



What is Sonoma Corps?

Sonoma Corps is an education-to-career bridge program that helps students build essential skills, identify career interests, and prepare for life after high school. Program participants will attend a fun, interactive and hands-on work-readiness training course throughout their senior year of high school. Upon graduation they will transition to a full-time paid gap-year internship with a local employer. Participants who successfully complete their gap-year internship will earn scholarship funds which can be applied to post-secondary study.

The program will focus on skilled technical careers that require interest and aptitude in advanced mechanical design, operation and maintenance ("mechatronics") which includes auto/diesel mechanics, computer science/programming, data collection and analysis, electrical/mechanical engineering and engineering tech. Participants will receive many opportunities to build a variety of skills that will prepare them for success in post-secondary education and career pursuits.

Year 1 (September 2019-May 2020)

- Students attend bi-weekly classes to introduce them to high-skill in-demand careers with local employers and to learn and practice a variety of work-readiness skills, such as workplace communication, Excel spreadsheets, project management and collaboration, resume and interview preparation, and more.
- Participants visit worksites to see and hear first-hand from employers about the high-need high-opportunity careers available and the skills required to be successful in them. Students will be provided opportunities to learn and ask questions about gap-year internship activities and responsibilities at each company.

Year 2 (June 2020-July 2021)

- Participants practice skills, explore careers and gain work experience in paid gap-year internships.
- Participants meet regularly to share observations and challenges encountered in the workplace and receive mentoring to guide integration of their learning in education and career planning.

Eligibility

- Must be enrolled in their Senior year of high school Fall 2019.
 - Must commit to attending Sonoma Corps classes 2x's monthly from September 2019 – May 2020.
- Participants who miss more than two class sessions will be dropped from the program.
- Must commit to completing a full-time (40 hours per week) internship assignment from June 2020-July 2021.
 - Must be legally allowed to work in the United States (able to complete an I-9 document).

Industry Partners	Education Partners
County of Sonoma Fleet Services	Santa Rosa City Schools
E&J Gallo	Santa Rosa Junior College
Keysight Technologies	Sonoma State University
Labcon	
Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART)	
Straus Family Creamery	

Sonoma Corps FAQ

Why is this program needed?

As reported in a recent article in Forbes magazine the gap between the skills needed for today's jobs and number of new workforce entrants prepared and trained to do them is growing wider every day. Employers nationwide report that a college degree is no longer the deciding factor for new hires; work experience, interpersonal skills and technical aptitude are now the most desired traits for a job applicant.

Students are also feeling the skills-gap; in a nationwide study conducted by Gallup, just one-third of college graduates reported that their course of study adequately prepared them for a career. Compound this result with the high cost of post-secondary education and the number of students who fail to complete a degree within six-years, and it is clear that we need to better equip our high school graduates with tools and information that connect personal interests to careers and the appropriate education pathways to be successful in them.

How come I've never heard of this program before?

Sonoma Corps is a new program and is in its pilot phase of implementation. CTE Foundation, in collaboration with key partners representing industry and education, are in the process of designing the program for implementation launch Fall 2019. Program outcomes will be evaluated for future implementation and scaling to other schools.

Is there a minimum GPA requirement to be eligible for the program?

No, there is not a minimum GPA requirement for the program. Sonoma Corps is open to all students who demonstrate interest in the program, curiosity about how their interests can lead to a fulfilling career, openness to engaging with employers to learn and practice new skills, and commitment to completing the entire 2-year program.

Are there any prerequisite classes or experiences required to be eligible for the program?

There are no prerequisite courses required for eligibility. Students who demonstrate experience and knowledge of key technical skills, such as computer science, auto mechanics, engineering, welding, applied math, maker and other STEM courses *may* receive priority, but completion of courses that teach these skills are not required.

What is a "gap-year"?

A gap-year is the interim period, usually one year, between high school graduation and post-secondary study. Many young adults decide to engage in gap-year experiences to help identify interests that will better guide them through post-secondary education and training.

What will Sonoma Corps participants be doing during their gap-year internship?

CTE Foundation and its employer partners are currently in the process of designing gap-year internships, so internship descriptions are not yet available. What is known is that internships will be full-time, paid placements at one or more of our employer partner worksites. Participants will be expected to show up on time, put away personal devices, dress appropriately for the job, be accountable for their work assignments, and demonstrate curiosity and openness to learning and practicing new skills.

How much will gap-year internships pay?

Hourly wages have yet to be determined. The Sonoma Corps planning committee is estimating that internships will pay somewhere around \$17-18/hour to start.