

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
Technical Assistance Guide**

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**Work Experience**

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**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE**

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## I. Purpose of the Work Experience Activity

Work Experience is a short-term or part-time planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a public, private-for-profit, or non-profit workplace for a limited period of time, generally not exceeding 520 hours.

Work Experience is for participants who need assistance in becoming accustomed to basic work requirements and self-management skills. It should promote the development of good work habits and basic work skills. Work Experience is available to youth, adult, and on rare occasions it may be appropriate for dislocated workers.

### Secretary's Commission on Acquiring Necessary Skills (SCANS)

SCANS are foundation skills and work place competencies, which are identified as being necessary for people to succeed in the world of work. These skills provide an excellent framework for employer assessment and feedback and for enriching the worksite experience. SCANS can be incorporated throughout the Work Experience activity. The SCANS skills are included in the WIOA-40 Job Description form and are listed as Work Maturity Skills. More information about SCANS skills may be obtained in the Supervisor's Workbook (WIOA-184)

#### A. Duration

Generally, participation in Work Experience should not exceed 520 hours, unless the career planner documents their rationale for extending the duration of the Work Experience in the participant's case notes. Specific hours must be determined as part of the development of the job description and Work Experience Learning Plan (WIOA-40), and will be based on the participant's needs. The anticipated duration of Work Experience shall be recorded in the participant's Employment Plan.

**Note:** Participants in WIOA Work Experience cannot incur overtime.

**Note:** When a WIOA Work Experience is being utilized to serve a youth participant, child labor laws must be observed. The State of Idaho follows the Federal child labor regulations. Please refer to <http://www.youthrules.gov/> for a complete guide of Federal child labor laws.

#### B. Payments

All individuals participating in this activity will receive an hourly wage equivalent to the federal minimum wage. Participants are provided with FICA and Worker's Compensation coverage while enrolled and active in this activity. Payment to the participant can only be made for time actually spent in the activity or authorized state and national holidays. Authorized holiday is allowed if the employing agency provides holiday pay to similarly situated, temporary employees and the Service Provider has not expressly prohibited such payment. No vacation or sick leave is provided. **Project-based incentives must be included in the service provider agreement.**

## **II. Participant Considerations**

Participant appropriateness for entry into Work Experience is determined during the in-depth assessment process and documented in the participant file. This assessment should show a clear link between the anticipated Work Experience and potential improvement in the participant's employability. A client-centered approach for the selection of a worksite should be used for the work experience.

The Work Experience activity is an ideal setting for participants to acquire SCANS skills and work maturity skills. In addition, Work Experience can be an excellent career planning mechanism for the participant by providing occupational sampling and exposure to the unique aspects of specific vocations, including non-traditional employment opportunities. Based on a participant's experience in an actual work environment, the individual should have a strong inclination as to whether the same or similar occupation is worthy of additional exploration.

## **III. Worksite Selection**

One of the career planner's roles in identifying potential Work Experience sites is to ensure that the employer is fully aware of the requirements of WIOA. Although the Memorandum of Agreement (WIOA-48 MOA) and accompanying Work Experience Operational Guidelines (WIOA-48-A) provide detailed information, it is recommended that the career planner specifically review this information with the employer. Each of the items listed should be discussed, emphasizing the necessity for the employer to record the participant's work time on the weekly time sheet (WIOA-50) and submit it to the WIOA Payroll Unit in timely manner.

The employer should be made aware that the purpose of the Work Experience is to assist the participant gain work maturity skills (See paragraph A below) and to be exposed to the industry, trade, or occupation. It is to be a fully supervised activity and all of the employer's staff members who may be responsible for participant supervision and guidance must be knowledgeable of the program's purpose and requirements.

The career planner must be especially careful to match the participant with the employer in selecting and screening potential Work Experience sites. Factors such as location, general employment conditions, type of work, the participant's demonstrated aptitude and interest in the work offered, and availability of supervisory staff committed to a successful experience for the participant are essential considerations for the career planner.

### **A. SCANS Skills**

Participants will be better prepared to enter the labor market if they possess SCANS skills. They include basic academic skills, the ability to communicate, to adapt to new situations, and to solve problems. While these and other related skills are not technical skills, they have everything to do with long-term success in the job. A listing of SCANS skills are included in the WIOA-40 Job Description Form and are listed as Work Maturity Skills. More information about SCANS skills is included in the Supervisor's Workbook (WOA-184).

## **B. Developing Learning Rich Work**

If supervisors are to be successful coaches for the participant's learning, they should assign meaningful work, not make-work. Meaningful work will require the kind of planning and problem-solving that leads people to stretch and enhance their abilities. It will provide a benefit to the agency or community where the work is performed, and it will be a source of pride and motivation for the participant.

An ideal training site will incorporate the philosophies of learning-rich work which are:

- Participant skills can be directed and developed to perform complex tasks under appropriate supervision.
- The work assigned to participants must have real value providing a benefit to the employing organization or its participants.
- If properly designed, the work will give more back to the organization than it costs in supervisory time and other resources.
- Time must be taken to identify the skills being developed, document them, and consider their applications in other areas of the participant's life.

Career planners should be prepared to assist the work site supervisors in the development of learning rich work environments and will provide technical support for the worksite. The Supervisor's Workbook (WIOA-184) provides additional information relative to SCANS and the development of a learning rich work environment.

## **C. Learning Plans**

The WIOA career Planner has an option of using the Work Experience Job Description (WIOA-40) or the Workplan and Competency Resume (WCR) (WIOA-185) when assisting the work site supervisor in the development of a Work Experience learning strategy. A mechanism which evaluates the participant's progress in achieving these skills is also required. The Workplan Competency Resume (WCR) incorporates SCANS skills and was designed to evaluate a participant's progress in achieving these skills. If the WCR is not used, the Participant Evaluation (WIOA-175) should be used. Any deficiencies should be addressed with the participant.

The Work Experience Memorandum of Agreement, the Work Experience Job Description, WCR, and other related forms are contained in the Resources section of the WIOA IdahoWorks under the Work Experience section.

## IV. Work Experience Supportive Services

The career planner may provide supportive services to enable a participant who cannot afford to pay for such services to participate in the program. The career planner must ensure the participant is unable to obtain supportive services through other programs that provide such services and that it is necessary to enable them to participate in WIOA activities. The need for supportive services must be documented by the career planner in the participant case file. In administering supportive services, the career planner will follow procedures and requirements described in the Supportive Services-Insurance TAG.

## V. Work Experience Forms

The following is a list of forms to be completed for each Work Experience participant.

- Work Experience Memorandum of Agreement (WIOA-48)
- Job Description (WIOA-40)
- Workplan and Competency Resume (WIOA-185)
- Participant Evaluation (WIOA-175) when the WCR is not used
- W-4 Tax Withholding Form
- INS Form I-9
- WIOA Weekly Time Report (WIOA-50)
- Work Experience Operational Guidelines (WIOA-48-A)
- Supervisor's Workbook (WIOA-184)

**Note:** The Work Experience Operational Guidelines is an information publication designed for worksite staff and does not require completion; a copy should be provided to the worksite.

The Supervisor's Workbook (WIOA-184) provides SCANS skills information for the work site supervisors and should be provided to supervisors of Work Experience participants.