

WORK EXPERIENCE FOR YOUTH

Effective

July 1, 2026

Purpose

To provide guidance on paid and unpaid work experience for youth programs under Title I of WIOA. Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board (STWDB) will convey this guidance to subrecipients and other entities that provide WIOA youth activities and services.

Applies To

1. Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board (STWDB)
2. Workforce Initiative Association (WIA)
3. All Area Subrecipients

References

1. [ODJFS WIOAPL 15-13](#) Work Experience For Youth
2. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Related Documents

Not applicable

Background

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, paid and unpaid work experience is an allowable activity and one of the fourteen (14) youth program elements required to be competitively procured when selecting a youth service provider for this activity.

Definitions

- **Incentive:** remuneration to participants for successful participation and achievement of expected outcomes as defined in the individual service strategy (ISS).
- **Internship:** a system of gaining on-the-job experience by placement in a work environment for a period of time with the goal to build technical and job awareness skills. Internships may be paid or unpaid.
- **Job shadowing:** a short-term unpaid activity which introduces a participant to the workplace and provides exposure to occupational areas of interest to increase career awareness. Job shadowing is limited and allows youth to observe only.
- **On-the-job training (OJT):** training by an employer that is provided to a paid participant while engaged in productive work in a job that:
 - Provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job;
 - Is made available through a program that provides reimbursement to the employer of a percentage of the wage rate of the participant; and
 - Is limited in duration as appropriate to the occupation for which the participant is being trained, taking into account the content of the training, prior work experience of the participant, and the service strategy for the participant.

- **Pre-apprenticeship programs:** programs or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship programs and have a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, Registered Apprenticeship programs.
- **Summer employment opportunities:** an activity conducted mainly during the summer months which involves work experience as the primary strategy and must provide direct linkages to academic and occupational learning.
- **Work experience:** a planned, structured learning activity that takes place in a workplace setting for a limited period of time.

Policy & Procedure

Work experience is one of the fourteen required program elements that must be made available to all registered youth and should be offered throughout the program year. It is a planned, structured learning activity that takes place in a workplace setting for a limited period of time and has an academic and occupational education component. Work experience may be paid or unpaid.

The primary intent of work experience is to help the youth understand proper workplace behavior and what is necessary in order to attain and retain employment. Work experiences should help youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment. Work experience can serve as a stepping stone to unsubsidized employment and is an important step in the process of developing a career pathway for youth. All work experiences should expose youth to realistic working conditions and task as much as possible. Work experience also includes work-readiness classes.

Work experience must be based on identified needs of the individual youth. Use of work experience situation must be based on an objective assessment and identified on the youth's ISS or CCMEP IOP.

Paid and unpaid work experience must include academic and occupational education. The types of work experiences may include, but are not limited to, the following categories:

- Traditional work experience;
- Internship and job shadowing;
- Summer employment opportunities;
- On-the-job training; and
- Pre-apprenticeship programs.

Work experience may be conducted in the private-for profit, private non-profit and public sectors. Although a business, public agency or non-profit (hereafter collectively referred to as "work experience provider") may also receive some benefit from work experience in the form of work being done or recruiting a potential new employee, the primary goal of work experience is to benefit the participant.

Based upon individual assessment and availability of funds, youth wages may be paid to eligible youth enrolled in WIOA activities. Per section 129 (c)(4) of WIOA, not less than 20% of the youth program funds shall be used to provide youth participants with paid and unpaid work experiences. The eligibility for youth wages will be determined by the designated CCMEP youth program staff and/or program contractors.

STWDB is responsible for creating and directing policy and a service delivery strategy for administering both paid and unpaid work experience.

The Goal of Work Experience

Work experience is designed to aid eligible youth in a structured environment, learning good work habits with the focus on career exploration.

Duration of Work Experience

Under CCMEP, paid and unpaid work experience can be provided to eligible youth year-round. Participants can be assigned up to twenty hours per week in work experience.

Youth Wages

In response to scheduled increases in the federal and/or state minimum wage, STWDB set the minimum paid wage rate for all in-school youth under the age of 19 years old as the higher of the federal or state minimum wage. The minimum rate for out of school youth will be the same amount plus an additional five percent (5%) rounded to the nearest five cent increment. Each increase will take effect the first day of the next pay period following any mandatory increase.

The maximum rate for both in- and out-of-school is 1.15 times the higher of Ohio or federal minimum wage. Wages are paid for participation in work experience.

Monitoring

STWDB staff or contracted entities on behalf of STWDB will monitor programs including work experience activities at least once per program year.

Responsible Party

Assistant Director, Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board

Approving Authority

Executive Director, Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board

Revision History

05-05-2021 | 07-01-2026