



Workforce Development Student Handbook

2017-2018

The Workforce Development program at the Skills Center is designed to usher students through a series of instructional and practical activities centered on developing work acquisition and retention skills. By participating in the program, you will receive the opportunity to develop immediately transferable skills that will prepare you to enter and be successful in the workforce. Beyond this, you can avoid a classic difficulty: how does one get a job without experience, and how does one gain experience without a job? In the Workforce Development Program, you have the opportunity to gain both, while simultaneously gaining credit towards achieving your high school diploma and also beginning to earn an income.

This handbook will describe the process through which you will go on your way to realizing the above benefits, as well as the process by which you will be able to prove to a prospective employer that you are dedicated, respectful, dependable, and honest; namely that you are employable.

At all stages of this process, you will be expected to maintain an exemplary attitude towards your work, your coworkers, the staff of the CSE, and the general public. This handbook will also illustrate how this will look, and consequently, how you will be assessed in reference to your disposition.

We congratulate you on your acknowledgement of the value of work, and on your participation in this program. Success in anything requires that you do what it takes to be successful. This means that if you take hold of this opportunity to improve yourself and prepare for your future, you will be successful, both in the program and later in life. You have the power to affect your future to be what you want only if you make the decision to do so.

We challenge you to learn what it takes.

The Level System

The three levels are the backbone of the Workforce Development Program, holding it up and supporting it. You will proceed through the different levels as you gain background knowledge, improve your skills, and prove that you have an employable attitude. It is the goal of the Workforce Development Staff to assist you in proceeding through to the last level, an accomplishment that will signify that you are ready to enter and keep employment.

Preliminary Level

Entrance to the program will only be considered after you have provided the Workforce Development Coordinator with a complete Perseus House application. Your application is the first introduction of yourself to any employer; therefore care must be taken to complete the application thoroughly, thoughtfully, and legibly. From this earliest stage, the Workforce Development Staff will gain insight into your willingness to do what it takes to be successful.

Upon completion of the application, the Workforce Development Staff will arrange for you a formal interview. The first interview is an opportunity for you to tell the Staff who you are, what you are good at, what you like to do, and how you can benefit the Program. At the same time, it affords the first taste of what it is like to have to sell your abilities to a prospective employer. You will be expected to present yourself professionally. This means dressing up conservatively for the interview, arriving early for your appointment, and conveying a positive attitude. Again, your ability to do this will be assessed from the beginning.

Having completed the interview process, you will then be allowed to begin Orientation. The orientation process will consist of a mandatory viewing of a series of videos concerning the workplace, and passing scores on the assessments of your comprehension of the videos. The videos are designed to inform, not to entertain, and they concern safety and appropriate behavior in the workplace. In order to advance to the first level, you must show that you have an understanding of the issues discussed by the videos.

Level I

When you have completed the requirements of the preliminary level, you will be considered a Level I worker. As this is the beginning of actual work, you will be assigned in your tasks under the supervision of a Student Manager. It is the duty of the Student Manager not only to teach you the procedures and methods of the tasks, but also to constantly assess your performance as you learn. This will begin the building of your work portfolio, a bank of documentation that you can use to prove the quality of your work to prospective employers.

Jobs included in Level I will include, but will not be limited to, the following: cleaning classrooms, hallways, computers, and offices; caring for the grounds of the school; general office and front desk duties; cleaning the cafeteria; helping in the kitchen; and any other duties on or

off site deemed appropriate by the Workforce Development Staff and the Administration of the school.

You will be assessed daily on your work attitude and quality, your ability to take initiative, whether you show dependability and respect, and your ability to work quietly in the open environment of the Skills Center.

Level II

When you have completed the requirements for Level I, you will receive a certificate of completion and an invitation to a second interview. This will give you another chance to practice advocating for yourself, and will be subject to the same expectations of attire and demeanor as the first interview. When you have completed this requirement, you will be considered a Level II worker. At this level, you will have proven to the Workforce Development Staff that you are capable of working without supervision, interacting with the public, representing the school, and possibly leading work crews of your peers.

Jobs included in Level II will include, but will not be limited to, the following: off-site Charter School functions, the leadership of small work crews within the building, acting as student ambassadors, and leading tours throughout the facility.

Crew Supervisors, student managers, and the Job Coaches, will continue to monitor and assess your performance as you assume duties requiring increased responsibilities and aptitudes.

Level III

When you have completed the requirements of Level II, you will be given a certificate of completion and an invitation to a third interview. This interview will be similar to the others; however, your advancement to Level III will depend on how well you do. You will have had two opportunities to practice and demonstrate your interview skills, so you should have very little difficulty impressing the interviewer. When you have done so, you will be considered a Level III worker.

When you have reached this point in the program, the work of the Job Coaches will be crucial, for they are the ones who generate employment leads, facilitate your introduction, and monitor your performance in the workforce to help you retain your job. The staff will attempt in all cases to match candidates with jobs that suit their interests and aptitudes. These will be fully independent jobs, where you will be subject to the rules and regulations unique to that workplace.

This is the culminating stage of the program, and the Workforce Development Staff is confident that if you make it, if you complete all the requirements satisfactorily, then you will have a significantly higher chance of finding and keeping any job because you will have proven that

you are willing and capable. These qualities will always look good to employers as they seek to hire new employees, and you will have proven that you have them.

Student Managers

Opportunities for management in the program exist for those student workers who have logged at least one full year of enrollment in the program. The position of student manager is geared towards introducing high-quality workers to positions of authority. It is the responsibility of the student manager to task, monitor, and help to assess student workers for efficiency, dependability, and cooperation according to the criteria set up by the Program Coordinator. It is their job to ensure that the tasks set up by the Program Coordinator are completed thoroughly and to specification. Managers must follow up with the Program Coordinator each block to ensure that all necessary tasks are completed, and must maintain open communication with the Coordinator throughout the day as it relates to both the tasks and the daily performance of the workers under their authority.

This added responsibility is accompanied by a raise in the hourly rate of the manager, and will be ultimately determined by the available funding.

Workshops

Part of the requirements for Level III workers will be to participate in workshops lead by Mr. DiTullio. The content of the workshops will be wide and varied, and they are designed to expand and build upon the knowledge gained through orientation. Topics will include, but will not be limited to, the following: Entrepreneurship, Hygiene and Appearance, Human Resources, Compiling References and Resumes, Job Searching, Self-Talk and Mirror-Talk, Maintaining Eye-Contact, etc. The workshops will also include guest speakers from major employers in the area. These employers will speak to what they look for in prospective employees, as well as to what job opportunities may be immediately available.

In Mr. DiTullio's workshops, you will also work on securing bus passes, making sure you can provide a birth certificate and a social security card, and obtaining your clearances and background checks.

Policies and Procedures

Grades

Your primary function at the Charter School of Excellence is that of student. Therefore, your continued participation in the Workforce Development Program will depend on you maintaining your progress in all of your classes. You must maintain a “C” average across all classes. By participating in the program, you agree to the possibility of being pulled out of a class to work. Success in the workplace is a function of balancing many factors. To help you balance your work and learning, we have built a weekly tutoring time into the schedules of your teachers. Each morning, you are assured that your other instructors will be present in their rooms for the duration of the morning tutorial. If you are falling behind in any class, this time is set aside each week to ensure that you make up lost assignments and do not fall behind in any class. The time is there for you, but you must choose to use it to your benefit.

Your progress in all of your classes will be assessed by the Workforce Development Coordinator. Four times each quarter, all participants will progress monitored. The continuum of actions/consequences is as follows:

- One class – D or lower: You will receive a written warning of the fact that this class has fallen below the 2.0 threshold. You have until the next monitoring cycle to bring the grade up to a minimum of a “C.”
- Two or more classes – D or lower: You will be placed on Academic Probation until the next monitoring cycle. Failure to raise these classes to the 2.0 minimum threshold by the next cycle will result in you being placed on Academic Suspension until the next cycle. At this point, you will be unable to work until either the next cycle, or until the Workforce Development Coordinator receives confirmation from your teachers that you are back in good standing.
- If you are placed on Suspension, and cannot bring your grades up to the minimum 2.0 threshold in the allotted time, then you will be terminated from the program.
 - If there are mitigating circumstances that have made it difficult or impossible for you to raise your grades in the allotted time, the above continuum of consequences may be adjusted at the discretion of the Workforce Development Coordinator.

Attendance

Like any job, attendance is mandatory and expected. It is the bare minimum. Therefore, in addition to the policies of the Charter School that will still apply to you, the Workforce Development Program has expectations for your attendance, and consequences for your absences.

The Workforce Development Staff understands that things come up. We also have sympathy for medical conditions, and for the difficulty of scheduling needed doctor's visits. We encourage you to make every effort to schedule any appointments before or after school hours. However, in the program you will be relied upon to be present, just as you would be in the workplace. Serious doctor's visits are almost always made far in advance, so with enough notice and with a note from the doctor, your absence will be excused. Last minute notifications when you are already scheduled or the inability to provide a doctor's note the day you return will be seen and logged as unexcused.

****Note****

If you are a level 2 or 3 worker who is working in the community during school hours at a school-sanctioned work site, not only must you inform the school of your absence before the start of the day, but you must also inform your work site that you will not be in attendance. These jobs rely on our workers just as any other free-standing job in the community relies upon their workers to show up and do the work. Not only is it inconsiderate to your employer, but not informing your employer of your absence is a sure way to lose your job.

A "No Show/No Call" is industry lingo for an employee who does not show up for work and who does not call to inform anyone. This type of attendance infraction is a serious issue, and it speaks to one's lack of consideration for one's job and one's co-workers. Therefore, it will be dealt with more severely. The consequences for a no call/ no show will be as follows:

- **1st Time:** You will receive a verbal and written warning and a call will be made home indicating that you are in danger of being removed from the program.
- **2nd Time:** You will be removed from the program and a letter will be sent home indicating that you have lost your position in the program.

Discipline

Just as with attendance, proper conduct in the workplace is an assumption. If your behavior is an issue, and if you show that you are unable to control yourself and your emotions appropriately, you will never be able to hold down a job with any consistency. Therefore, we encourage you to take every effort to elevate yourself above your emotions and to keep perspective on how you need to behave in the workplace.

Any code of conduct event during school hours, and especially while working, will result in the following consequences:

- **1st COC:** You will receive verbal warning and a call home will be made.

- **2nd COC:** A written notification of the event will be sent home indicating that you have lost your shifts for a duration to be determined by the Workforce Development Staff.
- **3rd COC:** You will be removed from the program and a letter will be sent home indicating that you have lost your position in the program.

****Note****

This continuum may be adjusted either up or down depending on the severity, or relative lack of severity, of the disciplinary infraction. Adjustments will be made at the discretion of the Workforce Development Coordinator.

Reapplication to the Program

If you are removed from the program either for discipline, attendance, or grades, you may be allowed to reapply to the program if the following conditions are met:

- You have received no COCs for a period of 45 days
- Your attendance rate is above 90% since the last infraction
- You are on track to earn credit in all your classes.

All of these conditions must be met before you will be considered for reentry to the program.

Disposition

Your disposition refers to the attitude with which you approach your work. If you have the right disposition, an employer will be more willing to hire you and teach you what you do not know to perform a job. However, if you do not have a good disposition, no employer will put the time and energy into training you to perform the job. Therefore, The Workforce Development Staff will constantly assess your disposition and attitude towards work.

You will be assessed according to the grading rubric of the school. As far as your attitude is concerned, you must maintain a “C” average or better across a grading period. You will receive a copy of the grading rubric as well as copies of the daily assessments when you go through the orientation process. It will be your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these materials so that you understand how you will be assessed and graded.