



## Youth Work Experience Policy

**Effective:** July 1, 2019

**Background:** WIOA Section 129 (c) (2) (C) and 20 CFR 681.600 address work experience and define it as: planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period. Work experience may be paid or unpaid as appropriate. A work experience may take place in the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector or the public sector. Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act or, where applicable, State law. Work experiences provide youth with opportunities for career exploration and skill development. Work experiences must include academic and occupational education to enhance a trainee's prospects for long-term labor market attachment.

**Policy:** The Oswego County Workforce Development Board will make available work experiences to provide opportunities for young adults (ages 16-24) to:

- Acquire skills, (including work readiness, transferrable and/or job specific skills)
- explore career interests
- improve work history and
- develop local character references

Work experiences may be developed with a public, non-profit or private employers. The program will provide opportunities for trainees to learn skills and interact with experienced workers in a structured work environment. Up to 100% of the wages paid to a trainee may be paid by the program. Wage payments may be directly by the provider agency to the trainee, or as reimbursement to participating employers who pay wages directly to the trainee (e.g. Internships or employer wage reimbursement programs).

Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee/employer relationship exists, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act or applicable State Law. Trainees will be paid the current State minimum wage or the prevailing wage as documented by the employer or local labor market information. Consistent with section 20 CFR 680.480 of the same chapter in the Federal Register, funds provided for work experiences may not be used to directly or indirectly aid in the filling of a job opening that is vacant because the former occupant is on strike or is being locked out in the course of a labor dispute, or the filling of which is otherwise an issue in a labor dispute involving a work stoppage.

Work experiences may be:

- Summer employment opportunities and other training opportunities available year-round, including, but not limited to:

- work experiences
- pre-apprenticeship programs
- internships
- job shadowing
- employer wage reimbursement programs
- On-the-Job Training\*

\*Trainees in on-the-job training will follow the agency On-the-Job Training policy.

Duration of training will be determined by the needs of the trainee and the skills required to prepare for labor market attachment as documented in the trainee's Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

A training period of 13 weeks or 390 hours will be the standard training duration. However, waivers up to 26 weeks or 780 hours may be granted by the Director of Employment and Training, or designee, to accommodate the following circumstances:

- Personal or family medical leave of absence
- An opportunity to transition to a private sector job
- Extra time needed to complete an employment prerequisite or job specific skill (e.g. OSHA or similar certification or licensure)
- A learning disability
- A physical disability
- To allow exposure to/acquisition of additional skill sets consistent with the employment goal identified in the ISS

At least 20% of the WIOA Youth program year allocation (less administrative funding) must be spent on Work Experience. Allowable work experience expenditures include the following:

- Wages/stipends paid for participation in a work experience;
- Staff time working to identify and develop a work experience opportunity, including staff time spent working with employers to identify and develop the work experience;
- Staff time working with employers to ensure a successful work experience, including staff time spent managing the work experience;
- Staff time spent evaluating the work experience;
- Trainee work experience orientation sessions;
- Employer work experience orientation sessions;
- Classroom training or the required academic education component directly related to the work experience;
- Incentive payments directly tied to the completion of work experience; and
- Employability skills/job readiness training to prepare youth for a work experience.

To complete a work experience placement, youth provider staff will:

- Determine eligibility of youth under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- Provide occupational and work readiness skills training using the Job Zone, Career Zone and/or similar training modalities (e.g. workshops).
- Complete an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) documenting the employment goal, and work experience needs (e.g. work readiness, transferrable, and/or job specific skills)
- Make available required academic training (e.g. Metrix, HS, TASC preparatory or HSE classes, Vocational education or similar relevant academic training)
- Identify an appropriate placement based on trainee needs as outlined in the ISS
- Refer the trainee to a work site. Referrals may include a pre-placement interview and/or orientation as appropriate to trainee needs and work site protocols.
- Prepare a worksite agreement outlining roles, responsibilities and expectations for the worksite supervisor, the trainee and provider agency staff. The work site agreement will include:
  - A job description and the transferrable (a.k.a. – “work maturity competencies”), work readiness and/or job specific skills to be learned.
  - General terms and conditions including evaluation and termination forms and procedures
  - A work schedule, sample time sheet, payroll schedule, and time sheet processing instructions.
  - A job specific skills competency/training plan
  - A work maturity competency validation worksheet
  - Youth services provider contact information
  - A participant contract which outlines behavioral expectations for the trainee
  
- Enter the start date and planned end date of service into OSOS within 5 days of the actual start of service.

Waivers or variations to this process may be granted by the Director of Employment and Training or designee in the following circumstances, and will be documented in the case notes in the One Stop Operating System (OSOS):

- Regulatory or legal changes from the State, Federal or local government
- Extraordinary or special needs of a trainee

Occupational training (e.g. Job Zone / Career Zone) and Academic training (e.g. Metrix) may occur prior to or concurrent with a work experience.

Youth provider agency staff will monitor work sites periodically throughout the work experience and document in the OSOS case notes. Work sites will have the opportunity to complete an evaluation of work performance with the submission of each timesheet. Trainee performance will also be evaluated by the work site supervisor and provider agency staff at the end of the 2nd week, midpoint and end of the work experience assignment. Each evaluation will be reviewed by agency youth provider staff with the trainee and work site supervisor to identify and address or correct any behavioral or performance concerns.

Work site contracts may be terminated upon (a) mutual agreement of both parties, or (b) The unilateral action of the Director of Employment and Training or designee, when and if the employer is not providing services in accordance with the training contract.

Concerns regarding training work site performance will be reported by youth provider agency staff to the Director of Employment and Training or designee. In the event a training work site is not performing satisfactorily, a written report will be submitted to the work site addressing the areas of concern, the corrective action needed and a timeframe for improvement. The work site will be given an opportunity to explain issues impacting their ability to meet established goals and discuss concerns, and to reach agreement on a plan for corrective action. In the event a work site is not successful in meeting agreed on outcomes (e.g. work readiness, transferrable, or job specific skills acquisition by trainee), the youth provider agency may discontinue contracts with that provider. Trainees may be transferred to alternate work sites or placements may be suspended pending the outcome of corrective action plans at the discretion of the Director of Employment and Training, or designee.

Trainees will be encouraged throughout the training program to seek conventional employment and/or educational opportunities.

Trainees who do not enter conventional employment during or immediately subsequent to work experience will be re-engaged and encouraged to utilize the One Stop Career Center services and access additional employment and training resources to progress to greater socio-economic self-sufficiency.

Incentives may be provided to trainees for training achievements or benchmarks as outlined in the Youth Incentive policy (e.g. job specific skills mastery).

## **Definitions**

**Transferable skills**, also known as “work maturity competencies,” are qualities that can be transferred from one job to another.

Work maturity competencies are behaviors associated with knowledge, skills and attitudes that result in positive work performance, and thereby enhance a youth’s potential to retain employment.

Examples include:

- Being consistently punctual
- Maintaining regular attendance
- Demonstrating positive attitude

- Presenting appropriate appearance
- Good interpersonal relationships
- Completing tasks effectively

**Job specific skills** or “hard skills”, are typically observable activities involving use of tools, equipment, or the performance of activities specific to a particular workplace or job.

For example: Grounds keeping job specific skills

1. Cuts lawns, using hand mower or power mower.
2. Trims and edges around walks, flower beds, and walls, using clippers, weed cutters, and edging tools.
3. Prunes shrubs and trees to shape and improve growth or remove damaged leaves, branches, or twigs, using shears, pruners, or chain saw.
4. Sprays lawn, shrubs, and trees with fertilizer, herbicides, and insecticides, using hand or automatic sprayer.
5. Rakes and bags or burns leaves, using rake.
6. Cleans grounds and removes litter, using spiked stick or broom.
7. Shovels snow from walks and driveways. Spreads salt on public passageways to prevent ice buildup.
8. Plants grass, flowers, trees, and shrubs, using gardening tools.
9. Waters lawn and shrubs, using hose or by activating fixed or portable sprinkler system.
10. May perform minor repairs to facilities and equipment.
11. May paint fences and outbuildings.

May perform variety of laboring duties, common to type of employing establishment.

**Work Readiness Skills** – A broad range of skills which demonstrate a higher level of socio-economic self-sufficiency. Work experience encourages and provides opportunities for exposure to and acquisition of work readiness skills. The scope and type of skills will vary depending upon the needs of the trainee. Examples include:

The ability to:

- Organize activities and create schedules
- Understand how to build personal skills and access education/training
- Get to work/appointments using the best form of transportation

- Be dependable
- Anticipate problems and identify possible solutions
- Obtain necessary personal documents
- Understand requirements and responsibilities of contracts
- Open bank account
- Access community resources
- Establish independent living arrangements
- Explore career options
- Use labor market information to decide upon career
- Use variety of job search techniques
- Complete a job application
- Write a cover letter
- Prepare a resume
- Develop interview skills
- Develop telephone skills
- Follow-up after interview
- Understand employment laws and regulations
- Understand employer's expectations for attendance and punctuality
- Understand expectations for timeliness of task completion
- Be able to work without supervision
- Have a positive work ethic
- Manage multiple tasks
- Recognize problems, identify causes, create solutions
- Recognize and apply new knowledge and skills
- Develop higher order thinking skills
- Develop decision making skills
- Specify goals, generate alternatives to accomplish goals, consider risks, evaluate solutions, choose best plan of action