

Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council
Workforce Investment Act Policies and Procedures

Policy Name: Youth - Subsidized Work Experience Wages
POLICY #: 401

Date of Original Policy: 8/26/08
Effective Date: 8/26/08

Date of Current Revision: n/a

Purpose:

To provide policy direction regarding the use of Workforce Investment Act funds to pay wages for Work Experience (WEX) opportunities for WIA enrolled youth.

This policy only applies to WIA Youth funded programs within the SW Washington Workforce Development Area comprised of Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties

Background:

A WEX is primarily intended to teach good work habits and basic work skills for those who have never worked or who have not worked for a significant amount of time, provide the participant an opportunity to explore career choices in selected industries, and provide the participant the opportunity to develop basic occupational related skills.

Where possible, formalized occupational training and credentialing is desired. Although desired, neither permanent employment nor occupational credentials are the required outcomes of a work experience. Successful completion of a work experience is where a participant achieves his/her stated learning goals and the participant and employer are satisfied with the youth's participation in the work experience.

A work experience is designed to provide youth with opportunities for career exploration and skill development and not to solely benefit the employer. A work experience is not designed to replace an existing employee or position.

Participation in a WEX activity shall be for a reasonable amount of time, generally 2-10 weeks, based on the needs of the participant and documented in his/her Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The participant's career goal described in the ISS should be age appropriate and of interest to the youth. The participant should be placed in a WEX that meets his/her needs and interests.

Work experiences may be in the private sector, the nonprofit sector, or the public sector within Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum in Washington, and Multnomah and Columbia counties in Oregon.

Policy:

It is the expectation of the SWWDC that the employer will pay the wages to the youth for the term of the WEX. If employer is unable to pay for the wages, WIA funds may be used to pay wages for work experiences in the public, private, for profit, or non profit sectors if at least one of the following criteria is met:

Criteria

1. The duties the youth will perform expose them to and/or prepare them for post-secondary education and/or entry into a demand occupation as listed on the Qualifying Occupation List that is in a SWWDC designated target industry; or,
2. The duties the youth will perform expose them to and/or prepare them for post-secondary education and/or entry into an occupation that the SWWDC has listed as a "Provisional Demand Occupation." These are occupations listed as in balance or decline on the Qualifying Occupations but where evidence exists that there is expected to be local demand in the near term; or,
3. The work experience and its associated training components provide youth with a recognized credential in a SWWDC designated targeted industry; or,
4. The employer has agreed to provide employment for the youth upon successful completion of their work experience; or,
5. The primary focus of the work experience for the youth is the development of very basic workplace skills such as appropriate dress, timeliness, respect, common courtesies, and basic task completion and the work experience is in a SWWDC designated targeted industry or exposes youth to occupations in a SWWDC designated targeted industry.

If wages are paid by WIA funds, the participant will be paid wages at not less than the minimum wage described by State or Federal Law. All participant timesheets must be kept in the participant eligibility file.

Generally, number of youth receiving WIA paid work experiences shall not exceed 15% of an employer's total workforce.

Timeline:

A WEX will not be less than 2 weeks and not more than 10 weeks per youth participant and per employer. For example, if an employer requests 5 youth each youth's WEX will be between 2 and 10 weeks. Another example is a participant completes a 6 week WEX with one employer and then 6 months later completes another 6 week WEX with a different employer. Both scenarios are acceptable. Anything above and beyond this timeframe, it is the expectation that the employer will pay the wages for additional days/weeks. If there are extraordinary circumstances that prevent the employer from paying the wages, a waiver request can be submitted to SWWDC for approval.

Waiver Request:

On an individual basis, the WDC may waive local policy requirements for any individual with physical or sensory disabilities or other unusual circumstance and it has been determined that the desired work experience is necessary for the individual to obtain relevant work experience.

A completed WEX Waiver Request form and appropriate supporting documentation must be submitted to the SWWDC Program Manager for review.

WEX Forms and Paperwork

The following WEX forms are examples and contractors are required to complete forms with a similar format:

- Work Experience Agreement (Attachment A)
- Position Request (Attachment B)
- Learning Plan (Attachment C)
- Pre-Assessment (Attachment D)
- Post-Assessment (Attachment E)

A Work Experience Agreement must be completed signed prior to the start of the work experience. The WEX Agreement may be used for group training with a single work site provided that the learning plan, job description, work conditions, wages, and term of the agreement are the same for all participants covered under this agreement.

Each Work Experience must contain a measurable training component. The training component should be documented by using a learning plan, pre-assessment, and a post-assessment. Documentation must be kept in participant's eligibility file, which is kept with the WIA youth service provider.

References/Resources:

- Final WIA Regulations 20 CFR Part 664
- TEGL 3-99 Dated January 31, 2000

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Work Experience Agreement
- Attachment B – Position Request
- Attachment C – Learning Plan
- Attachment D – Pre-Assessment
- Attachment E – Post-Assessment
- Attachment F – WEX Waiver Request