

Work Experience Program (WEP) For Youth

PURPOSE

This policy provides guidance and establishes procedures for *providing* Work Experience for youth who have identified work experience as a goal under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

REFERENCES

Title 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 681.640

2 CFR 200

POLICY

Paid and unpaid work experience is allowable under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. The Work Experience activity must be tied to program goals on the youth's Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and provided in accordance with the requirements in 2 CFR 200.

A work experience should be a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. A work experience is primarily intended to:

1. Teach good work habits and basic work skills to those who:
 - Have never worked, or have not worked for a significant amount of time or
 - Have a history of inability to retain employment; or
2. Provide an opportunity to explore career choices in targeted industries; or
3. Assist in the development of occupational related skills along a career pathway.

Allowable work experience activities must have an academic and occupational education component, can be paid or unpaid, and include, but are not limited to, the following: summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities throughout the school year; pre-apprenticeship programs; internships and job shadowing; and on-the-job training opportunities.

The work experience is not intended to benefit the employer, although the employer may, to a limited extent, benefit from the activities performed by the participant. In addition, the work experience must not be used to replace planned or current workforce.

PROCEDURES

Training Plan: Justification for receiving work experience activities shall be documented in the youth's IEP. All participants enrolled in work experience should have a clearly defined set of goals for the work experience along with skills identified that they hope to learn or enhance. The case manager should work with the youth and the work experience supervisor to assure that they can be trained and evaluated based on these defined goals. Client notes should provide description regarding the necessity of the work experience, defined goals, and specifically outline how this supports the participant's career pathway.

Work Experience Contracts can only be written after an Employment & Services Training Counselor has determined the appropriateness of the worksite. Employers in the private for profit, as well as the private nonprofit sector, are eligible to participate in a Work Experience Contract under the following guidelines:

1. The employer *must not* be involved in a current labor dispute.

2. The employer *must not* utilize the Work Experience Program to displace current workers or to reduce the hours of those employed workers below their normal schedule.
3. The employer *must* be willing to train the assigned worker on identified tasks.

Contract Development: The Employment & Services Training Counselor in conjunction with the site supervisor will develop the Work Experience agreements. Work Experience agreements are designed to enhance the learning experience of the participant. Therefore, agreement development will take into consideration the participant's field of study, experience and abilities as they relate to the position. To further enhance this training opportunity, every participant entering into a Work Experience agreement will be required to attend a "Job Readiness" workshop **AND** successful enrollment & completion of the WorkKeys/WIN Assessment Program (when available) before placement into the Work Experience program. Participants with experience of one year or more in any given career will be exempt from participating in the same type of work experience.

Hours: Paid work experience should not exceed 600 hours. If work experience beyond 600 hours is deemed necessary to help the youth excel along their designated career pathway, approval from San Benito County management is required. Hours must comply with the rules of the California Child Labor Laws, the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, and the Affordable Care Act. The workday cannot exceed 8 hours per day, or 40 hours per week. Employment shall be no less than 30 hours of work per week. Exception may be made to reduce hours per week on a case-by-case basis and approved by AJCC Management.

Wages: Participants enrolled in a paid work experience shall be compensated an hourly wage at not less than the State or local minimum wage, whichever is higher. It is acceptable to pay wages above minimum wage based on an individual's training beyond high school, previous work experience and/or the objectives of the work experience and/or skill set required. Wages should not exceed the local wage standard for an entry-level worker in the targeted occupation. Justification for wages exceeding the local minimum wage must be documented in the participant's file.

Participants shall be paid only for the hours worked during the work experience as documented on the participant's work experience time sheet.

Incentives/Stipends: Incentives are allowable for paid and unpaid work experience as documented in the program's WIOA Incentive Policy.

Evaluation: A progress/performance report must be completed within the first 300 hours (or midway point) of the work experience by the assigned career counselor. A final progress/performance report must be submitted by the worksite supervisor at the completion of the work experience. This will ensure that each work experience is focused on the goals outlined and that the participant is clear on areas of strength and improvement.

Administrative: Youth enrolled in paid work experience must have the appropriate right to work documentation and work permits on file.

1. Youth participating in work experience must be covered by Workers' Compensation.
2. All worksites must comply with OSHA requirements.
3. No individual may be placed in a WIOA employment or work experience activity if a member of the person's immediate family is directly supervised by or directly supervises the individual.
4. Paid work experience is not an allowable activity during Follow-Up.