

Checklist for Arranging Community Work Experiences

This checklist can serve as a guide for educators when setting up four distinct types of community work experiences: 1) volunteer, 2) temporary unpaid work, 3) temporary paid work, and 4) permanent paid work. This tool was designed to accompany two other Let's Get to Work informational documents: the FAQ about Student Work Experiences and the companion FAQ for Employers. Both are available in the Let's Get to Work Quick Guide at www.letsgettoworkwi.org.

Step 1: Meet as a Team & Obtain Necessary Permissions

- Meet with the student and her/his family to identify preferred types of experiences and locations where they already have established connections.
- Let the student and family know that documents including: a social security card, birth certificate, vaccination records, and school or state ID will likely be needed.
- Assist with referral to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) if needed and invite the DVR counselor to participate in a discussion about planning work experiences and potential use of DVR-funded services during the process.
- If the student has already been deemed eligible for DVR services, meet as a team to talk about the choice of vocational support providers and division of labor between school staff and the DVR-funded services (e.g. contacts to prospective employers, transportation, support at the experience(s), troubleshooting if issues arise).
- If the student has already chosen a vocational service provider, a representative from that agency will also be involved in meetings/discussions.
- Get permission forms signed (if needed by your high school/district) for the student to engage in community employment experiences if she/he is under legal guardianship.
- Make arrangements to get a work permit if the student is under age of 18.

Step 2: Check Compliance with Labor Laws

For volunteer experiences:

- The experience must be for an organization with non-profit status (educational, charitable, religious, community service).
- School staff must supervise the student(s) at all times while volunteering.
- Student(s) volunteering cannot displace one or more paid employees.
- If student(s) is under 18 and/or has guardianship in place, consent must be obtained.
- If student(s) is under 18, she/he cannot volunteer in an area or use equipment prohibited by child labor laws.

For temporary unpaid work, all 4 of the following criteria must be met:

- Student is directly trained and continually under supervision of school staff.
- No employee(s) at the business are displaced by the student.
- Student is not entitled to the job at the completion of the experience (but the business can offer employment to student).
- All parties involved understand the student is not entitled to wages or other compensation for the time spent in the experience.

For temporary paid work, determine how the student will be paid:

- The employer hires the student directly for seasonal work or a discrete set of tasks and pays wages to the student.
- Or-**
- The employer offers the work opportunity but does not hire the student directly. DVR pays the student's Temporary Work Experience wages through a third party.

For permanent paid employment, determine if On-the-Job Training (OJT) will be used:

- With the DVR Youth On-the-Job Training (YOJT) program*, the employer hires the student directly, pays wages to the student and DVR uses YOJT funds to reimburse the employer for up to 500 hours of the student's wages during the initial job training period.

-Or-

- With the "regular" DVR On-the-Job Training (OJT) program*, the employer hires the student directly, pays wages to the student and DVR uses the regular OJT funds to reimburse employer 50% of the student's wages for 12 weeks during the initial job training period.

*Working directly with DVR, the employer chooses which OJT to use unless the student will exit school services during the use of OJT, then the regular OJT must be utilized.

For ALL paid experiences:

- Ensure the wage paid to the student is a prevailing wage (at least minimum wage). This is also a requirement for DVR Youth OJT and regular OJT.
- A student must be under 20 years of age to legally be paid an Opportunity Wage (considered a training wage and less than the current minimum wage). The student can work no more than 89 days for the employer at the Opportunity Wage (must switch to prevailing/at least minimum wage thereafter).

Step 3: Confirm the Arrangement in Writing

- Establish a written agreement with the employer that spells out the commitments, responsibility, and liability.
- Get all parties involved (employer, student, parents/guardian, school staff) to review and sign the agreement.

