

Internship program can help Michigan's economy, Detroit chamber says

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Michigan Future Inc. President Lou Glazer says internships play a critical role in keeping Michigan college graduates in the state.

The Detroit Regional Chamber is launching a \$500,000 initiative designed to dramatically increase the number of internships available to Michigan college students.

The program, funded through a \$5 million "Wired" grant, will involve the creation of a main Web site through which companies can post internship opportunities and students can connect with businesses.

Richard Rassel, former chairman of global law firm Butzel Long, said the goal is to increase the number of internship opportunities in Michigan to 25,000 - although officials said they couldn't estimate how many opportunities exist right now.

The announcement comes as Ann Arbor-based Michigan Future Inc. released preliminary details about a report to be released in June that is expected to show where Michigan college graduates are heading after graduation. The announcement came this evening at the Mackinac Policy Conference at the Grand Hotel.

Of graduates under age 30 who were identified as crucial to helping Michigan develop a knowledge-based economy, some 46 percent have left the state since graduating. Some 11 percent of students went to Chicago. Other top destinations were California, New York and Ohio.

"They're moving to big metros and the north," Michigan Future President Lou Glazer said. "When you actually look at where our kids are going, they ain't moving to the South."

Several executives affiliated with the initiative identified internship opportunities as the key to keeping many students in Michigan.

The Web site, which officials said would go live in the fall, hopes to provide a central point at which students can search for internship opportunities and companies can post openings.

"Key is getting to the kids before they make their job decisions," Rassel said.

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