

# SummerWorks Helps Our Community Prosper

by Loren Podwill  
Bullivant Houser Bailey

*It's important that, as citizens and business leaders, we provide opportunities to youth in our community. I'm proud of Bullivant's partnership with SummerWorks and impressed by the professionalism and enthusiasm of the young adults that have worked with us.*

- Loren Podwill

Do you remember your first job? Mine was at a resort in the New York Catskill Mountains (of the movie *Dirty Dancing* fame). There I learned among other things, to be comfortable communicating with lots of total strangers, a skill that has served me well in my career as a trial attorney.

A teen's first job experiences are crucial to gaining the skills and experience to build an economic foundation and transition to adulthood. But today, only one in four teenagers can find a summer job. That's why two years ago Bullivant partnered with Worksystems, Inc. and their SummerWorks program. Through SummerWorks, local youth - especially those from diverse and low-income communities - can get a paid, 180-hour internship and an on-ramp to career success.

This summer, we had the privilege to work with Inna, a young woman from Ukraine. She arrived with bright eyes, enthusiasm and an interest in the

legal profession. Inna was a quick study and very good with detail - swiftly mastering aspects of our filing system, back office work and phone system. She was eager to contribute and a joy to be around. We set up opportunities for her to job-shadow alongside our paralegals and attorneys to enhance her experience.

We were so impressed with Inna's enthusiasm and diligence during the summer that when we were later planning for our receptionist's parental leave, we decided to give Inna a call. Even though school limited her availability, we worked around this. The intern program, and our positive experiences with it, inspired us to provide the opportunity to a young person in our community. We could have easily gone the typical temporary staffing route. I have to admit, I was a bit nervous but I'm glad we did it.

*"I am so thankful for my internship at Bullivant and then being hired by the firm afterwards. Having the opportunity to interact with people in the legal profession has strengthened my desire to become an attorney and it also has given me the tools to progress towards my goal with excitement."*

- Inna Voronova



Loren & Inna

Inna has been an exceptional employee, but she is not alone. There are many youth in our community with potential who just need opportunities to learn critical workplace skills that can only come through real work experience. Over the last decade, teenagers and young adults have experienced the steepest drop in employment rates. You can make a difference. I encourage my colleagues to learn more about the program and consider opening your office this summer to a SummerWorks intern.

*SummerWorks is a youth workforce development initiative of Worksystems, Inc., a non-profit organization that pursues and invests resources to improve the quality of the workforce in the City of Portland, Multnomah and Washington Counties. To learn more, contact Reese Lord (503.478.7340 or email [rlord@worksystems.org](mailto:rlord@worksystems.org)) or visit [www.worksystems.org/summerworks](http://www.worksystems.org/summerworks).*