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ASPIRE Program Guide for Participants, 2014

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Employment Services

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

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ASPIRE Program Guide for Participants

Job training for future employment



www.maine.gov/labor/bes/aspire

Program handbook signoff

I have received a copy of the Work Activity Participant Handbook.

I understand and agree to abide by the terms of the program as outlined in the Handbook.

Name (printed): _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Maine Department of Labor
Bureau of Employment Services
and
Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Family Independence

January, 2014



A Letter from the Governor

Dear Participant:

Welcome to this program. The Departments of Education, Labor and Health and Human Services have come together to help you get the important work skills you need to develop your future career goals.

I encourage you to take advantage of all of the services these agencies can provide. Our staff has helpful tips and good advice. They can also make sure that you get help when you need it. They will help you find a worksite and show you what you need to do to make the most of that experience.

Making important changes in your life can often be intimidating, but the staff are here to help you take this important step.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul R. LePage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'P'.

Paul R. LePage

Governor

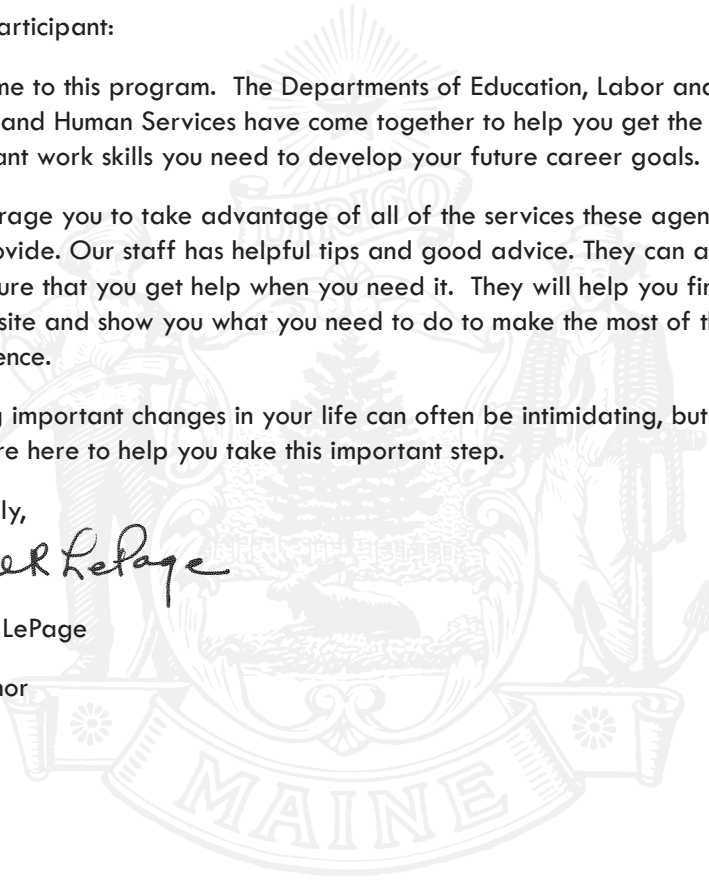


Table of Contents

Work Experience Program Introduction.....	1
Notice to All Work Experience Participants	2
Basic Work Experience Program Information.....	2
Hours	2
Holidays.....	3
Sick Leave	3
Proper Call-in Procedures	3
Proof of Absence Requirements	3
Your Worksite Development Specialists (WSDS).....	4
Accidents/Injuries	4
Time Sheet.....	5
Tardiness/Absences	5
Termination	6
CareerCenter Complaints	6
Confidentiality	6
Worksite Orientation.....	7
Monitoring	7
Participation and Work	8
Employability Development	9
Employability Skills	9
Basic Work Experience Program Information.....	10

Welcome to the work experience program!

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine Department of Labor, through a joint agreement, provide recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment (ASPIRE) help with career search activities, training and additional supports in order to return the recipient to meaningful employment and independence.



To gain the most benefit from this program you must work in partnership with your ASPIRE Specialist and Maine Department of Labor Worksite Development Specialist (WSDS) to prepare for employment. You and your ASPIRE Specialist have identified the services needed to help you better prepare for employment or complete your employment related training. As a part of your plan, you must participate in work experience activities for a set number of weeks and hours per week. The number of weeks and hours per week are determined by the ASPIRE rules. Whenever possible, your work experience sites will reflect your personal employment goals and objectives.

Based upon an assessment and the number of hours worked, ASPIRE may provide you support services such as child care, transportation or work clothes over the course of this program to help you participate in these activities.

Work experiences are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited time. Work experiences are unpaid. The work experience is also intended to provide you with an opportunity to:

- gain successful work habits and job skills.
- learn the attitude and skills needed for work.
- provide services that help improve your community.



As part of your training and employment plan, your Worksite Development Specialist will help you connect with additional Career-Center services to help you better prepare for and move to employment. These services will include Maine Job Bank registration, resume

development, interviewing and learning how to conduct a more successful job search.

The success of the work experience program depends upon your ability to be an active participant in this process and to use all of the resources that are being provided to lead you down the road to success.

To help achieve these goals and to ensure that the work experiences are meaningful and constructive, this handbook has been prepared to provide a detailed description of the program rules and regulations and the rights and responsibilities of all those involved. It is our hope that this guide provides answers to your questions and helps lay the groundwork for your successful transition to a new job that matches your skills and training.

Note to all work experience participants

The program is designed to give you a work experience for a limited time and to help you explore possible future careers that interest you. You will also learn the skills you need to find and to keep a job on your own. You may also learn about other training or educational programs.

Hours

Weekly hours may exceed 30 hours per week; however, you must perform the minimum number of hours required by your ASPIRE Specialist. In collaboration with your ASPIRE Specialist, you may take on additional hours. Needed supports must be available and in place before you can take on extra hours.

Holidays

You will not be required to participate in work experience activity during holidays. If a holiday falls on a normal work day (Monday through Friday), you must make arrangements with your Worksite Supervisor to make up the lost time during the other four days of your scheduled work week. You must coordinate your schedule with your supervisor.

Sick leave

Work experience participants do not receive time off for being sick. However, the work experience program does understand that individuals do get sick and may miss required work hours. It is possible to make-up hours missed because of absence as long as you have received **advanced** supervisor approval and proper call-in procedures have been followed.

Proper Call-In Procedures

If you are going to be absent, you **MUST** use proper call-in procedures. These are:

- You **MUST** call your immediate supervisor at the beginning of each day you will be out.
- You should call in **BEFORE** your usual start time at the worksite. If the supervisor is not available, you must leave a message at the worksite with a telephone number where you can be reached so the supervisor can call you back later in the day and speak to you directly.
- If you do not call in each day when you are going to be absent, your work experience may end early. This could affect your TANF benefits.

Proof of Absence Requirements

Documentation from an appropriate medical professional is required for any absence lasting more than three days in a row, for any illness causing repeated absences, or if the supervisor suspects abuses of the policy.



Your Worksite Development Specialist (WSDS)

You will be assigned a Worksite Development Specialist from the Maine Department of Labor upon entering the program.

- The WSDS is responsible for identifying and placing you in worksites that best match your job/career interests and abilities.
- The WSDS will help your Worksite Supervisor prepare you for your new job as needed. Your WSDS will advise you if you have any work-related problem(s).
- Your WSDS will visit your worksite regularly and meet with your supervisor to monitor your progress and performance.
- Your WSDS is a point of contact for you and your supervisor in case you have problems at the worksite or with your worksite supervisor.
- He or she, in addition to your Worksite Supervisor, is responsible for checking your hours and reporting your progress to your ASPIRE Specialist. During that visit and throughout the experience, he/she will work with you to make sure you have a successful learning experience that leads to a successful transition to employment.

Accidents/injuries



If an accident or injury occurs at your worksite, you must notify your Worksite Supervisor immediately. She or he will follow their organization's procedures for reporting and for getting medical care, if needed. You and your Worksite Supervisor should notify the WSDS immediately.

Time sheets

You must write the proper number of hours you actually participate in work activities on your weekly Time and Evaluation Form.

Each day, you should write down the actual time that you were at the worksite that day to make a permanent record of the days and hours you participated.



Lunch periods should not be added to your reported activity hours.

TIME SHEETS must be filled out and signed by you and your Worksite Supervisor **IN INK**.

- Your Worksite Supervisor should sign the time sheet only after he or she has checked the accuracy of hours and after you have signed the time sheet.
- If your regular Worksite Supervisor is not available to sign your time sheet, arrangements must be made for another agency representative to sign.
- Your time is based only on actual hours worked and other activities approved by your ASPIRE Specialist.

Tardiness/absences

If you are going to be late or absent for any reason, including illness, call your Worksite Supervisor. Your Worksite Supervisor will record your absences and tardiness on the Worksite Record of Attendance and report them to your WSDS and ASPIRE Specialist. Excessive tardiness or absences may be cause for termination from the program.

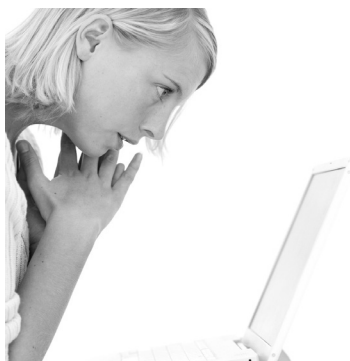
Termination

The WSDS reserves the exclusive right to terminate participants under the direction of your ASPIRE Specialist. Should a serious problem, (such as not

complying with work experience program rules and regulations, work standards, safety standards, or being a danger to her/himself or others), arise at a particular worksite, a Worksite Supervisor may dismiss you for the rest of the day or until you, your supervisor, your WSDS, and, in some cases, your ASPIRE Specialist can meet to discuss possible solutions. If the problem cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the WSDS, with approval of your ASPIRE Specialist, may permanently remove you from the worksite. Your WSDS will let you know of their decision and must submit the proper paperwork to your ASPIRE Specialist for early terminations.

CareerCenter services complaints

The Maine CareerCenter system strives to assure that every customer's needs are met and that customers are satisfied with the services they receive. From time to time, customers of the employment services system may have complaints about processes, violations of employment laws, employer practices, discrimination, unsafe working conditions, and the like.



When possible, complaints and grievances will be resolved locally without invoking the more formal processes. The overall objective of the CareerCenter Complaint Resolution Process is to resolve complaints quickly to the satisfaction of the complainant whenever possible.

If you have a complaint about services received from CareerCenter, please speak to your WSDS; he or she will assist you.

Confidentiality

The identity of the complainant(s) and any persons who furnish information relating to, or assisting in, an investigation of a complaint shall be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible, consistent with applicable law and a fair determination of the complaint.

Worksite orientation

At least part of your first day at the worksite will be devoted to a worksite orientation period. These activities may include.

1. Tour of the worksite.
2. Introduction to other employees.
3. Explanation of any equipment that is used including use, care, and proper storage.
4. Where to find supplies.
5. Definition of job-specific vocabulary that will be used on the job site.
6. Special procedures such as phone usage or how files are organized.
7. A complete briefing about the job: where and how it is to be conducted and who will provide help if needed.
8. The establishment of a weekly schedule.

Monitoring

Worksites will be monitored to ensure that all aspects of the program are meeting the needs of the participants.

Specifically, the monitoring will:

1. Ensure that all participants are provided with safe and sanitary working conditions.
2. Ensure that participants are receiving the most rewarding work experience possible.
3. Identify problem areas and recommend modifications.
4. Evaluate supervision and work experiences at each job site.
5. Conduct interviews with Supervisors and participants at all participating agencies for feedback on the operation of the program.

Participation and work

For many participants, this work experience may be your first chance to test your abilities and to learn about the kinds of careers in which you would like to work one day, the kind of jobs that you would like to do, and what

an employer would expect you to do on the job.

You may not be familiar with the basics skills of being employed, such as calling in when you are sick or late, asking questions about your work assignments if you don't understand what you have been asked to do, finding new tasks if you complete your assigned duties earlier than expected and choosing the proper clothes for the workplace. The Worksite Supervisor is a key role model to help you discover the world of work.

Every job you have will add to your understanding of the nature of work and work experience is valuable. Make sure that your Worksite Supervisor explains the meaning and purpose of the tasks you will perform. The work experience must mean something to you. Knowing that the tasks you are required to do are important and knowing why helps you develop a positive attitude towards work and working.

We all learn differently. Most of us learn by observing the behavior of others and then repeating the task under some level of supervision. Participants paired with experienced workers and supervisors seem to learn not only from performing tasks, but by observing the work attitudes and behaviors of their co-workers. Therefore, we encourage you to learn from your co-workers and others who strive to maintain high work standards.

Employability development

People face challenges when they enter the world of work. The work experience program is intended to make

that entry successful by providing support while gaining work skills required of entry-level employees. Such basic educational skills, such as reading,



writing, math, and listening are required but are not always enough for today's workers. This program provides you with positive role models, direction while learning new skills, counseling, and support when difficulties are encountered.

Employability Skills include such things as:

- Regular Attendance
- Good Personal Hygiene
- Acceptance of Supervision
- Controlling Feelings and Emotions
- Honesty and Trustworthiness
- Accountability for Work Performed
- Appropriate Dress for the Job
- Language Appropriate to the Workplace
- Respect for Co-Workers and Supervisors
- Asking for Help When Needed
- Interpersonal Skills in Communication and Listening
- Following Rules and Regulations, Including Safety in the Workplace

While a list of employability skills could go on and on, these are a few basic skills that every work experience site can expect to be developing and improving with you. You may come to the work experience with some level of skill in these areas, while in other areas you are just beginning to learn. It is important that you have positive experience learning about the demands of work and gaining the necessary skills. You may require additional time to learn and understand some of these basic skills. Your WSDS, Worksite Supervisor, and ASPIRE Specialist will work together to assist you in gaining these skills.

Basic work experience program information

The Work Experience program will provide you a worksite placement based on the employment and training plan established by you and your

ASPIRE Specialist. Depending on individual circumstances and requirements, your work experience may vary in length of time you are in the work experience and the number of hours per week you will be required to do.

Important information to get and keep in your wallet and at home and to enter in the contacts section of your cell phone if you have one

1. Name, address, telephone number of the worksite
2. Your Supervisor's Name: _____
Telephone Number: _____
3. Your Worksite Development Specialist's Name: _____
Telephone Number: _____
E-mail: _____
4. Employment Start Date: _____
End Date: _____
5. Work hours from _____ to _____ (Your work hours might be different from other people in the program.)

***Note It is extremely important that your time and attendance record is completed on time each week and forwarded to your Worksite Development Specialist to make sure you receive proper credit.**

Augusta CareerCenter

1 Enterprise Drive, Suite 2
109 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
Phone: 624-5120/1-800-760-1573
Fax: 287-6236

Bangor CareerCenter

45 Oak Street, Suite
Bangor, ME 04401-6667
Phone: 561-4050/1-888-828-0568
Fax: 561-4066

Brunswick CareerCenter

275 Bath Road
Brunswick, ME 04011
Phone: 373-4000/1-888-836-3355
Fax: 373-4004

Calais CareerCenter

One College Drive
Calais, ME 04619-0415
Phone: 454-7551/1-800-543-0303
Fax: 454-0349

Lewiston CareerCenter

5 Mollison Way
Lewiston, ME 04240-5805
Phone: 753-9000/1-800-741-2991
Fax: 783-5301

Machias CareerCenter

53 Prescott Drive, Suite 1
Machias, ME 04654-9752
Phone: 255-1900/1-800-292-8929
Fax: 255-4778

Portland CareerCenter

185 Lancaster Street
Portland, ME 04101-2453
Phone: 771-5627/1-877-594-5627
Fax: 822-0221

Presque Isle CareerCenter

66 Spruce Street, Suite 1
Presque Isle, ME 04769-3222
Phone: 760-6300/1-800-635-0357
Fax: 760-6350

Rockland CareerCenter

91 Camden Street, Suite 201
Rockland, ME 04841-2421
Phone: 596-2600/1-877-421-7916
Fax: 594-1428

Skowhegan CareerCenter

98 North Avenue
Skowhegan, ME 04976-1923
Phone: 474-4950/1-800-760-1572
Fax: 474-4914

Springvale CareerCenter

9 Bodwell Court
Springvale, ME 04083-1801
Phone: 324-5460/1-800-343-0151
Fax: 324-7069

Wilton CareerCenter

865 US Route 2E
Wilton, ME 04294-6649
Phone: 645-5800/1-800-982-4311
Fax: 645-2093

TTY users call Maine Relay 711



*Department of Health
and Human Services*

*Maine People Living
Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives*

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

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