

WEX

Work Experience Community Service Program



PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

Work Experience (WEX) provides an opportunity to increase job skills and explore other career paths

The Purpose of Work Experience (WEX) Community Service Program

Welcome and congratulations on your WEX assignment. You are starting an exciting opportunity. The Work Experience Program has three goals to help you, as a CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work participant, become successful:

■ First, to provide you with someone to guide and instruct you in work culture and behaviors. Work behaviors or soft skills, include issues such as workplace culture and etiquette, appropriate communication on the job, how to get along with co-workers, and other critical job retention skills.

■ Second, to improve or enhance your skills by giving you a work assignment where your targeted skills are used over and over. Agencies participating in the WEX program are anxious to provide instruction to help you improve your skills.

■ Third, to offer you a work opportunity that not only gives you a job assignment that can be put on your resume, but also offers you guidance and evaluation. This is a great opportunity for you to evaluate your strengths and limitations without “fear of being fired”.

For individuals with a break in employment, or no employment history, a Work Experience assignment can give you a bridge to the world of work. The “positions” are unpaid and give you training and skills that will allow you to provide a service to the community while learning work-related skills. While in your WEX assignment you can get childcare, transportation, and ancillary expenses paid for as needed. WEX participants are not employees of Contra Costa County or the Worksite Agency. In Contra Costa County, Work Experience positions may only be in a public agency or private, non-profit agency.



ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

If you successfully completed Life Skills, Job Club, and Job Search, but still have not found a job, you are eligible for a CalWORKs WEX assignment. Your Assessment Worker and Employment Specialist will work with you to determine if training and/or a WEX assignment is most appropriate. In order to stay eligible for CalWORKs cash aid, you can be in training and WEX programs designed to help you improve skills in a targeted employment/career path.

Assignment

WORK ASSIGNMENT

The work assignment will consist of regular days and hours of work allowing time to complete your job search as planned by you and your worker.

Your work assignment may target your career path or it may provide you with a chance to expand your general work skills.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Report to WEX assignment every day scheduled, treating it as if it was a job
- Be on time
- Maintain professional work behavior
- Maintain a positive work attitude
- Communicate promptly and professionally with worksite host staff
- Promptly send required reports or forms to EHSD staff
- Communicate promptly with EHSD staff regarding matters such as work assignment challenges, difficulties on the job, or other job opportunities
- Notify your worker and the worksite agency right away if you get a job
- Always remember that you are representing the Employment & Human Services Department of Contra Costa County and you must take the work assignment seriously



CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE IN WORK EXPERIENCE ASSIGNMENT

You must clearly define your reason for requesting a change in your work experience assignment, for example:

- Work environment
- Working conditions
- Personality clashes with worksite supervisor or other agency staff

You have a responsibility to handle this as if it were a real job. If difficulties or challenges arise, talk with your worksite supervisor. This is the time to learn how to handle problems and communicate appropriately.

ORIENTATION AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

The worksite agency will tell you about safety procedures, rules of conduct, policies and behavior expectations, as the agency would give to all regular employees. Be sure to ask questions if you are unclear about procedures.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU ARE INJURED AT YOUR WEX WORKSITE

Safety is very important to us, but injuries do happen. The good news is that you are covered by the State under the County's CalWORKs Program. In case of injury, follow the steps listed below:

- Report to your worksite supervisor right away if you are hurt at the worksite
- If appropriate, you and your supervisor will determine how you will get to the nearest emergency room
- At the hospital when asked "Is this injury job related or were you injured on the job? You must say "yes" and "I am in a Work Experience assignment covered by the State under the County's CalWORKs Program."
- Call your worker when you get home and explain the details of the injury and the medical treatment received

EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assess participants and make appropriate assignments to work experience positions
- Review participants progress monthly
- Review and pay for childcare, transportation, and ancillary expenses as needed
- Provide intervention and support as identified on attendance and tardiness records
- Assist worksite agencies as appropriate, and facilitate supervision of participant placements
- Fill vacancies as soon as possible
- Respond to agency calls and queries
- Work with agency and participant to plan for career and employment needs

A final word...

ASSIGNMENT COMPLETION SURVEY

EHSD wants to improve the WEX experience for future participants. You can help us do that by completing our Assignment Completion Survey when you finish your assignment. Your answers to the questions will be confidential, so be as open and honest as you can. Your opinion is important to us and will help us with our program planning and implementation efforts.

Contra Costa County
Workforce Services

A Bureau of the Employment & Human Services Department

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