



## Building Futures, Powering Hudson County: Inside the 2025 Internship Program

In 2025, Hudson County is doubling down on its commitment to growing the local workforce—and it's doing so in a big way. The Hudson County Internship Program, a new initiative led by the Hudson County Improvement Authority (HCIA) in partnership with the Hudson County Economic Development Corporation (HCEDC), is opening doors for local students to explore their futures, right in their own backyard.

GP's Restaurant Owner George Politis

Funded through a generous grant from Citizens Philanthropic Foundation and the Career Accelerator Internship Grant Program (CAIGP) through the Office of Higher Education, this paid internship program is more than just a career development opportunity. This innovative program is a community investment—connecting students with nonprofits and businesses across Hudson County, and laying the foundation for a stronger, more inclusive local economy.

Students from Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and New Jersey City University (NJCU), representing a wide range of majors and academic backgrounds, are stepping into real-world roles that reflect their passions and ambitions.

“At Citizens, we believe in the power of local businesses to strengthen communities and fuel healthy economies,” said Yajaira Hafley, Tri-State Metro Retail Executive at Citizens. “Internships are a valuable workforce development opportunity that give students the hands-on training and experiences they need to be prepared for today’s industry needs. We’re looking forward to engaging local students and investing in the next generation of talent that will help propel our New Jersey businesses forward.”

### From Campus to Career: A County-Led Commitment

What makes this program unique is how intentionally it bridges the gap between student aspirations and employer needs. Developed and implemented by Jersey City-based SRL Enterprises, the internship experience is rooted in the ACE framework: **Apply, Connect, Elevate**. Over the course of the month, SRL hosted several info sessions and readiness workshops, connected with 38 registered businesses, and proudly matched 28 interns with 27 unique companies. Through this model, students are empowered to:

- **Apply** what they’ve learned in the classroom to real-world challenges,
- **Connect** with professionals in industries aligned with their goals,
- **Elevate** their career trajectory through meaningful, skill-building experiences.

It's not just about preparing students for jobs—it's about shaping the future of Hudson County through inclusive, community-centered workforce development.

### **A Hudson County Legacy Steps Up: GP's Restaurant**

One shining example of how the program comes to life is GP's Restaurant in Guttenberg. Perched along Boulevard East with sweeping views of the Manhattan skyline, GP's is a third-generation, family-run restaurant with roots dating back to 1934 in Hoboken.

Known for its Italian-American comfort food and warm hospitality, GP's has long been a beloved neighborhood staple. But for Owner George and Operator/Manager Adriana Politis, the restaurant is about more than meals—it's about legacy, mentorship, and giving back.



Rooted in Tradition, Built for Today.

“This region has always been a first stop for immigrant families like ours,” said George Politis. “And our goal has always been to give back to the place that gave us our start.”

That community spirit is what led GP's to join the internship program, welcoming Angel Bermudez, a business and hospitality student from HCCC. Angel quickly became part of the team, diving into front-of-house operations, helping with staff training manuals, and offering insights from his own experience.

“He brought fresh perspective and curiosity,” said Adriana. “It reminded us how much potential there is in the next generation—and how important it is to open doors for them.”

### **County Collaboration for a Stronger Tomorrow**

Hudson County Executive Craig Guy sees the internship program as a perfect example of the power of possibility.

“When opportunity meets collaboration, great things happen—and that's exactly what we're seeing with the relaunch of this paid internship program now in its second year,” said Guy. “Thanks to strong partnerships between HCIA, HCEDC, and our local business community, students are gaining valuable real-world experience right here in Hudson County. It's more than an internship—it's a launchpad.”

Guy also emphasized how programs like this are preparing the region for big moments on the horizon, including FIFA26 and the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. “We're building a stronger, more skilled, and more diverse Hudson County—one opportunity at a time.”

### **Looking Ahead: Pride, Purpose, and Possibility**

As GP's approaches its remarkable 100-year milestone, the Politis family is already looking ahead to the next chapter. For George and his daughter Adriana, it's not just about preserving a legacy—it's about evolving it. Together, they're exploring fresh opportunities to deepen the restaurant's impact and bring even more vibrancy to Guttenberg. Whether it's expanding their footprint, mentoring the next generation of hospitality professionals, or championing local initiatives, the vision is clear: GP's will continue to grow alongside Hudson County. As the community thrives, so too will this beloved family business—remaining a place where culture, cuisine, and community come together in meaningful ways.

### **Shaping Futures Through Real-World Experience**

“At SRL, we believe meaningful career exploration starts with access, and that's what this internship program is all about,” said Elise White, Workforce Program Director at SRL Enterprises. “By empowering students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings and connect with businesses that reflect their interests, we're not just preparing them for jobs; we are helping shape confident, capable professionals who are ready to lead right here in Hudson County.”

**For more information about how the HCEDC can help grow your business, explore the HCEDC website!**

**Explore:**                    <https://hudsonedc.org/>

**GP's Restaurant**        <https://www.gpsrestaurant.com/>