

Employers sought to hire teachers as summer interns; Uplink Initiative program is designed to give educators experience in the business world.

By Diane Stafford

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Kansas City employers: Can you spare \$8,500 to hire a well-educated, highly motivated teacher for eight weeks this summer?

The UpLink Initiative has 145 applications from teachers from 16 area school districts for its TeacherTech summer internships, which are designed to give teachers experience in the business world.

So far, though, only 14 positions have been committed by area organizations.

The \$8,500 covers the teachers' salaries and administrative fees for the program.

"We really need to get the word out because we have some tremendous, qualified applicants who have gone through a rigorous application process," said Lisa Adkins, YouthFriends president. "Most of the teachers have master's degrees. Many are bilingual. They can do many things."

UpLink is a YouthFriends program backed by a grant from the Kauffman Foundation. It provides teachers with paying summer jobs that allow them to better see the work world applications of what they teach.

The program's ultimate goal is to help teachers get students interested in classes and jobs in the sciences, math, engineering and technology fields.

Adkins emphasized that the summer internships do not have to be directly in a science or technology application. One commitment already received is for a human resources position.

In addition to teacher internships during the summer, the UpLink program includes school-based mentoring, student internships and job shadowing opportunities.

Adkins said internship commitments have been received from American Century, H&R Block, Bayer Animal Health, CVS, GE Transportation, GE Energy, KCP&L, KU Med Center, Walz Tetric Advertising, the Kauffman Foundation and Science City.

The application deadline is Friday. The exact dates of the eight-week internships will vary slightly.

Business representatives may go to www.yf-uplink.org or call Laura Norris, executive vice president, at YouthFriends, (816) 842-7082, for information.

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