

THE MISSISSIPPI PARTNERSHIP WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

YOUTH WORK EXPERIENCE POLICY

Revised February 17, 2022

**The Mississippi Partnership
Workforce Development Board
Youth Work Experience Policy**

I. Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on Work Experience (WEX) for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title 1 youth programs.

II. Background

Work experience is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. 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.

III. Requirements

Under WIOA, paid and unpaid work experience is an allowable activity and one of the fourteen (14) youth program elements. The primary intent of work experience is to help youth understand proper workplace behavior and what is necessary in order to attain and retain employment. Work experience should help youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment.

A. Work Experience Categories

Work experience must be based on identified needs of the individual youth. The use of work experience must be based on an objective assessment and identified on the youth's individual service strategy (ISS).

Paid and unpaid work experience must include academic and occupational education. The types of work experience include the following categories:

- Internship and job shadowing;
- Summer employment opportunities;
- On-the-Job Training; and
- Pre-Apprenticeship programs.

B. Work Experience Expenditures

WIOA Sec.129(c)(4) requires at least 20% of the local area's annual WIOA Youth formula allocation be expended on paid and unpaid work experience for WIOA in-school and out-of-school youth. The Mississippi Partnership's youth subgrantees must incorporate work experience in their budget.

Funds provided for work experience 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, 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.

Youth participants enrolled in a paid WEX shall be compensated at an hourly rate of not less than the Federal minimum wage and up to the worksite's prevailing wage for similarly situated individuals in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills.

In-School Youth work experience hours may not exceed 140 hours and out-of-school youth work experience hours may not exceed 320 without prior written approval from the fiscal agent.

Allowable work experience expenditures include the following:

- Wages/stipends paid for participation in 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
- Participant work experience orientation sessions
- Employer work experience orientation sessions
- Classroom training or the required academic education component directly related to the work experience
- Employability skills/job readiness training to prepare youth for a work experience

Subgrantees reporting staff time towards work experience expenditures must maintain payroll records documenting staff time spent on work experience activities.

NOTE: Supportive services are a separate program element and cannot be counted toward the work experience expenditure requirement even if the supportive services assist the youth in participating in work experience.

C. Participant Eligibility

Work experience participants must meet WIOA program eligibility requirements, be enrolled into the respective WIOA program, and have received an assessment resulting in the development of the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) that documents the participant's need and benefit from work experience. In addition to need and benefit, the subgrantee must clearly document the location of the work experience and whether it is paid or unpaid.

D. Work Experience Employer Eligibility and Agreement

All WEX employers and worksites should be inspected and approved by the subgrantee before youth participants begin work experience. A WEX agreement must be developed and used for all assignments. The WEX agreement should include specific details and guidelines that must be followed by the employer and the participant. The agreement should be signed by the subgrantee and employer.

Employer/Worksite/Occupation Prohibitions

- Federal and state regulations regarding Labor Laws, including Child Labor Laws, must be followed.
- WIOA youth participants may not be employed on construction, operation, or maintenance of a facility that is used for religious instruction or worship.
- WIOA youth participants may not be placed in a WIOA work experience activity if the participant's immediate family directly supervises the participant.

E. Monitoring

Youth Subgrantees must ensure regular and on-going monitoring and oversight of WEX. Monitoring may include on-site visits, phone/email, and virtual communication with the employer and the participant.

IV. Effective Date

This policy is effective February 17, 2022. This policy will be revised as additional DOL/ETA and State guidance is received.