



## INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

### Application Timeline

<b>Monday, March 1</b>	<b>Priority Application Deadline</b> Applications received after the priority deadline will be reviewed on a space-available, rolling basis.
<b>Monday, March 15</b>	Applicants are notified if they have advanced to the finalist phase of the application process.
<b>Monday, March 29 – Thursday, April 1</b>	Group interviews for all finalists (Spring Break)
<b>Mid-April</b>	Follow-up individual interviews for select finalists
<b>Monday, May 3</b>	Finalists notified of decision

### Application Checklist

An application is complete when all the items below have been received. You should try complete and submit your application by the priority deadline: **Monday, March 1**. However, it is important not to rush your application. We encourage you to take the time necessary to submit a thoughtful, well-prepared application.

The online application and guidance counselor recommendation are available at [www.opportunitynetwork.org](http://www.opportunitynetwork.org). If you have any questions at any point during the application process, please call 646-616-1205 or email [recruiting@opportunitynetwork.org](mailto:recruiting@opportunitynetwork.org).

#### *Checklist:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Student Application (**To Be Submitted Online by the Student**)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Guidance Counselor Recommendation (**To Be Submitted Online by Counselor**)
- \_\_\_\_\_ High school transcript including all grades from ninth grade and fall semester of tenth grade (**To Be Mailed or Faxed by Counselor**)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Signed Parent/Guardian Consent Form (**To Be Signed, Then Mailed or Faxed by Counselor Along with Transcript**)

#### Mailing Address:

The Opportunity Network  
381 Park Avenue South, Suite 1401  
New York, NY 10016

#### Fax Number:

212-545-9665  
(c/o The Opportunity Network)



## LETTER TO FAMILIES

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are delighted to inform you that your child has been chosen among a small pool of qualified candidates to apply to a prestigious six-year program for high-achieving high school students. This letter is an introduction to the program and the kinds of candidates we are seeking. In all, we will be accepting a small number of students for the incoming class of eleventh graders in Fall 2010, selected from public high schools all over New York City.

### **What is The Opportunity Network?**

The Opportunity Network is a non-profit organization that opens important doors for top-performing high school students to reach positions of influence in society as adults. Students who enter The Opportunity Network, starting their junior year of high school, are able to:

- Meet influential executives and professionals and get exposure to over twenty-five career tracks
- Apply to competitive colleges that lead to the best jobs
- Build their resumes through paid internships or special enrichment opportunities for six summers
- Make personal connections in the professional world that lead to high-level positions and rewarding careers

It is no exaggeration that students who are accepted into our program can dramatically change the course of their futures.

### **What is the Main Idea?**

Perhaps you've heard the expression, "It's all who you know." In today's world, most jobseekers find top jobs through personal and professional connections. Networking – building relationships in professional settings – is consistently cited as the number one way to get a new job; more than 75% of new hires come from a "hidden job market," where positions are not advertised but pass through word of mouth – people talking to their friends and professional contacts about available jobs. For this reason, developing relationships with executives in your field of interest is critical. This is the "secret ingredient" that, along with good grades in high school and college, and real work experience, leads to lifelong career success.

Moreover, early resume credentials are crucial, as they lay the foundation for a track record of success. Most students who land the best jobs out of college have had early job and internship experiences in high school and college, attained through personal connections or job search resources found in their institutions. We are able to open doors for our students, who, with their solid academic performance, leadership qualities and sincere dedication, start the process well before most of their peers.

These early internships demonstrate to future employers motivation, ambition and real experience, which lead to competitive jobs after college with progressively increasing responsibility, and ultimately, senior management positions.

## **Who Are We Looking For?**

We seek high-achieving and extremely motivated students for our intense, but rewarding program. Students are recruited during their sophomore year from a number of New York City schools and are selected following a rigorous application process that includes school recommendations, written applications, transcript reviews and in-person interviews. Once selected, the program begins in junior year and continues through college for a total of six years (high school junior and senior years we meet after-school; during college we meet on school breaks).

## **What Can Your Child Expect?**

### ***Career Development***

As a distinguished member of The Opportunity Network, your child will be exposed to a variety of new and exciting careers that will expand your horizons. They'll learn how to make important career contacts and seek out high-profile jobs by practicing professional etiquette, perfecting their resume and cover letter, and learning how to put their best foot forward in a job interview. During interactive classroom sessions with professional guests, they'll learn what it means to work in such fields as law, finance, public relations, consulting, marketing, the arts, sports management, science and medicine, fashion, entertainment, journalism, publishing, technology, politics, non-profit and many more. They'll pursue exciting, special summer enrichment opportunities on college campuses, research laboratories, and sites abroad and paid summer internships at major employers, including law firms, PR agencies, banks, magazines, media companies, fashion houses, political campaigns, web design firms, museums, hospitals, theater and film companies, international agencies and other organizations.

### ***Networking***

As part of the program, they will develop their networking skills, use their own business cards and have the opportunity to meet all kinds of professionals: doctors, lawyers, scientists, advertising executives, bankers, journalists, writers, marketing and PR practitioners, non-profit professionals, artists and musicians, sports management professionals, fashion designers, graphic designers, politicians, web designers, you name it! They will learn about strategies for building networks of professionals who can assist them in their job search when the time comes.

### ***College Preparation***

As a student in The Opportunity Network, they get top-quality college preparation assistance for free. They will get all the help they need in applying to college. We help with school selection, personal statements, SAT courses, financial aid applications, college visits and interview preparation, and help to advocate for them with admissions officers (we are also in direct contact with their school's college counselor). Our intensive college program provides much-needed counsel for you and your child in navigating the process, which can be daunting without help.

We hope you are getting the idea that as a student in The Opportunity Network, your child will come out with a diverse set of contacts, both mentors and peers, who will continue to support them and act as resources for them as they make their way in the working world. The Opportunity Network is more than just a network. It is a comprehensive program that will give your child access to all the tools necessary to achieve success in their future.

Sincerely,

Jessica Pliska  
Founder and Executive Director

Micah Sommers  
Deputy Director



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What exactly is a “network” and how will it help me achieve success?**

Many people think that our society is a “meritocracy,” meaning that if you are smart and work hard, you will achieve success. While these are of course important factors, in reality, it’s not always that simple. In fact, more than 75% of new hires come from a “hidden job market,” where positions are not advertised but pass through word of mouth – people talking to their friends and professional contacts about available jobs. Unfortunately, many bright and talented students are at a serious disadvantage coming out of college because they do not have access to these types of connections, or don’t know how to make the most of the connections they do have. This is why it is essential to develop a “network” - a system of mutually beneficial relationships with people who can help you find jobs, career advice, and additional networks. In turn, you can ultimately serve as a helpful contact to them as well.

The Opportunity Network (OppNet) will help ensure your career success by introducing you to our well-established network of successful professionals and by providing the skills necessary to create and expand your own network.

### **Where does OppNet recruit and how many students are accepted?**

We recruit from public schools across the city. Our students live in all five boroughs. OppNet is a very competitive program and only a select few of those we interview are accepted each year.

### **What type of time commitment is required to be a member of OppNet?**

The time commitment is not extensive during the school year, but you are required to attend all sessions, i.e. weekly afterschool classes, a weeklong college tour during your February break in eleventh grade, and occasional special evening and weekend events. You will also attend frequent college counseling sessions during the spring of junior year and the fall of senior year. Both summers after junior year and senior year, you will be placed in either a special enrichment opportunity or a full-time paid internship lasting for all or most of the summer. In college, you will attend meetings and networking events during your vacations in addition to exciting summer placements.

### **Will the time commitment prevent me from having an after-school or summer job?**

We understand that many of our students need to work in order to provide financially for themselves and/or their families. During the school year, we ask that you attend all sessions and events, but this should not prevent you from holding a non-conflicting, part-time job. In the summers, you will be expected to participate in a summer enrichment program or paid internship. These placements are mandatory, but depending on your circumstances may be part-time in order to accommodate your work schedule.

### **I am involved in a number of extra-curricular activities. Can I still participate in them and be a member of OppNet?**

We understand that many of our students are involved in sports, clubs, and other school and community activities. However, we do require attendance at meetings and significant dedication to the program, and we will not accept tardiness or absences because of other commitments. Each student is allowed a

certain number absences per year; if you miss more, you will be put on probation and risk not getting a summer placement. You are responsible for prioritizing your commitments and managing your time, so we encourage applicants to think hard and be selective with their commitments before joining us. We can help you figure out how to manage all of your priorities.

### **Do I need to know for sure which career I want to pursue?**

Definitely not. Although we work to match students with their desired career interests, if known, we do not expect you to know with any certainty at this stage what you ultimately want to pursue. We ask instead that you keep an open mind to different opportunities, and that you understand that every session, regardless of whether it seems like a career you would enjoy, can teach you something about the professional world, workplace norms and etiquette, and networking.

### **I am already involved in a career development program. Can I join OppNet as well?**

Students accepted into The Opportunity Network should not be participating in or join other programs that offer similar types of career development, college, or professional development services without first talking with program staff. Please be prepared to let us know about other programs in which you are involved or applying to this year.

### **How difficult is the work itself?**

As a member of OppNet, you will be exposed to new, dynamic topics. You will be challenged, but OppNet's application process is rigorous, so that all students accepted into the program have been carefully selected to ensure that they are able to handle the material. OppNet also offers a support system that will help you manage your workload, and you will always be able to talk to someone if you feel you need extra help with a particular topic.

### **How will OppNet help me during the college application process?**

OppNet will help you with all aspects of the college application process and make sure that you have access to the kind of support and opportunities offered to students at expensive, private schools. We offer a comprehensive college training program in which we will work with your school counselors to help address such issues as school selection, financial aid/scholarships, SAT scores, and how best to present yourself in your written applications and interviews. The college program begins with an exciting weeklong overnight college tour during the February break in your junior year. After that, you will work closely with OppNet staff who will help you to develop a timeline and strategy for successfully executing your applications, read and help edit your personal statement and other written materials, offer support and advice through the application process. In addition, we have developed relationships with a number of top colleges and universities and will leverage these connections to help your chances of being accepted.

### **How will OppNet help me pay for college? Does OppNet provide scholarships?**

OppNet is not a scholarship program. However, we provide extensive help to ensure that you are able to attend the college of your choice. We will work alongside your high school's college counselors to explore all possible options for scholarships and financial aid through seminars, information sessions, and individual counseling. We will assist you through all aspects of the aid process, from researching unique independent scholarship programs, to filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), to reaching out to counselors at colleges to help ensure you receive the best possible aid package from the school.

### **If this is a career development program, why is there a college component as well? Why do I need to go to college to be successful in my career?**

While career skills and professional networks are extremely important elements of success, they alone are not enough. Today, a college degree is necessary to gain access to the top jobs, and the skills you will learn during your time at college will give you an important edge in the professional world.

Moreover, college experience allows you to compete for summer internships that lay the foundation for a track record of success. These early internships demonstrate to future employers your motivation, ambition and real experience, which lead to competitive jobs after college with progressively increasing responsibility, and ultimately, senior management positions. For these reasons, OppNet combines its unique career development curriculum with college prep training to ensure the brightest future possible for our members.

**How long is the program?**

OppNet begins in students' junior year of high school and continues through college for a total of six years. During your junior and senior years of high school, you will be an active member engaging in weekly meetings and sessions and participating in paid summer internships. Once you go to college, we serve as a support during your transition and we will continue to help you find jobs and internship opportunities each summer, and you will participate in fun and informative workshops and networking events. Even though the program officially ends after your graduation from college, you will be a life-long member and will have access to the ever-growing OppNet Network, which will be an invaluable source of connections and opportunities as you build your career.

**What if I have trouble meeting the program's expectations due to unforeseen circumstances?**

In addition to being a professional network and educational resource, OppNet serves as a support network during high school and college years. We are always here for you should problems arise or should you face unexpected obstacles; as long as you are willing to work with us to find a solution, you will always have a home with us.



## PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your signature is a required component of your child's application process. Please sign below and have your child return this letter to his/her guidance counselor, who will sign and submit it to The Opportunity Network along with the student's transcript.

Note: The priority deadline for applications is Monday, March 1, 2010.

*I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the information contained in the Letter to Families, Information for Applicants, and Frequently Asked Questions. I hereby grant The Opportunity Network consent to request/retrieve my child's high school transcript and relevant test scores on my behalf for the purpose of determining eligibility for the program.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guidance Counselor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guidance Counselor Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date