, onboarding, training, and day-to-day management of the IGNITE! student.

Students must submit timesheets to the NIU College of Business two times each month. This must be signed by their organizational supervisor.

How are the IGNITE! positions promoted to the students?

Organizations selected for the IGNITE! program must load their positions in Huskies Get Hired, the NIU online job board (<https://niu.edu/careerservices/huskies-get-hired/index.shtml>), and indicate that the position is limited to College of Business majors, not open to current graduate students or student workers, and funded through the IGNITE! Program.

For assistance, please contact Jan Wylde (815.753.8346 or jwylde2@niu.edu) in NIU Career Services.

IGNITE! organizations will participate in a virtual information session on August 4, from 3-4 p.m.

What resources are available to support the hiring process?

In Huskies Get Hired, organizations can choose how students apply, directly to the organization or through the Huskies Get Hired system. NIU Career Services has interview rooms for organizations to speak with students on campus, if desired.

We found the ideal student and would like to make an offer. Now what?

When a hiring decision is made, the organization should make the offer to the student and contact Amy Buhrow at abuhrow@niu.edu (815-753-5764) with the student's name when the offer is accepted.

What are the important dates and deadlines?

June 15, 2021 – IGNITE! proposals due.

June 30, 2021 – IGNITE! positions selected.

July 14, 2021 – IGNITE positions loaded on Huskies Get Hired

August 4, 2021 (5:30-6:30 p.m.) – IGNITE! Virtual Information Session

IGNITE! Impact

Since 2018 the IGNITE! Program has placed 15 students. This translates to 5,620 hours assisting start-ups, established businesses, and nonprofit organizations in the northern Illinois region. Two of the placements have resulted in full-time employment upon graduation and one will have an ongoing placement funded by the IGNITE! Partner as she continues her degree program.

My Kishwaukee College IGNITE! position has greatly helped me out when it comes to my professional development. As students, we do learn a lot about what our career will entail once we graduate but getting that hands-on experience is also so important. At Kishwaukee College I was not only able to apply all the material that I was learning in the classroom but was also able to learn about the daily functions of HR that are harder to picture from just reading the material in the classroom. My work at Kishwaukee College gave me a lot of exposure to several functions of HR and I was allowed to grow by being assigned several assignments. Now I am a full-time employee at Kishwaukee College, and I would say it is all thanks to the work I did with them during my IGNITE! internship.

-Edgar Nunez, 2020 IGNITE! Student

Our IGNITE! student has significantly impacted Datatelligent in a very positive way. She was in a sales and marketing coordinator role for us that focused on new account development. She was able to generate many leads that resulted in new clients for Datatelligent, driving significant value for us. Since we are a small startup company, the IGNITE! Program and NIU became a partner in our growth, by funding a great team member in our IGNITE! student who was willing to quickly learn and help the company grow. She will be employed directly by the company after the IGNITE! internship is over.

- Larry Blackburn, Datatelligent IGNITE! Partner

The impact on the organizations served is significant. The labor savings to date is to \$48,202. The ability to expand the labor pool allowed partners to focus on areas they otherwise would not have been able.

Our IGNITE! student was able to assist the HR department in implementing our first ever online benefit enrollment. This was especially critical while the majority of our workforce was remote due to COVID. The student also assisted in updating many of our HR practices and forms to help us operate efficiently in a remote environment. I believe we were able to launch several initiatives at the College that we would not have had the funding or staffing to complete. Having our IGNITE! student work on special projects, such as a benefit analysis report, provided us an opportunity to ensure we are able to attract and retain qualified employees by offering a competitive salary and benefit package which in turn provides a positive impact on the community in which our employees live and work. In our case we were able to transition our IGNITE! student from an intern position to a full-time professional staff position in our Human Resources department.

- Cindy McCluskey, Kishwaukee College IGNITE! Partner

This program is designed to assist the small business owner by offering a very affordable intern to assist with business operations and business promotions. Our IGNITE! student assisted the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation as our Marketing Intern. He assisted with writing and posting website news, writing and posting social media news/promotions, assisting at our events, beginning with the event communication eblasts, website registration forms, designing the e-blast, promoting the event regularly, creation of the printed program, creation of the event power point slides, corresponding with the event participants and securing their presentations, at the events, IT setup, general event set-up, take-down, check-in, photos. He also provided support to our Business Retention and Expansion committee by preparing the meeting packets, participating in the meetings, and conducting follow up work of the committee. He participated in our monthly Executive committee meetings and quarterly board meetings. At times, he conducted research for the organization of business best practices. The benefit to the student is real world hands-on work experience. The position enables the student to engage with the community members and prepares the student for future employment with a small business.

- Karen Hoyle, DeKalb County Economic Development IGNITE! Partner

The IGNITE! Program impact on Datatelligent was enormous. The program allowed us to quickly scale the Datatelligent team. We could not have done that without partnering with NIU and IGNITE! It is another way to provide funding for start-ups like us, who need additional talent to grow but cannot always afford it or find it difficult to make the right connections to find the talent. IGNITE! is excellent for small businesses and start-ups because it allows them to infuse young, fresh talent into their workforce. It also allows small businesses and start-ups the opportunity to gain valuable assistance from a college student/intern in situations where they potentially may not be able to afford to otherwise. The intern can have an impact in helping the business grow and therefore, as in our case, can be employed directly by the company after the internship is over. It was really good in helping us get started. I would highly recommend the program to start-ups. This program is directly correlated with the ability to create jobs in Northern Illinois.

- Larry Blackburn, Datatelligent IGNITE! Partner

As a small nonprofit organization with only 4 full time staff, we are always overwhelmed by the amount of work that needs to get done. Having a student through the IGNITE! program made a huge impact on our organization. We were also in the middle of a major capital campaign when we were selected for this program. Having another set of hands to keep up with donor communications was critical. While most internships may only be for one semester, this year-long program was hugely beneficial as it allowed the student to become comfortable with our organization and really excel. There is no doubt that as a direct result of the IGNITE! program, we were able to accomplish more work, raise more money, strengthen relationships, and grow our programming. This was all done through a program that we would not have been able to afford on our own as a nonprofit.

- Alex Nerad, Egyptian Theatre IGNITE! Partner