

Work-Based Learning FAQs

Students with Disabilities

WHAT IS WORK-BASED LEARNING?

Work-based learning is a coordinated sequence of experiences designed to provide students with real-world knowledge through partnerships with local businesses and industries. These learning activities help a young person explore careers and choose an appropriate career path. Overall, the terms on which the business, the school and the student agree guide the work-based learning experiences. A training plan including assumptions and agreements is essential to the success of this type of program.

Resources:

- [Department of Education Work-Based Learning Site](#)

IS WORK-BASED LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS?

Yes! Ohio is an Employment First state, meaning that in 2012, Gov. Kasich signed an Executive Order stating that community employment is the first and preferred option for all people with developmental disabilities. This statement holds true regardless of disability category. Work-based learning can be a great part of student - focused transition planning, as part of the individualized education program (IEP) to identify a desired employment goal.

Resources:

- [Ohio Employment First](#)
- [Employment First Transition Planning Framework](#)

HOW DOES THE WORK-BASED LEARNING TRAINING PLAN RELATE TO THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM?

The work-based learning training plan should align with, not conflict with, the IEP. The learning plan and work experience are directly related to the individualized goals, objectives and transition services outlined in the student's IEP.

Resources:

- [Preparing Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities for Work: What School Leaders Need to Know About the New Legal Landscape](#)

HOW DO I APPROACH EMPLOYERS ABOUT HIRING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

Approaching employers about setting up work-based learning is the same for all students. Take the preferences, interests, needs and strengths of your students into account when setting up work sites. Strategies may include educating employers on disability myths, reaffirming that additional supports can be provided if needed, and explaining how the training plan will address potential issues and accommodations. If a student is unable to meet workplace standards, partners can put modifications and accommodations in place to meet mutual learning or training objectives.

Resources:

- [Ohio Department of Education Job Training Coordinator Manual](#)
- [Hiring Ohioans with Disabilities: A Toolkit](#) 34 CFR §361.48
- [State of Tennessee Elevator Pitch Activity](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor's Inclusive Internships Programs: A How-To Guide for Employers](#)

WHERE DO I FIND INFORMATION ABOUT LIABILITY AND INSURANCE?

Liability and insurance considerations are the same for all students. How the experience is classified and the setting in which it occurs determines liability responsibility. **Check with your school district's legal counsel for information regarding your school district's specific work-based learning opportunities.** The Ohio Department of Education encourages companies to contact The Adecco Group if they are interested in offering work-based learning opportunities or enhancing their current training programs and want to minimize their youth-employment risks.

Resources:

- [Adecco – Work-Based Learning](#)

CAN WORK-BASED LEARNING BE UNPAID?

Ideally, work-based learning takes place at a community work site with the student earning competitive wages. However, work-based learning experiences can be paid or unpaid. If a work experience is paid, students with disabilities must receive the same, competitive wages as students without disabilities. Companies also can offer training stipends for students with disabilities. These stipend amounts must be the same as students without disabilities are paid when participating in these experiences. There are laws regarding where and how long work experiences can be unpaid. **Be sure to closely follow to all unpaid work and child labor laws.**

Resources:

- [Department of Labor – Youth and Labor Laws](#)
- [SELN Unpaid Work, Internship and Volunteer Guidelines](#)

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THAT LEGISLATION AND THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) AFFECT WORK-BASED LEARNING?

WIOA prohibits school districts from entering into contract or other arrangements with entities that hold a special wage certificate to pay subminimum wages to children with disabilities (see 34 CFR 397.31). **Work-based learning experiences must occur within competitive, integrated settings to the greatest extent possible.** This is because work experiences in integrated community environments prepare students with disabilities for community-based competitive, integrated employment. Using classrooms and educational facilities as settings for work-based learning experiences tends to segregate and replicate the tasks performed in adult, sheltered employment. When this happens, students often end up in segregated employment settings once they finish school.

Resources:

- [Department of Education Secondary Transition and Workforce Development Rules and Regulations](#)
- [Preparing Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities for Work: What School Leaders Need to Know About the New Legal Landscape](#)
- [Employment First Taskforce Joint Guidance - Subminimum Wage](#)

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON CONCERNS AND CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS IN WORK-BASED LEARNING?

Appropriate site-based supervision and accommodations for students with disabilities are essential considerations. The employer, school and student will work together to develop the work-based learning training plan. The IEP team, which includes the student, should discuss and incorporate conditions for success into the work plan.

Resources:

- [Job Accommodation Network](#)
- [Department of Education Secondary Transition and Workforce Development Website](#)
- [Department of Education Secondary Transition and Workforce Development Resource Section](#)
- [Department of Education Secondary Transition Learning Modules](#)

Concern	Conditions for success the work-based learning training plan can address
Student does not have the skills to work	Identify the types of employment options and skill sets needed. This could include analyzing tasks within a business to determine those that a student can complete with and without supports. Consider including these services within the IEP. Agree that the student will not be placed at a work site without the foundational skill set or support he or she needs to learn the skill.
On-the-job supports	Determine the types of on-site support the student needs. The secondary transition planning process (Age-Appropriate Transition Assessment and Transition Services) can help define this. A combination of job coaches, co-workers, technology and environmental support may help meet the student's needs. Depending on the intensity of the support a student needs, an outside agency, such as Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, may be able to offer short-term support the school cannot provide.
Behaviors that cannot be tolerated in the community	Identify the level of self-management and self-regulation expected of students working in the community. Ensure that the educational program includes teaching these skills and that all needed on-site supports are available.
Safety Needs	Discuss safety concerns. Determine where the student will be safe and why. Explore why the team feels that working in the community is not safe. Discuss what strategies, skills, support or interventions could be provided or developed that would increase the student's safety at the integrated work site.
Transportation	Review the transportation services included in the student's IEP and provide those. If applicable, discuss public transportation and other available transportation, such as that provided by family and community members.

HOW DO I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WORK-BASED LEARNING IN MY AREA, OR SETTING UP A WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCE?

First, visit the [Ohio Department of Education Work-Based Learning Site](#). This site has an array of resources. Examples include credit options for Work-Based Learning, sample training plans, and employability skills checklists. If you have further questions, contact one of these Ohio Department of Education staff members:

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