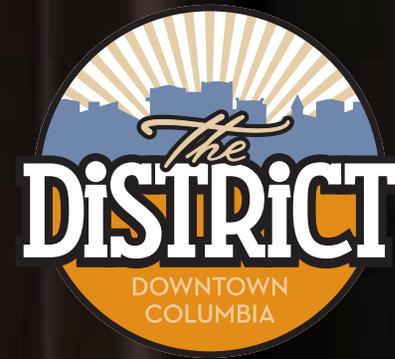


Partners in Education Program
The District + Douglass High School

IDA Downtown Achievement Awards



DOUGLASS

A photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, there is a black metal bench and a trash can. The street is lined with various buildings, including a white building with a brown awning and a brick building. A traffic light is visible on the right side of the street, and an American flag is flying on a pole in the background. The sky is blue and there are trees in the scene.

With the formation of a new CID, a primary goal was stepping up the services of our Clean Team.

At the same time, we wanted to build a bridge to the teens in the nearby neighborhood to avoid some looming public safety issues.

The solution was to partner with the neighboring alternative high school to address teens' immediate educational needs and work on basic job skills—all while helping them feel they had a stake in downtown.



Little did we know how important this partnership would become.

We partnered with Douglass High to provide paid internships for students as members of our Clean Team.



Interns help sweep sidewalks, remove posters from light poles, and help pass out information to merchants. All are required to attend school full time.

We found that most teens acted out simply because they lacked the tools to handle anger and frustration. Our goal was to offer those tools.



Students are taught how to fill out job applications and perform in job interviews. They are also coached on the importance of a strong work ethic, life skills, and problem solving.

“Growing up, a lot of people didn’t believe that I would amount to anything,” graduating senior Mar’kiez Smith said.



Smith said he now believes he has amounted to something "huge."



"As soon as they found out I had a daughter, they tried to help me out. They helped me move into my first house, they helped me get my first job, they helped me get my first car. They even came and decorated my house when I moved in."

Terryonna Samuels,
intern

An aerial night photograph of a city. In the upper left, a large firework bursts in the dark sky, with bright streaks of light radiating outwards. Below the firework, a plume of white smoke rises from a building. The city below is illuminated by streetlights and building lights, creating a warm, golden glow. In the distance, two tall, dark smokestacks stand against the night sky. The overall scene is a vibrant depiction of a city at night during a fireworks display.

The program has also helped us tackle the inevitable litter that appears each night in college towns like ours. 79% of members feel the appearance of downtown has improved and 63% believe the sidewalks are cleaner now than before.

Calls to our office complaining about sidewalk litter have virtually ceased.

Douglass students pick up skills as interns

Douglass interns get experience.



Kit Doyle/Tribune Buy this photo

Douglass students Jyquitha Lambert, 18, left, and Donnesha Troy, 18, joke Friday while emptying trash into bins along Ninth Street. The Douglass High School students are interning with the Downtown Community Improvement District this semester to learn trade and service skills. Mark

By **CATHERINE MARTIN**

Monday, September 10, 2012 at 2:00 pm [Comments \(3\)](#)

Updated: 12:57 am, Wed May 29, 2013.

When the Downtown Community Improvement District lost one of its employees the group came up with the idea to bring on interns from Douglass High School as a temporary fix.

Two Douglass students took the job over the summer, and it worked out so well CID Assistant Director Erin Ford said, they decided to make it permanent. New interns will rotate each semester to give more students the opportunity. Three students signed up for the job in the fall.

The job consists mostly of cleaning up downtown — removing trash from sidewalks and alleys, cleaning light poles and maintaining the flier kiosk. High school students are a perfect fit for the job, Ford said, because “they’re young. ... They get things done a lot faster.”

Holding the internship in high school also results in many benefits for the students, she said.

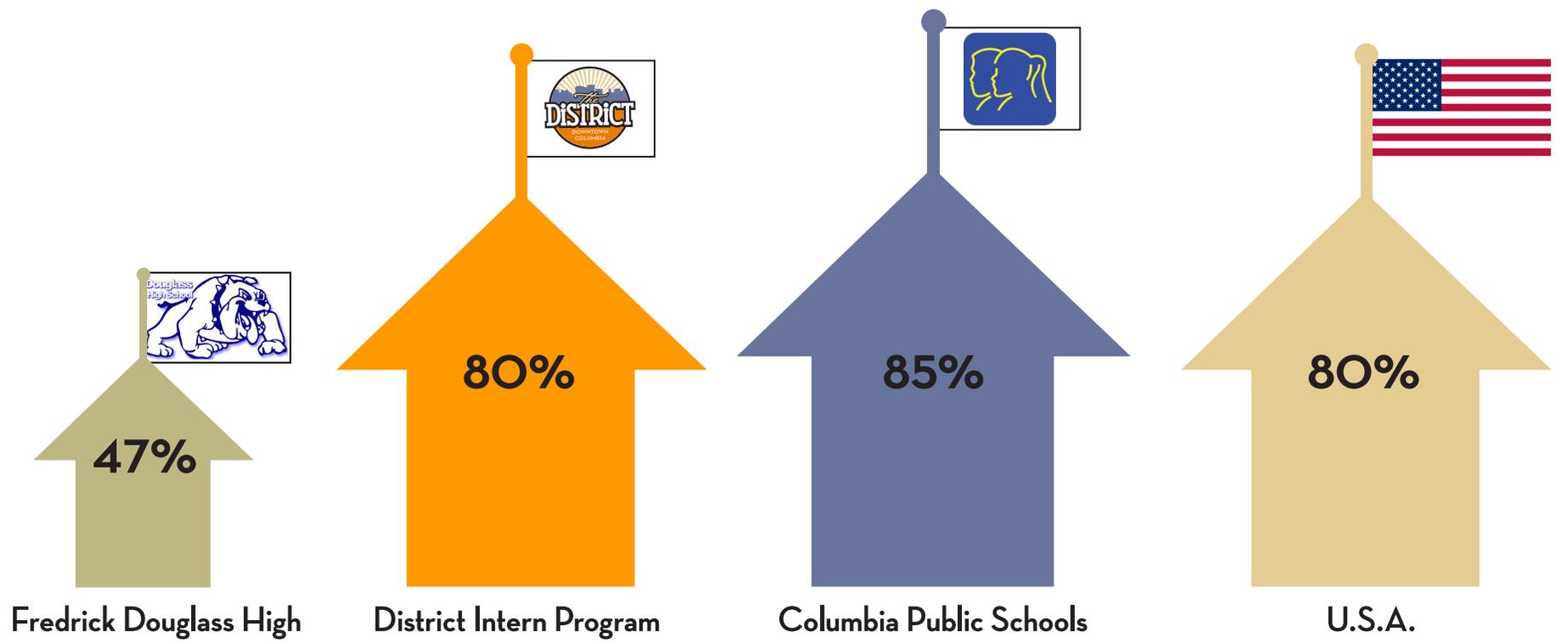
Aside from providing a paying job, the internship teaches them other important life skills, such as how to build a résumé and how to open a bank account, especially emphasizing the importance of saving money, Ford said.

“When people stop in the office to say how well the interns are doing, the students are all smiles.”

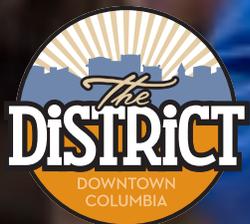
Erin Ford, Project Director

represent the district and Douglass when they are working around town, and the teaches them responsibility and respect. Ford said.

We've mentored 11 students over the last two years and our graduation rate is 80%, compared to 47% overall at Douglass High.



This May our 4 interns graduated, were awarded over \$11,000 in scholarships total, and one was chosen to give the Senior Address.



"I've got references now, so I can get another job."

O'Shea Clarkson, intern