



ELEMENTS OF A SUPPORTIVE WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAM

At its core, work-based learning connects youths' skills to the workplace. Young people can practice the essential skills they learned in a real-world environment; establish a strong, positive work history; and start building an important professional network of peers and employers. Support from workplace or Club mentors fosters positive relationship connections youth need to grow professionally. Work-based learning experiences are shown to be among the strongest predictors of adult employment successes.

Work-based learning can include the following types of Club experiences.

- **Service learning:** A project-based model in which youth apply academic content in a real-world context. In simple terms, it's learning by doing. Use the Teens Take the Lead guide on BGCA.net to identify activities and experiences that support skill development and positive employment outcomes.
- **In-Club internship or volunteer opportunity:** Roles in the Club or Youth Center supporting programmatic and/or administrative functions based on the Club's needs. Your Club or Youth Center may run a competitive (or non-competitive) work-based learning program where youth must meet certain requirements in order to participate. Such requirements may include age, application and participation in additional learning experiences (e.g., leadership sessions, field trips, in-service training) through the duration of the program. There is no promise of wage at the conclusion of the experience. Volunteer positions are unpaid, and supervision by a program leader or Club staff is required. Additional learning experiences are not required.
- **Out-of-Club job placement:** Part-time paid work experience with an external business or company. Your Club or Youth Center can leverage community partnerships and identify companies that are favorable to hiring teens and will be willing to train and support teens post hire.
- **External internship:** Industry-specific professional work experience at an external business or company. Teens are connected to an industry professional to support their learning and professional growth. To place teens in internships, you will need established community partnerships in a variety of sectors.
- **Pre-apprenticeship:** Introductory hands-on program designed to prepare youth to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program. Pre-apprenticeships can provide academic and workplace skills that lead to postsecondary education and long-term careers. Find out more about industries that have registered apprenticeship programs at apprenticeshipusa.workforcegps.org.

SUPPORT FOR WORKING YOUTH

Supporting youth post-hire is integral to on-the-job success, and having the right staff in place to ensure youth have an optimal experience is key. As defined in our Formula for Impact's Five Key Elements for Positive Youth Development, supportive relationships with peers and adults ensure youth feel connected. Use the steps below to help you make proper connections with youth when work experiences are involved.

- **Promote ongoing engagement.** Ask youth to share their work schedules so you know when they will be available for their assigned roles at the Club or Youth Center. With your staff team, identify the right person to regularly conduct check-ins and manage work-based learning experiences. For multiple youth, develop a tracking schedule that all staff can use to keep youth engaged.
- **Help teens connect with industry and community professionals.** To ensure teens get the most out of their work experiences, set up opportunities that allow for mentorship by industry and community professionals. When identifying placement opportunities, describe how mentors can be involved in supporting meaningful learning and growth for youth workers.
- **Provide coaching and time for reflection.** Once you identify staff to manage work-based experiences, include time for coaching to discuss workplace challenges or issues that could be affecting youths' experiences. Discuss items such as school, work and Club-life balance. Ask questions and give youth the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences. Use this time to create teachable moments to encourage persistence and provide positive guidance.
- **Offer training for staff and industry-specific mentors.** Host a kick-off meeting to onboard staff and/or mentors on providing general career and education guidance; personal and professional growth; cultural diversity and inclusion awareness; and how to build a caring, emotional connection with youth workers. Provide ongoing opportunities for training and discussion to promote open and honest dialogue between you, mentors and employers.