



Southwest Georgia Workforce Development Board  
Policy/Procedure Name: Youth Work Experience (WEX)  
Policy/Procedure #: WIOA-2017-066  
Effective Date: June 1, 2017  
Revision Date:

## **PURPOSE**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) offers 'internships and work experiences that are linked to careers' as an available individualized career service. WIOA Sec.134(c)(2)(A)(xii)(VII), defines an internship or work experience as a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time.

WIOA identifies four categories of work experience in order to determine a qualifying youth work experience program:

1. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year: paid temporary employment opportunities that provide individuals with work experience relevant to an individual's career path while further contributing to their career or skills development.  
  
Note: Summer employment opportunities that are not relevant to the educational or occupational skills and goals of the individual do not meet the requirements for Youth WEX.
2. Pre-apprenticeship programs: programs that provide individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet entry requirements for a registered apprenticeship program. Individuals participating in these programs are expected to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program upon completion (additional information can be found in TEGL 21-16).
3. Internships and job shadowing
  - a. Internships are paid or unpaid and provide individuals with the opportunity to apply classroom learning to a work-based environment with the intention of furthering their learning through professional experience.
  - b. Job Shadowing applies classroom learning to professional experience by participating in a typical work day as a shadow to a competent worker in the field.
4. On-the-job Training (OJT): training by an employer to a paid participant (treated as a regular employee) that involves actively participating in productive work that offers the participant relevant skills and knowledge to fully and adequately perform the duties of the job upon completion of the training program.

The goal of youth work experience should be to expose individuals to opportunities that provide further career exploration or skill development. The work experience must also include an academic or educational component, which may occur concurrently or sequentially depending on the qualifying work experience program.

These opportunities are available for both in-school (ISY) and out-of-school (OSY) youth, and may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate and consistent with other laws, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act. An internship or other work experience may be arranged within the private for profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. Labor standards apply in any work experience setting where an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act, exists.

### **STATE POLICY**

Reference:

Georgia Department of Economic Development Policy and Procedure Section 3.4.1.5 Work Experience (WEX)

Workforce Implementation Guidance (WIG) Letter: WIG PS 16-004, Guidance Regarding Youth Work Experience

### **LOCAL POLICY**

#### Program Requirements

The intention of a work experience is to enable participants to explore career options and gain exposure to the working world and its requirements. A work experience shall be designed to enhance the employability of individuals through the development of good work habits and basic work skills. The work experience must also include an academic or educational component, which may occur concurrently or sequentially depending on the qualifying work experience program.

The purpose of a work experience is not to benefit the employer, although the employer may, to a limited extent, benefit from the activities performed by the participant. For example, individuals placed in a work experience are generally considered trainees, and should not take on roles in which the employer depends on the trainee's productivity to maintain or advance the profit margin or performance of the company or agency.

Work Experience opportunities are offered to participants when the participant's Individual Service Strategy (ISS) identifies that the participant would benefit from this activity. Justification for a work experience must be outlined in the participant's ISS. A worksite evaluation and a work experience agreement should be completed with each worksite that is utilized and a signed copy of the work experience agreement should be given to all parties to ensure that the expectations are fully understood. The work experience agreement must also include details of the academic or educational portion and how the work experience supports the ISS.

A work experience may be a standalone career service or may be combined with training or other WIOA services. Generally, although all work experiences must meet the following requirements, allowances may be offered for special workforce initiatives and programming as they arise.

- Occur in a workplace for a limited period of time (see maximum allotment below). The exact duration will be set as appropriate for the participant's employment goals, background and skill level as reflected in the Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

Youth may benefit from two work experience trainings in one program year as long as it is found, through assessment, that it would assist in meeting their training plan goals. The benefit and need must be justified and documented in the ISS.

- Provide up to 35 hours per week, subject to a maximum duration of 420 hours per work experience training.
- Assist the participant in gaining competencies and experience in order to meet local employer demands
- Be related to a career choice or interest and provide learning through work based projects
- Include an academic or educational component, which may occur concurrently or sequentially depending on the qualifying work experience program
- Pay at an hourly wage at the same rates as similarly situated employees or trainees, subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act
  - Must offer a rate of pay that meets the federal minimum wage rate (currently \$7.25/hour)

The work experience will be guided by a Work Experience Agreement, an agreement between the worksite employer and the employer of record, which will specify the occupational and employability competencies the participant will achieve in the work experience, the details of the academic or educational component and how the work experience supports the ISS, the relationship and responsibilities of all parties, the evaluation process that will outline the progress of the participant at certain intervals, and other necessary requirements.

At a minimum, the Work Experience Agreement should include the following elements:

- Names and contact information for all parties;
- Names and titles of all employer staff that are authorized to sign the timesheet for the Work Experience participant(s);
- Acknowledgement that all applicable child labor laws will be followed;
- The participant's Work Experience start and end date;
- Responsibilities and expectations of the participant, the worksite employer, and the local workforce development area (LWDA) and/or Contracted Provider;
- The job title, pay, duties, and goals for each participant;
- Details of the academic or educational component and how the work experience supports the ISS;
- A statement informing the worksite that they may be subject to worksite monitoring by both state and local representatives, as well as regular visitations by LDWA staff and/or Contracted Provider staff to check on the progress of the participants;
- Other information relevant to the specific work experience activity; and
- Signatures and dates from the site supervisor and LWDA staff and/or Contracted Provider

### Academic or Educational Component

The academic or educational component may occur concurrently or sequentially with the work experience and may occur inside or outside the worksite. The work experience employer can provide the academic and occupational component or such components may be provided separately in the classroom or through other means.

The academic or educational component could include, but not limited to, certifications as part of a pre-apprenticeship program, employability or soft skills instruction, or specific knowledge and skill instruction that leads to the successful completion of occupational tasks.

More specifically, the academic and occupational education component refers to contextual learning that accompanies a work experience. It includes the information necessary to understand and work in specific industries and/or occupations. For healthcare occupations, occupational education could include learning the duties of different types of hospital occupations such as phlebotomist, radiology tech, or physical therapist and academic education could be learning some of the information individuals in those occupations need to know such as why blood type matters, the name of a specific bone in the body, or the function of a specific ligament.

### Supportive Services

Although work experiences are individualized career services, participants are eligible for Supportive Services as if they were enrolled in training, subject to funding availability (Ref: Policy #25 – Supportive Services)

### Employer Eligibility

A work experience may be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector or the public sector. Due to work experiences being planned, structured learning experiences, the entity hosting the work experience, or worksite, must designate an appropriate manager to provide supervision and feedback to the participant at regular intervals during the course of the program.

Worksites where employers will be committed to helping participants receive the experience and training that is required for employment beyond the work experience period and are willing to work closely with program staff are appropriate.

Employers should be flexible in working with participants who have issues that may be barriers to employment. The worksite agreement will ensure that the work experience arrangements do not unfavorably impact current employees and do not impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.

Work experiences in the private for-profit sector must be structured so as not to appear to be subsidizing private for-profit operations. The work of the participant should not materially impact the profit margin of a private for-profit company.

### Unpaid Work Experience

An unpaid work experience is an activity exposing participants to the working environment, and an individual does not expect payment for tasks performed. The use of an unpaid work experience should be limited and typically are offered in combination with other services such

as an Individual Training Account (ITA). An unpaid work experience may include job shadowing. Job shadowing is a short-term activity which introduces a participant to the workplace and provides exposure to occupational areas of interest. A participant experiences the work environment to increase career awareness, observe models of behavior on the job through examples, and receives help in making career decisions. Job shadowing can reinforce the link between classroom learning and work requirements. Job shadowing is limited and allows participants to observe only.

### Training Orientation

The Service Provider staff will schedule a meeting with the participant prior to the work experience training start date to review the rules, requirements and expectations of the program including assigned worksite name, address, supervisor, worksite telephone number, job title/duties, scheduled first day of work, projected scheduled training end date, and scheduled number of hours each week. After the information is reviewed with the participant, the participant will be asked to sign an 'Acknowledgement' to verify and document his/her awareness of the worksite and training details provided.

### REFERENCES

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Public Law 113-128, enacted July 22, 2014  
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regulations, 20 CFR Parts 678, 680, 683  
WIOA Section 134(c)  
State of Georgia Workforce Development Board Policy and Procedure Manual, 3.4.1.5 Work Experience (WEX)  
Workforce Implementation Guidance (WIG) Letter: WIG PS 16-004, Guidance Regarding Youth Work Experience  
USDOL TEGL 21-16, Third Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Formula Program Guidance  
Child Labor – Georgia Laws and Rules Regulating Employment of Children  
<https://dol.georgia.gov>

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