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## Youth Employment Program (YEP)

Revised 9-23-19

RochesterWorks!

Standard Operating Procedure

### Overview:

The Youth Employment Program (YEP) is a short-term, paid work opportunity for job-ready youth, who have very little or no work experience, to gain an understanding of what it means to be in a work environment, to communicate with co-workers on business related matters, to follow regular and assigned job duties, build professional skills and more. A youth worker is matched up with a worksite and is paid minimum wage hourly during their Work Experience. Youth workers are oriented through and hired by our partners at TES Staffing (who are the official employer of record) for this program.

This opportunity is paid through Rochester Works! WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) funding and operated by Navigators. The current budget requires for each FTE Navigator to provide 1,300 hours of work experience, distributed to youth on their caseloads and to be determined by the Navigator. As part of their contractual responsibilities, 20% of a Navigator's time must be allocated to YEP-related activities. Duration of the program and hours per week will vary based upon the agreement with the Navigator, Youth Intern, and Worksite Representative. Navigators are encouraged to utilize internships to benefit as many of their clients as possible and no youth may receive more than 250 hours unless otherwise approved by RochesterWorks! Based upon maintaining the Program budget, RochesterWorks! reserves the right to reduce a Navigators total allotment of internship hours, in which case Navigators will have at least 3 weeks' notice to make adjustments to youth interns' employment plans.

### Eligibility Criteria:

For a youth customer to be eligible for the Youth Employment Program, they must first be WIOA-enrolled as an Out-of-School Youth. Youth must then meet a certain level of job readiness, as determined by their Navigator and agreed upon in the Individual Employment Plan. The client will have demonstrated interest and commitment to the program, as evidenced by consistent attendance to previous meetings and completion of all job-readiness training (JRT) activities included as benchmarks in their action plan with their Navigator.

### Suggested Activities and Preparing Youth for Internships

Prior to acceptance into YEP, the youth should meet with their Navigator for an assessment interview to determine if they are appropriate for the program and ready to begin their internship experience. This appointment acts as the main point of information sharing with the youth worker and addresses a series of subjects pertaining to the client's next steps with the program, including:

- A discussion of purpose and structure of the Youth Employment Program
- Analyzing worksite opportunities and selecting a worksite for placement
- Potentially making a connection between the worksite supervisor and the youth worker

- Paperwork, etc. unique to the selected worksite
- Scheduling the youth worker for Payroll Orientation and confirming required documentation
- Completing a Youth Orientation and Worksite Guide, if necessary
- Reviewing scheduling, rate of pay and fact that **youth cannot work overtime hours**
- If necessary, identifying any additional steps for the youth to complete before they begin their internship

The Navigator should determine a customer's professional interests, education and employment goals in considering the final placement decisions. It is then important to discuss the Youth Work Experience Program in full, our mission behind it, why they have been guided towards this program, its duration, and provide an explanation that this program is only a temporary work opportunity. Youth will be encouraged to develop positive rapport with their coworkers and worksite supervisors to obtain professional references and increase their chances of post-internship hiring.

Using all information that has been gathered before and during this process, the Navigator should have internally decided upon the optimal worksite for this youth worker. At this point, the youth worker should be informed that we have a recommended worksite considering all factors, should verify their interest in and ability to get to and from that worksite, and should verbally confirm that they are ready and able to accept the assignment. Should an appropriate opportunity be identified, but a connection with a business does not yet exist, Navigators should work with the YEP Coordinator to develop new opportunities that will benefit the youth's career goals.

### **Required Activities:**

#### **Career Zone:**

It is the discretion of the Navigator when a youth is prepared to start their internship. While any JRT activities are to be agreed upon by the youth and Navigator, there are required Career Zone activities that a youth **must** complete **prior** to beginning their internship (document attached). Documentation **must** be maintained and current in OSOS and should reflect the activities that a youth is taking to prepare for the work experience, with corresponding Service/Program Element, Achievement Objective and Comment (Using SENSE Model).

#### **Resume and Interview Preparation:**

A resume will be required prior to referral and should be completed with the assistance of the Youth Navigator. This document should be tailored towards the specific tasks a youth will be completing at their intended worksite and identify what appropriate skills they have pertinent to the internship.

The Navigator will engage youth in a Mock Interview and provide feedback on their interviewing skills and offer suggestions for improvement if necessary. As many youth have never participated in a professional interview, this will serve as beneficial practice to help to build their interviewing skills and increase their confidence when meeting with potential employers. RochesterWorks! Staff are available for support in this area if a Navigator wishes to schedule an offsite Mock Interview with the YEP Coordinator or other Youth Team Members.

#### **Onboarding Documentation, Childcare and Transportation Assistance:**

Prior to referral, Youth should be prepared with all documents required for work (Social Security Card, Photo ID, and Work Permit, if applicable), **as well as reliable childcare arrangements (if applicable)** and reliable transportation planned to and from the worksite.

#### **Final Navigator Assessment:**

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Navigators will evaluate and confirm the job-readiness of youth before initiating the referral to the YEP program and connecting with an employer. Ultimately, the Navigator should feel confident in the youth representing the Navigator, the Navigator's agency, and RochesterWorks! YEP Program.

### **Academic and Occupational Education Components:**

In determining appropriate internship placements, Navigators should align work experiences with a youth's current occupational and/or long-term career goals (and as documented on OSOS under Employment Objective). Navigators will provide educational components to youth to ensure success in their placements and career development. Educational components refer to contextual learning, with necessary information to understand and work in specific industries and occupations.

According to state regulations, work experiences **must** include Academic and Occupational Education components which:

- may occur concurrently or sequentially to work experiences.
- can take place both inside & outside of the worksite.
- can be provided by the business or in a classroom.
- are flexible and tailored to the youth.

While Occupational Education will be learned through the course of an intern's duties on the job, Academic Education will include learning some of the information that occupations need to know and should help to advance the youth in their professional development and/or through their desired occupational field/industry (based upon their documented employment objective). Appropriate academic education can be attained through additional, on-the-job training or through outside activities, including independent study (HSE, Career Zone, Work Keys, Key Train, etc.), as well as relevant post-secondary education classes and certificate programs. Please see attachment – Sample Academic and Occupational Education Components – for examples.

### **Connecting Youth to Employers:**

Navigators are responsible for creating new relationships with businesses in the community, when applicable. This is best accomplished when a youth has identified and is prepared for a specific opportunity and the Navigator is confident in pitching an identified individual to a company. or through utilizing a Navigator's existing networks. Resources are available on the internet that can provide insight into successful Job Developing techniques, but Navigators are encouraged to utilize their existing networks to identify potential placement sites. Navigators are also encouraged to share best resources with each other and connect with YEP Coordinator for insight and support.

There are many existing employer partners through RochesterWorks! programming that youth may be referred to for internship opportunities. In these instances, if a Navigator has not yet connected with the business, they should contact the YEP Coordinator, with a summary of the potential youth referral and the type of position for which they would be suited. The YEP Coordinator will then establish a connection between the business and Navigator. In instances where no relationships exist but positive youth outcomes are possible, Navigators are encouraged to collaborate with the YEP Coordinator to identify new opportunities.

Once the youth is prepared and an opportunity has been identified, the Navigator is responsible for creating a connection between the youth intern and an appropriate worksite. Internship opportunities provide the youth participant with opportunities for career exploration and skill development and should allow for any of the following:

- Youth with limited experience to develop hard and soft skills and a professional work record to help increase their employment outcomes in the competitive job-market.
- Youth to engage in career exploration in a potential industry of interest.
- Youth to 'get their foot in the door' that will help them to secure employment in a given company.

Understanding the nature of work environments, Navigators must always confirm with the selected worksite that they are able to take on a new intern at that time to ensure a good relationship with our employers. Sites may grow disinterested in participating if they ever feel inconvenienced by our program. Different employers may have preferred methods for contact and it is encouraged that Navigators and the YEP Coordinator accommodate these preferences as best as possible. While some employers may prefer telephone communications, it is beneficial to email these contacts with the youth's resume and a brief summary describing their preferred opportunities, qualifications for such placements and how the internship will assist the youth's career development. It is imperative to describe the value that a youth can bring to the worksite to demonstrate the reciprocal nature of the internship as benefitting both the youth and the worksite.

This contact serves as an opportunity to create a meeting between the worksite supervisor and the youth worker *before* the worker's first day. It is important for the supervisor to be able to meet their new intern, discuss the nature of the job, worksite expectations, dress code, and create a weekly schedule. Some employers may wish to prescreen or interview the youth prior to taking them on as interns, and many worksites have a lengthy orientation process, including background check and healthcare screening. The youth should be aware of the expected time-frame of the onboarding process, and the Navigator should communicate to youth that they should engage in professional communications throughout the process. If the worksite denies having a new intern at that time, the Navigator and youth customer should decide upon a new worksite and continue with the process, including the YEP Coordinator if necessary.

## **Employer Records**

For a business to benefit from the funding used to operate the Youth Experience Program, RochesterWorks! must maintain legal record of each business entity. The following documents are required for any business receiving a YEP intern, and hard copies must be kept on file with youth records at the Navigator's location where files are stored:

- Intern Request Form, detailing duties a youth worker will complete while engaged in internship.
- Updated W-9 form.
- Executed YEP Worksite Agreement. It is encouraged to date these for the length of the Navigator funding cycle to avoid having to resign contracts each year.

Navigators will be required to connect with the YEP Coordinator during the onboarding of new businesses. Documents should be generalized to reflect the RochesterWorks! Navigator system and to allow for sharing of documents between Navigators – with 6 potential agency partners, it is imperative to not overload worksites with additional paperwork. The YEP Coordinator will also explain to employers the potential supports available through our Business Services unit, reinforcing the reciprocal nature of the supports provided in the partnership.

## Referral Process:

- All referrals will be provided to the YEP Coordinator when connecting a youth with TES Staffing for Payroll Orientation prior to starting their work experience. A standard youth referral form should be utilized and forwarded through email, with a copy to be kept in the youth's file. This form should indicate the youth's name and corresponding information, name of worksite and location, name of worksite supervisor, internship position, and expected start date. In addition to the referral form, the Navigator should also submit:
  - A copy of the youth's resume
  - A formal job description,
  - 2 copies of the **Job Readiness Assessment Tool**: 1 completed by youth and another by Navigator
  - **Worksite Consent Form** (16-17) or (18+)

Navigator's should ensure that they have OSOS updated with information about the internship, with corresponding Funded Service, Achievement Objective and Comments using the **SENSE Model**. The YEP internship should also be added to the youth's work history in OSOS and all job entry titles should have an O\*NET Code.

## Payroll Orientation

After connecting a youth with a business for their work opportunity, interns will need to obtain Payroll Orientation through TES Staffing prior to starting their work experience. Appointments can be scheduled through e-mail or by phone, and it is encouraged to bring multiple youth to Orientation, if possible. Navigator's may attend Payroll to serve as a moderator and assist their clients with the process, but are not required. Navigators may also forward copies of documentation to TES for payroll processing, but it is encouraged for youth interns to bring these in to acclimate them to the typical onboarding process. A representative from TES will distribute and complete onboarding paperwork with the youth worker and walk interns through the payroll process.

The Navigator will provide the relevant information to TES Staffing about the internship, including start dates, location and supervisor contact information. If a worksite is new to YEP, TES will connect with the worksite to initiate the online payroll system and go over details for submitting weekly paychecks.

RochesterWorks! has partnered with Citizens Bank previously and Navigators are welcome to connect with our contact, who will meet individually with any youth workers and assist them with opening a bank account. As lost paychecks will have an associated cost to replace, it is strongly encouraged that a Direct Deposit bank be created. It is expected that a youth will receive Financial Literacy services prior to referral, to teach them how to effectively manage their money in what may be their first paid work experience.

## Duration of Work Experience and Worksite Monitoring

Work experiences are planned, structured learning experiences that occur in the workplace for a limited period of time. Each youth intern will be allotted a total of 250 hours for the duration of their work experience. This should

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provide ample time for youth to gain skills, make professional connections and obtain references, and solidify their status within a business that may be able to hire the youth in a competitive position. There may be circumstances where a youth intern will be permitted to exceed the 250-hour cap, but the Navigator must submit a written request to the YEP Coordinator, detailing why the youth should be permitted to receive more hours and continue their experience. This request will be reviewed by the Coordinator and other Program Administrators to determine if an extension will be appropriate.

The Navigator is responsible for a series of duties while a participant is completing their work experience assignment, including:

- Ensuring that the youth worker is completing their shifts and meeting worksite expectations
- Follow up with youth to track their progress and professional development
- Communicating with the worksite supervisor to check in and resolve any issues
- Conduct worksite monitoring as needed
- Inform all parties as the work opportunity is nearing its end

Communication should take place with the worksite supervisor within the first week of a new intern starting in their YEP position. If there are any immediate issues, it is the responsibility of the Navigator to collaborate with the youth worker, supervisor, and other necessary staff or partners (including YEP Coordinator) to find a solution. If the severity of misbehavior from a youth worker at a worksite exceeds a tolerable level, that worker can be terminated from their work opportunity and will be removed from the Youth Experience Program. In the instance where a youth is in good standing, but is not a good fit with the worksite, this youth can be referred to a different placement. Overall, it is the responsibility of the Navigator and YEP Coordinator to meet the needs of the Business and to maintain a successful working relationship. Responsibility lies with the referring Youth Career Services Specialist or Youth Navigator to follow up with the youth worker on their progress and experience, and to continue to provide WIOA-based supportive services.

Worksite monitoring should be scheduled as needed and conducted using the appropriate monitor forms including the Supervisor Interview Form, Participant Interview Form, and the Youth Employee Evaluation (see Program Documents section). Navigators are welcome to utilize their own forms if they see fit, but they should provide similar levels of documentation as the existing forms. Site visits are best scheduled in advanced to ensure that supervising staff and youth workers will be available for conversation, but can also be conducted unannounced as necessary. Again, it will be important in maintaining positive relationships with employers to consider the needs and schedule of a business before conducting visits.

The worksite supervisor, youth worker, YEP Coordinator and TES Staffing should all be notified one week in advance of the youth worker's final day of work. Youth will be encouraged to speak with their supervisors about continuing with employment or obtaining professional references to aid in their job search.

### **Youth Worker Funding Management**

A payroll representative from TES Staffing will provide an invoice to the YEP Coordinator weekly for the active youth workers' previous work week. This invoice will then be forwarded to appropriate Navigators for approval and remittance, which includes:

- Highlighting each line with youth on WIOA caseload enrolled in internship opportunities.
- Writing OSY (indicating Out-of-School Youth) and initialing/dating each line with enrolled youth.
- Signing and dating the entire document.

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-Invoices should be completed and emailed back as a 1-page document back to the YEP Coordinator within 5 business days.

Navigators are responsible for keeping track of the total amount of hours worked by each intern for their internal records. The YEP Coordinator will track each Navigator agency's progress to ensure they are spending down their allotment of hours. If there are any discrepancies on invoices, Navigators should contact the YEP Coordinator immediately to correct. If youth have issues with their paychecks, TES Staffing should be contacted. If an employer fails to submit hours for a week, the business and TES should both be included to ensure that hours are entered appropriately.

**Partner Staff:**

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