

PRESS RELEASE

Pay Our Interns Receives \$175,000 grant from College Futures Foundation

Funding to help the organization's growing work in California and in state-level advocacy in the higher education sector

LOS ANGELES — Today, Pay Our Interns announced they will be receiving a \$175,000 grant from the College Futures Foundation to expand the work of Pay Our Interns in California, which has been working directly with members of the California State Legislature and state agencies over the past year to explore and analyze how to expand paid internship opportunities within these sectors.

“We’re building on our federal successes by expanding to the state-level in California, because the culture of unpaid internships across all levels of government is a huge equity issue,” said **Carlos Mark Vera, Executive Director of Pay Our Interns**. “We’re on a mission to shift these inequities, as we push to increase paid internships across all sectors. We’re grateful to College Futures Foundation for understanding this mission. Their generous grant helps us expand our reach and continue working with stakeholders, especially with first-generation, students of color within the state. We’re confident our work will not only help eliminate barriers in California, but also create a national blueprint for change.”

The College Futures Foundation is a California-based private, non-profit foundation focused on equitable educational pathways to opportunity.

“Access to paid internships is essential to closing equity gaps for California’s higher education students,” said **Ria Bhatt, the Policy Director for College Futures Foundation**. “At their best, paid employment opportunities support students’ college affordability, expand their professional networks, enable a smoother transition into the workforce, and ultimately support greater economic and social mobility. Pay Our Interns’ work to expand access to these positions will create lasting impact for California’s college students and supports a more diverse pipeline of future policy leaders. It’s why College Futures is proud to support their work.”

Since the founding of Pay Our Interns in 2016, POI has successfully pushed Congress to allocate funds towards paid internships on the Hill, the State Department and the White House, helping to secure over \$70 million to date.

In 2021, Carlos Mark Vera, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Pay Our Interns testified before the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, on access to equitable internships. His testimony included further contextualization on broadening intern recruitment, improving access to internships, expanding remote internship opportunities and providing intern housing.

Pay Our Interns was founded in 2016 by two former unpaid interns of color. It is the nation’s leading organization fighting to ensure all students have equitable access to professional career paths through the implementation of paid internships countrywide—especially students from historically excluded communities.