Bloomberg BNA, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bloomberg, is headquartered in Crystal City, Virginia and is a leading source of legal, tax, regulatory, and business information for professionals. Its network of more than 2,500 reporters, correspondents, and leading practitioners deliver expert analysis, news, practice tools, and guidance – the information that matters most to its customers. Below is an interview with Demedre Heulett, Corporate Counsel/Equal Employment Opportunity Manager, about its partnership with Urban Alliance.

Why do you partner with Urban Alliance?
Urban Alliance allows businesses to build a pipeline of talent by giving youth exposure to new work environments which allows them to gain experience and confidence as they grow into young adults. We view Urban Alliance as an investment in employees and in our diversity initiatives. This partnership provides Bloomberg BNA with the opportunity to continue its commitment to diversity and it helps us lend support to the local community in which we live and work. Supporting Urban Alliance in Northern Virginia is a way for us to give back to students so they can get a better understanding of how they want to move forward in life, benefits the community and Bloomberg BNA as a whole.

What is the Return on Investment for your company and community?
Having greater visibility in our community was one of the primary drivers of building this partnership with Urban Alliance. We were already active in the community, but not to the degree to which we wanted. Working with the Northern Virginia community — and particularly with Urban Alliance — has brought many benefits. There has been a tremendous positive reaction from Bloomberg BNA staff to being able to work with students, help shape their career aspirations and provide support to the students as they try to figure out what their next stage of life will be (from college to the workforce). This is a great opportunity and our Urban Alliance interns have been very well received as they have helped us immensely.

How does Urban Alliance meet other business needs?
There are a lot of other outcomes and benefits that we didn’t plan for when we initially engaged with Urban Alliance. Since the inception of this relationship, we have expanded our partnership with Urban Alliance by hosting several professional development events onsite and our employees have been overwhelmingly supportive. Bloomberg BNA employees have repeatedly volunteered to participate in these events which not only gives them an opportunity to support our corporate philanthropic objectives, but also allows them to work side by side with staff they may not interact with during their workday. This helps to form a sense of collaboration across our organization. Now through these events Bloomberg BNA employees are working together on initiatives in which they can take great pride. We are building an internal sense of community and comradery within the organization and this alliance is an integral part of those efforts.

What have you learned from partnering with Urban Alliance and working with their Interns?
All companies should examine how they want to be viewed in their local communities. Bloomberg BNA has developed a diversity and inclusion program that focuses on working with a diverse set of organizations to open doors professionally in our community. Partnering with Urban Alliance as part of our diversity initiative has been a big step in this initiative, and we’ve had such a positive experience with Urban Alliance and our interns that it has opened doors for us to build relationships with other organizations. Our management team sees it as a way to help advance our business.

“Partnering with Urban Alliance is a great opportunity to mentor and guide students as they think about their future while providing Bloomberg BNA the ability to be active in the local community.”
— Demedre Heulett, Corporate Counsel/Equal Employment Opportunity Manager
**Tells us about an Urban Alliance Intern who has been successful.**

Urban Alliance Interns Kevin and Alejandra work in the Facilities Department at Bloomberg BNA. Mentored by Cindy Clearwater, Facilities Manager, they have done extensive work assisting in the renovations of Bloomberg BNA’s work space. Through their experience under the program, the interns have increased their knowledge of Microsoft software, Bloomberg BNA’s information and technology procedures as well as customary business security and safety protocols. In addition to teaching them how to read floor plans and conduct building mapping they have increased their interpersonal skills through interaction with a wide range of Bloomberg BNA employees at various levels of the company. Both Kevin and Alejandra are quick studies, often attending construction meetings, and approach every task with a level of enthusiasm which is infectious. They are seen as an integral part of the Facilities team and the Bloomberg BNA family as a whole.

**Would you recommend this program to other employers?**

We would definitely recommend this program to others employers. This is a valuable investment. Urban Alliance does a terrific job in ensuring that their students have the ability to develop professionally under this program while their continued involvement hinges on their ability to earn good grades and perform academically. The interns are professional, continuous learners, ambitious, and truly embody Bloomberg BNA’s core values.

**Is there anything your company particularly values in the partnership that is not reflected above?**

Bloomberg BNA views this partnership as an opportunity mentor youth to assist in shaping their career goals and aspirations. By providing the interns with an overview of Bloomberg BNA, and working with them to give them the tools and skills to perform various tasks, the interns have a better understanding of their areas of interest. It is our role, as a partner of Urban Alliance and mentor of these young individuals, to determine how we can best assist them so they have a great experience. We take great pride in being able to do so!

**ABOUT URBAN ALLIANCE**

Urban Alliance empowers under-resourced youth to aspire, work, and succeed through paid internships, formal training, and mentorship. Its goal is to give youth access to professional growth and experiences. Through the course of the year, students participate in the High School Internship Program that prepares them for a life of work and self-sufficiency. All students start the program with 6-weeks of job readiness training so they are equipped to succeed in their internships and are supported throughout the program year by Urban Alliance staff, job site mentors, and continued professional development training.

Since its founding in 1996, Urban Alliance has partnered with more than 200 corporations, connected more than 2,000 young people with internships, and reached an additional 15,000 youth through job skills training and workshops. The results are impressive:

- 100% of Alumni graduate high school on time
- Over 90% of Alumni are accepted into college
- 80% of Alumni enroll in a 2– or 4-year college
- 80% of those who enroll in college persist to their second year
- More than 90% of Alumni report feeling comfortable in a professional office environment
- Over 75% of Alumni remain “connected” to a pathway—including college, employment, or a career training program—one year after completing Urban Alliance.

Urban Alliance is the only year-long employment program for under-resourced high school seniors in Washington, DC; Baltimore, MD; Chicago, IL; and Northern Virginia. For more information, please visit: [theurbanalliance.org](http://theurbanalliance.org)