

Work Experience Procedure/Best Practice

Utilization of Work Experience Participants in DCF Offices: Work Experience participants may be used in local and state DCF offices to accomplish tasks that the office determines appropriate for the assignment.

Good management safeguards will be practiced to insure that Work Experience participants are not allowed to work on their own records and reports. The participants will abide by the confidentiality policies in KEESM 1220. The agency will follow the same policies and procedures as they would for a regular employee if there is any infraction of the policies. The participant may be transferred to another work site while disciplinary measures are being considered.

DCF employees who serve as supervisors for Work Experience participants may be asked to provide work references for participants. Reference information that is true, accurate and has been shared with the participant may be included in the reference information.

Orientation: Workshops may be conducted for Work Experience participants before they begin their work site assignment. These workshops may include work habits such as being on time, calling employers when absent or late, appearance, expectations of employers, listing time on a work site as work experience on resumes and job applications, and responsibilities of the client while assigned to Work Experience. Participation in these workshops should be coded as Work Experience.

This orientation to work is generally a group workshop. Information may be provided on an individual basis if necessary to ensure the participant is adequately informed prior to assignment. Information regarding participation in this type of orientation will be documented in the case record.

Assignment to this type of orientation fulfills the agency's responsibility to provide expectations and information about how to be a good employee to the client before they start the work experience assignment. See KEESM 3310.3.

Work Site Agreement Process: To be developed.

Work Site Recruitment and Development: The staff members selected to develop work sites need to be "salespersons" for the Work Experience component. Their ability to interpret and explain the objectives of the work experience component will affect community interest and support.

The staff members responsible for recruitment should consider the following factors:

1. Target groups for participation and the reasons why these were chosen.
2. Assess unmet service needs in the community.

3. Assess the potential employers availability and interest in using work experience participants.
4. Assess the diversity of job tasks to be performed. Specific data should be reviewed on: number of potential participants; diversity of the participants' job skills; information obtained on assessment, geographic location/concentration of participants; and
5. Determine the need for support services, especially transportation and child care.

The above factors will help EES staff assess the need for the worksite.

Only when preliminary aspects of planning are completed should EES staff begin to project the need for specific sites based on the number of persons expected to participate, their characteristics, and the approximate number of hours of work obligation.

The following resources may be used to help identify employers willing to provide potential worksites: City directories, telephone listings, foundation brochures, trade associations and various publications are helpful in locating additional possibilities. Letters, media advertisements or public service announcements, and group meetings have been used successfully for this purpose. Preliminary discussions should be held with the administrators or directors of business establishments which are possible work sites. While these individuals may not be involved in later operational activities, their commitment to work experience and their decisions regarding the level of participation, provision of supervision, and support are essential.

EES staff should determine the employer's interest in being and its appropriateness as a work site. The purpose and goals of work experience should be presented to potential work site employers so they understand the component's rationale, concepts and requirements. While much can be accomplished through group meetings or media presentations, it is recommended that individual contacts be made for an assessment of the employer's potential and suitability to be a work site. This may involve more than one contact since full consideration should be given to the ability of the employer to adequately handle work experience participants. The following areas should be thoroughly examined with both administrators and personnel staff of the potential employer:

1. Types of services the employer provides to the community.
2. Employer's need for work to be performed.
3. Employer's ability to provide supervision.
4. Location and accessibility of various offices.
5. Types of work experience available for participants.

6. Employer's previous experience with work programs.
7. Prospects for unsubsidized employment.
8. Employer's requirements for medical clearances, arrest and felony checks and other screenings.
9. Union agreements, contracts which affect agency operations.

The timing of the visits and contacts can be an important factor in site development. The individual contact should come early after the initial presentation of general information about the components so that interest is indicated in pursuing agreement with potential sites. It should be late enough, however, to allow time for in-house discussions and considerations before making definite commitments. The responsibilities of both the work site and the agency operating the work experience site need to be discussed. Worksite supervisors need to be advised that they may be asked to provide a reference for a worksite participant.

When it is mutually agreed by the DCF Office and the work site that participants can be assigned, written agreements which outline the responsibilities of each party should be negotiated and signed.

Ongoing Communication with Worksites: Ongoing communications with participating work sites is essential for effective program administration and will be helpful in problem solving and in identifying potential trouble spots. Individual files will be maintained for each work site.

Designated EES staff should schedule periodic on-site visits which are planned in advance so that the participant's supervisor can prepare for the visits and have time to discuss overall operations, specific problem areas, etc. When an employer initially becomes a worksite, visits maybe needed more frequently, but semi-annual visits at a minimum are recommended. Group work site supervisor meetings may be another method of communicating with work sites.