

# PROMISING PATHWAYS TO CAREERS TOOLKIT

**A How-To Guide to Creating Quality Work-Based  
Learning Opportunities for Young People**



*This Toolkit was compiled and edited by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children*

## Acknowledgements

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## User's Guide to the *Promising Pathways to Careers Toolkit*

The major focus of this toolkit is to provide information, tips and templates to help employers create quality work-based learning experiences for young people, but there is also a section geared toward local work-based learning partners and one for afterschool providers.

There are three distinct components of the toolkit:

- ***Toolkit for Employers*** provides employers information, resources and tips to help them conduct successful career exploration and work-based learning experiences for young people. It includes information on how to identify and contact local work-based learning partners, elements of successful programs, how-to guides and checklists on conducting a high-quality job shadow or internship, and a variety of templates.
- ***Toolkit for Local Work-Based Learning Partners*** is geared to those professionals who promote, develop and/or coordinate local work-based learning opportunities for young people in their region (from now on referred to as Local Work-Based Learning Partners) -- such as Regional Career Education Partnership (RCEP) Coordinators, Chamber of Commerce staff, community-based organizations, etc. The toolkit provides information and tips on convening local partners and coordinating activities, the elements of successful work-based learning programs, and engaging more employers to participate in activities.
- ***Toolkit for Afterschool Providers*** provides information, resources and tips to help afterschool providers integrate work-based learning activities into their programs for middle and high school students. It includes information on how to identify and contact their local work-based learning partner, the benefits of incorporating these activities into afterschool programs and helpful tips to get started.

Because the toolkit contains three separate stand-alone components targeted for different audiences and provides a large variety of information and templates to help create quality work-based learning opportunities for young people, all pieces of the toolkit will likely not be appropriate or useful for all audiences. Therefore, we have the following printing options:

- Print the entire Creating Quality Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Young People Toolkit (includes all sections of the Toolkit including Local Work-Based Learning Partners, Employers and Afterschool Providers).
- Print the Toolkit for Local Work-Based Learning Partners only
- Print the Toolkit for Employers (entire employer toolkit with includes jobs shadows and internships) only
- Print the Toolkit for Employers -- Job Shadows only
- Print the Toolkit for Employers -- Internships only
- Print the Toolkit for Afterschool Providers only

## Resources

Information in this toolkit was adapted and/or extracted from a number of websites and resources including:

Corporate Voices for Working Families; <http://www.cvworkingfamilies.org/our-work/workforce-readiness>

Junior Achievement; [http://www.ja.org/programs/programs\\_job\\_shadow.shtml](http://www.ja.org/programs/programs_job_shadow.shtml)

National Academy Foundation; Preparing Youth for Life: The Gold Standards for High School Internships; <http://naf.org/internship-gold-standards>

Operation Intern: North Dakota's Future at Work; <http://www.teamnd.org/documents/Interns2.pdf>

Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills; <http://www.p21.org/>

Penn State University for the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool and Youth Development Network; The Pennsylvania Older Youth Out-of-School Time Study; <http://www.psaydn.org/Documents/2010PractitionerGuideforOlderYouthRetention.pdf>

Pennsylvania Department of Education Career Education and Work Standards; <http://www.pacareerstandards.com/>

Philadelphia Youth Network; Work Ready Philadelphia Worksite Toolkit; <http://www.pyninc.org/worksitetoolkit/index.php>

Quality Work-Based Learning Toolkit, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools <http://www.newwaystowork.org/qwbl/tools/index.html>

Quality Work-Based Learning: Guide to Creating Quality Work-Based Learning; New Ways to Work; [www.newwaystowork.org](http://www.newwaystowork.org)

Regional Career Education Partnerships Network Wiki; <http://parcep.ning.com/>

Starting and Maintaining A Quality Internship Program; Technology Council of Central PA

University of Memphis Internship Program; <http://www.memphis.edu/internships/employerhome.php>

US Department of Defense CIO for the Federal CIO Council; Federal IT Job Shadow Day Tool Kit; [http://www.cio.gov/Documents/Toolkit\\_Web.pdf](http://www.cio.gov/Documents/Toolkit_Web.pdf)

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# PROMISING PATHWAYS TO CAREERS TOOLKIT

*A How-To Guide to Creating Quality Work-Based Learning  
Opportunities for Young People*

## INTEGRATING WORK-BASED LEARNING INTO AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS: A TOOLKIT FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROVIDERS



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## **Note to Afterschool Providers About this Toolkit**

*The Promising Pathways to Careers Toolkit -- Integrating Quality Work-Based Learning Into Afterschool Programs* has been developed to provide information, resources and tips to help afterschool providers integrate work-based learning activities into their program for middle and high school students.

The toolkit includes information on whom to contact for help, the benefits of incorporating these activities into your programs and helpful tips to get you started.

Because the toolkit contains three separate stand-alone components targeted for different audiences (employers, local work-based learning partners, and afterschool providers) and provides a large variety of information and templates to help create quality work-based learning opportunities for young people, all pieces of the toolkit will likely not be appropriate or useful for all audiences. Therefore, we have the following printing options:

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## **What is Work-Based Learning?**

Work-Based Learning is any activity that occurs in the workplace and provides opportunities for young people to learn about and “try on” a variety of occupations through structured learning experiences. Students learn by observing and/or actually doing real work. Work-based learning helps young people link their academic learning with real-world job skills.

Participating in these activities helps young people understand what the jobs of the new economy are, where the jobs are, what the educational and skill requirements are for the jobs, and various pathways they can take to get the necessary education and skills. Work-based learning also teaches workplace skills, and stresses the importance of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that are necessary to succeed in today’s knowledge-based global economy.

## **The Continuum of Work-Based Learning**

Work-based learning is most effective when students experience a continuum of work-based learning opportunities throughout their middle school, high school and postsecondary years. These include career awareness, career exploration and career preparation activities.

- **Career Awareness Activities** are designed to inform young people about the vast variety of career options available in today's economy. These activities also provide students with information on education and skill requirements for jobs, compensation and workplace expectations. Some examples of career awareness activities include career presentations, workplace tours, field trips, career fairs, and career clubs.
- **Career Exploration Activities** provide young people the opportunity to learn more about a specific field of interest related to their individual career goals. Students work closely with workplace professionals and participate in developmentally-appropriate hands-on experiences. Some examples of career exploration activities include job shadows, service learning, career mentoring, and career exploration camps.
- **Career Preparation Activities** provide young people an opportunity to gain in-depth job knowledge about a specific career through a monitored work experience in which a young person links skills used in the workplace with his or her academic learning. Career preparation activities also allow for the development of real-world occupational and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Examples of work-based learning activities include internships, apprenticeships, and paid summer employment experiences.

## **Benefits of Work-Based Learning**

Connecting in-school and out-of-school youth with work-based learning opportunities not only creates benefits for the young people, but also makes good business sense too.

*Potential benefits to young people who participate in these activities include:*

- Identify skills, abilities and explore career interests
- Develop an understanding of the link between school and work
- Provide motivation to graduate from high school and pursue postsecondary education
- Think about career pathways and identify strategies to acquire necessary education and skills
- Gain a better understanding of workplace habits and develop employability and soft skills
- Have a better understanding of employer expectations
- Enhance self-esteem
- Gain valuable work experience that is geared to a career interest
- Build a resume

*Potential benefits for employers include:*

- Extra help to work on seasonal or “back burner” projects
- Help recruit a more skilled and better prepared workforce
- Boost employee morale
- Build supervisory and leadership skills within the organization
- Increased productivity
- Bring new perspectives and solutions to problems
- Provide input on ways to effectively communicate with and market to young people
- Positive public and community relations and brand awareness
- Increased opportunities to provide community leadership and gain local, state and national recognition

### **Integrating Work-Based Learning into Middle and High School Afterschool Programs**

Opportunities to explore careers and to gain exposure to the world of work are critically important to provide young people the information they need to not only make informed decisions on a career path, but to understand the education and skill requirements necessary to get there.

Afterschool (including summer) programs can play an important role in making the connection between young people and 21<sup>st</sup> century occupations by integrating work-based learning activities into their middle and high school programs.

There are a number of reasons why afterschool providers should consider integrating these activities into their programs:

- There is not time during the traditional school day. There are more and more demands on the school day so it can be difficult to carve out time for students to participate in high-quality work-based learning activities.
- Afterschool provides more flexibility and opportunities for young people to attend activities at employer worksites.
- Work-based learning provides valuable experiences to help students meet the commonwealth’s Career Education and Work standards.
- Integrating work-based learning results in higher recruitment and retention rates for middle and high school students in afterschool programs. A study conducted by Penn State University for the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool and Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) – *The Pennsylvania Older Youth Out-of-School Time Study: A Practitioner’s Guide to Promising*

*Practices for Recruiting and Retaining Older Youth*—found that in Pennsylvania, two factors that were consistently associated with high recruitment and retention of older youth were:

1. Offering career skills, internships and/or workforce development opportunities
  2. Hiring staff members with a college degree
- Providing young people with work-based learning experiences helps to keep them in school by connecting the relevance of their schoolwork to their future life success.

If you are interested in exploring the inclusion of work-based learning activities into your middle and high school afterschool programs, contact your local Work-Based Learning Partner for help. Work-based Learning Partners are those local professionals who promote, develop and/or coordinate local work-based learning opportunities for young people in their region -- such as Regional Career Education Partnership (RCEP) Coordinators, Chamber of Commerce staff, community-based organizations, etc. To identify your Local Work-Based Learning Partner, see the following --

<https://spreadsheets.google.com/cc?key=0AtjWVvCVFZu6dHdmOE9xd2RSY181NUJhb1pPX3huT0E&hl=en#gid=0>

### **Tips for Afterschool Providers to Consider When Thinking About Adding Work-Based Learning Activities to their Programs**

Below are some tips to consider as you begin thinking about integrating work-based learning into your middle/high school afterschool programs.

- **Start Small** – and gain experience and comfort. You may want to consider beginning by bringing some employers into the program to give presentations on careers, have your young people participate in a career fair, or with the help of your local Work-Based Learning Partner conduct a week-long Summer Career Camp to introduce students to a variety of occupations in a specific industry cluster (such as health care or STEM).
- **Don't Reinvent the Wheel** – there are a number of models identified in this toolkit and links to additional information in the Additional Resources section. Contact your local Work-Based Learning Partner for help and to discuss the possibility of linking your program with existing activities occurring in your area. Also reach out to the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool and Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) – [www.psaydn.org](http://www.psaydn.org) – to learn about what other afterschool providers are doing around this issue.
- **Support what is happening in the classroom** – Talk to your local school district(s) to learn what they are doing to help students achieve the PA Department of Education's Career Education and Work standards. Identify ways that you can supplement and address gaps in their efforts.

- **Ask for help** – Contact your local Work-Based Learning partner for assistance and to find out what activities are already being conducted for young people in your area and identify ways you might connect to these activities.

### Examples of Promising Models in Pennsylvania

Below are a few examples of high-quality work-based learning models that you may want to consider for your afterschool programs.

- **Industry Partnership Career Clubs**-- afterschool programming that provides opportunities for middle-school students to explore major industry clusters and jobs available in their areas. The object is to broaden the occupational knowledge of students prior to their having to make career path decisions when they enter high school. Industry Partnership Career Clubs are typically conducted by Regional Career Education Partnerships (RCEPs) at the local Workforce Investment Boards. For additional information, contact your local Work-Based Learning Partner.
- **Summer Career Camps**-- summer camp programs that assists students in making quality career decisions with interactive activities including career assessments, interviewing techniques, resume and application preparation, job shadowing, college tours and employability skills. An example is the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board’s Career Linking Academy -- <http://www.lvbep.org/Default.aspx?tabid=80>
- **SHINE Afterschool Program** – which includes elements that link work-based learning and innovative programming to ensure all students graduate from high school on time and ready for the rigors of postsecondary education. For additional information visit [www.shineafterschool.com](http://www.shineafterschool.com)

### Tips for Engaging Employers in Work-Based Learning Activities

The easiest way to get employers to participate in work-based learning activities with your afterschool students is to reach out to your local Work-Based Learning partner for assistance. However, if you need to contact employers yourself about providing work-based learning activities in your afterschool program, here are some tips to help --

1. Be prepared
  - Know the employers you are calling on
    - Any special needs?
    - Do they have a history of hiring young people?
    - Do they experience skill shortages in entry-level employees?

- Do they currently participate in any additional education outreach that you can build upon?
  - Know labor market needs and high-priority occupations in your region. To find this information, contact your local Work-Based Learning partner.
2. Develop a clear, concise plan
- Focus on the value and benefits of participating (see Benefits section above)
  - Make connections to other organizations (Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development agency, United Way, youth-serving community based organizations, etc.)
  - Make it easy for employers to begin – if appropriate, start with less demanding career exploration activities (such as company tours, presentations, participation in career fairs) and build on those successes to work-based learning initiatives (such as job shadows, internships).
  - Show employers how participation can help them meet specific workplace needs while having a positive impact on young people.
3. Communicate strategically – some suggested activities include:
- Utilize employers who are successfully providing career awareness and work-based learning activities to reach out to other employers in the region
  - Pursue opportunities to speak with other organizations (Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development agency, United Way, youth-serving community-based organizations, etc.) about your program and your plans to integrate work-based learning
  - Leverage existing campaigns and initiatives (such as Groundhog Shadow Days, WIA Summer Youth employment, career week celebrations, etc.)

### **Additional Information**

For more specific information and templates for job shadow and internship activities, see the employer component of this toolkit.

## Additional Resources

**Afterschool Alliance** -- An alliance of public, private, and nonprofit groups committed to raising awareness and expanding resources for afterschool programs. [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)

**Citizens Schools** -- a national nonprofit provider of out-of-school learning programs for middle-school students. Citizen Schools uniquely mobilizes business, civic and community volunteers to participate in education by providing hands-on apprenticeships. <http://www.citizenschools.org/>

**Corporate Voices for Working Families** – A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization to improve the lives of working families by developing and advancing innovative policies that reflect collaboration among the private sector, government and other stakeholders. [www.corporatevoices.org](http://www.corporatevoices.org)

**National Mentoring Partnership** -- helps children by providing a public voice, developing and delivering resources to mentoring programs nationwide and promoting quality for mentoring through standards, cutting-edge research and state of the art tools. [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org)

**Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool and Youth Development Network (PSAYDN)** – Pennsylvania network of afterschool providers which promotes sustainable, high-quality out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy and capacity building to enhance the welfare of Pennsylvania’s children, youth and families. [www.psaydn.org](http://www.psaydn.org)

**Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Boards** – The Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board (PA WIB) is the Governor's principal private-sector policy advisor on building a strong workforce development system aligned with state education policies and economic development goals. [http://www.paworkforce.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pa\\_workforce\\_investment\\_board/12943](http://www.paworkforce.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pa_workforce_investment_board/12943)

**Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN)**—connects individuals, organizations and systems to increase capacity and resources in order to provide high-quality preparation so Philadelphia’s youth can thrive in a regional and global economy. [www.pyninc.org](http://www.pyninc.org)

**Regional Career Education Partnerships (RCEPs)** – intermediary network that convenes local partners to provide opportunities to help prepare youth for further education and employment. <http://parcep.ning.com>

**The Coalition for Science After School** – Promotes afterschool as a vehicle to stress the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) careers <http://scienceafterschool.blogspot.com/2011/05/career-pathways-in-stem-afterschool.html>