



WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

## WHAT'S NEXT

Where do our region's employers find their talent? According to the 2022 State of Our Workforce: Western NC Talent Analysis, 70% of participating employers said they turn to friends and personal networks when it's time to hire. That means future workers need relationships in their chosen industries, and employers need to connect with younger, more diverse populations to expand their talent pools.

That's where NEXT AVL comes in. NEXT AVL is a mentorship program that works to bridge the gap between young people and employers in the Asheville area by pairing second- and third-year students from local colleges and universities with mentors who are working professionals in a range of industries. Together with our partners at Mars Hill University, Montreat College, the University of North Carolina – Asheville, Warren Wilson College, Western Carolina University, A-B Tech and the WNC Human Resources Association, we help students develop professional connections and networks that can be leveraged to find their first jobs here in Asheville after graduation.

We're invested and committed to the success of NEXT AVL because we understand that in the real, working, professional world, economic opportunity and mobility is less about who you know and much more about WHO KNOWS YOU.



## WHO'S NEXT

### Mentees

College students who are interested in professional job opportunities in the Asheville area post-graduation and able to commit 2-4 hours per month for meetings, events, and professional development opportunities over the 9-month academic year. Additionally, we intentionally seek students that meet any of the following criteria:

- First in family to attend college
- From underrepresented or historically marginalized communities
- Receives financial aid
- From culturally diverse backgrounds

### Mentors

Seasoned professionals who agree to extend their professional networks and connections to their mentees. NEXT AVL mentors commit about 6-8 hours per month working with their mentees during the 9-month program.





## OBJECTIVES

As a result of this mentorship program, students will:

- Have a clearer vision of their career aspirations and goals
- Participate in professional development opportunities
- Talk about themselves and their professional aspirations clearly and concisely in a public or private setting
- Identify 3-5 employers in the Asheville Area within their field of interest
- Build a professional network

## PROGRAM CURRICULUM

### Mentor Meetings

On a weekly basis, mentees and mentors meet one-on-one as a pair to get to know each other and discuss career aspirations. These meetings can vary in form – from a check-in text thread, to a phone call, to meeting for coffee, or checking in with a video call. Together, the mentor and mentee also develop entry-level job skills, including resume writing, interviewing, networking, and talking about their professional aspirations. Mentees and mentors will also meet once per month, in-person.

### Group Cohort Meetings

All NEXT AVL mentees meet for networking and leadership development at set times throughout the cohort duration.

### Job Shadows / Informational Interviews

Mentors and mentees work together to identify other Asheville area employers and select 2 that they would like to visit for a short job shadow or virtual information interview. The objectives are to get to know the employer, explore the field of work, and provide insight into day-to-day job responsibilities. Mentees will arrive at their job shadows independently without their mentors, but mentors will help to set up the visit for their mentees.

### Networking Events

Mentors and mentees will identify 1 or 2 industry-related networking events to attend together.

### THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

