

Adopted Policies

Work Experience Policy

Background:

Work experience is the planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. It is designed to provide specific behavioral skills appropriate for the workplace. It may be paid or unpaid, and located in the private, nonprofit, or public sectors. It primarily functions as a workplace-values activity, as opposed to a training activity, which is for the acquisition of specific occupational or job skills.

Work experience should be designed to promote the development of good work habits and basic work skills. When combined with other services, work experience should be provided concurrently or sequentially to increase the basic education and/or occupational skills of the participant, as set out in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP). Work experience may be combined with community service or conservation service corps programs.

Federal Regulations:

WIA regulations state that WIBs are responsible for developing policies on the use and duration of both paid and unpaid work experience and internships.⁴ The regulations also state that unpaid work experience should be limited in duration, combined with other activities, and based on a service strategy identified in the IEP.

Contractors and city staff will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of intensive services, including work experience, in addressing the needs of participants and participant outcomes. In response to concerns generated by an early draft of the regulations regarding the effectiveness of work experience, the final Federal Regulations cite the School-to-Work Opportunities as responding well to participants' needs. Additionally, the initiatives of this national program, identified locally as School-to-Career Opportunities, provide many young people the needed experience to secure higher paying, higher-skilled employment.

Labor standards apply to any work experience where there is an employee-employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Policy:

We recommend that work experience is paid, and should be provided to individuals lacking a significant work history. Work experience shall be limited in duration, integrated in the individual's employment plan, and combined with other intensive services. The goal of work experience is for an individual to gain employment, and if the

⁴ Internships will not be addressed in the adult and dislocated worker programs, as internships are not expected to be widely used. Internships will be for youth 14-18 years old.

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intensive service does not assist a customer in obtaining a job, there should be further consideration of on-the-job or classroom training.

Participation in work experience should be for a reasonable length of time, based on the needs of the participant, and should be linked to achievement of a necessary skill level (skill competencies attained). The WorkSource centers shall ensure that paid work experience does not result in the loss of public benefits