



EMPLOYER HANDBOOK

THE MAINE CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM

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The Maine Career Exploration Program is an initiative of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, funded by the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan, and coordinated by:

Kay Kerina
Maine Career Exploration Program Manager
kaylin.kerina@maine.gov | (207)-215-6802

About the Maine Career Exploration Program (MCEP)

The Maine Career Exploration Program (MCEP) is a \$25 million initiative within Governor Janet R. Mills' Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan to connect 6,000 young people in Maine to future career opportunities by funding paid work experiences with employers across the state.

The Maine Career Exploration Program will introduce thousands of Maine students to future employment options and prepare them to succeed in careers right here in Maine, strengthening our workforce over the long term and supporting our business communities.

It is vital to our young people to engage with role models and experience workplaces where they can see themselves in the future. Your commitment to helping the next generation is critical in building pathways for success and growing Maine's workforce. Thank you!

Employer Participation Benefits

Build your recruitment pipeline

Encourage and attract young people to explore opportunities in your industry, fostering potential recruitment prospects and creating a pipeline of possibility for the state's economic future.

Paid work covered by the Maine Career Exploration Program

Up to 75 hours paid by the MCEP for a young person's work experience with your company - at no cost to you as an employer.

Contribute to the future of Maine's workforce

Prepare our future workforce with vital skills and increase workforce participation among Maine youth. Demonstrate to our youth that there is opportunity for them in Maine!

Hire motivated young people

After the conclusion of a young person's work experience through Maine Career Exploration, employers may choose to hire these individuals to join their team (part-time or full-time depending on business needs and individual's schedules).

Showcase and advertise your business

Become a Preferred Employer Partner with the Maine Career Exploration Program.

Roles & Responsibilities

Young Person / Student

Maine people between the ages of 16 - 24 participating in a paid work experience through the MCEP.



Responsibilities

- Learn and explore career options in Maine!
 - Work with the Program Coordinator and employer to develop the work experience.
 - Report to work as scheduled.
 - Follow the policies and procedures as required by the school, the worksite and the program.
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Program Coordinator

Responsible for assisting the young person with the program. Program Coordinators may be a school Extended Learning Opportunity Coordinator (ELO) or from one of five community based organization partnerships.

Responsibilities

- Help young person connect with career exploration opportunities in their area and support them through the experience.
 - Work with young person and employer to identify and prepare employer and worksites to host.
 - Assist young person with the completion of all employment paperwork and procedures.
 - Submit all required application forms to ensure young person is accurately paid and covered by insurance by program support partners.
 - Act as main point of contact for young person, employer, and program support.
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Employer

Employer hosting young person in a paid work experience through the Maine Career Exploration Program!

Responsibilities

- Provide a safe, fun, meaningful and appropriate work experience.
- Complete all onboarding requirements, both required by the MCEP and your workplace.
- Follow all state, federal, and local laws.
- Define and create the work experience in collaboration with the Program Coordinator.
- Facilitate on the job training that meets learning goals and business needs.
- Contact Program Coordinator with questions or concerns during the work experience.
- Complete the Employer Post Work Experience Survey at the end of the young person's work experience.

The Employer Process

To get started, complete the Employer Onboarding Survey:

[CLICK HERE:
Employer Onboarding Survey](#)

1. EMPLOYER INTEREST

Become an employer for the Maine Career Exploration Program (MCEP)! There are a few different ways that you can get started.

1. **Reach out to the MCEP:** As an employer, reach out directly to the Maine Career Exploration Program to get started! Click [here](#) for more information.
2. **Direct outreach from the MCEP or Program Coordinator:** The Maine Career Exploration Program reaches out directly to employers in the community to gauge interest and invite participation.
3. **A young person identifies an employer:** A young person identifies the employer as their desired placement.

2. WORK EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITY DEVELOPMENT & PLACEMENT

Before beginning a work experience the opportunity must be developed and defined.

RESOURCE: Review the [Work Experience Opportunity: Best Practices & Tool-Kit](#) and work with the Program Coordinator to create a safe, safe and meaningful work experience!



The Employer Process

3. ON THE JOB

While hosting the young person at your job site, your role is to create a safe, fun, and meaningful experience.

Tips for a successful experience:

- Follow the job description and training and mentor plan as designed.
- Report any issues or concerns (including workplace injuries) to the Program Coordinator (and Manpower) in a timely manner.
- Exercise flexibility and understanding. Remember this may be a young person's first job experience and they likely are balancing school and activities.
- *All the other operational logistics, including, onboarding paperwork, payroll, taxes, and insurance are covered under the program through one of our program partners.*

When to contact the Program Coordinator:

- To report a workplace injury (in this case, also contact Manpower)
- Performance or scheduling concerns that cannot be resolved easily or directly with the young person
- A change in the job description
- To inquire about extending a work experience opportunity
- Any other issues, concerns or questions

4. PROGRAM COMPLETION

Wrap up the work experience: Consider providing a completion certificate and give the young person feedback on their work!

- **To extend a work experience, contact the Program Coordinator:** If interested in extending the current work experience through the MCEP please contact the Program Coordinator to inquire about additional available funds.
- **To hire a young person directly, work with the young person:** After program completion employers are welcome to directly hire a young person. See the [FAQs](#) to learn more about work extensions and direct hires.

Complete the Employer Post Work Survey: Please provide us with your valuable feedback and a testimonial!

[CLICK HERE:
Employer Post Work Survey](#)

Become a Preferred Employer Partner with the MCEP and host again: More information on this partnership designation is found [here](#). Contact the MCEP to host another young person!

Work Experience Opportunity: Best Practices & Toolkit



Thank you for your interest in the Maine Career Exploration Program! It is with great excitement that we welcome you as a potential employer partner. In this section, please find additional information on how to create and deliver a high quality work experience (the placement) for a young person at your business.

To get started, complete the Employer Onboarding Survey:

[CLICK HERE:
Employer Onboarding Survey](#)

Main Point of Contact for the Business

Best Practice: Identify the main Point of Contact for the MCEP at your business in the Employer Onboarding Survey. This person can be a department head, the business owner, the HR business partner, or the employee directly supervising the young person you are hiring. Having an identified point of contact will help create a quality and consistent experience!

Types of Work Experience Opportunities

Design a placement that introduces the young person to the workforce and reflects their interests in your business and industry. As you design the placement, you may choose to create a rotational or highly focused opportunity.

Multiple Pathways	Single Pathway	Blended Experience
Rotational Opportunities (example: Front Desk & Kitchen rotation) are beneficial when providing an overview or introduction to a specific industry or introducing a young person to a variety of roles or departments within your business.	Focused Opportunities (example: Marketing Department work experience) are ideal for a young person who is focused on a specific trade, skill, or profession and are looking to gain hands on experience within that role.	In a blended experience, the young person may start with a rotation among departments, and then choose an area where they want to spend more time and develop skills relevant for the role.

Each business is different and unique and we look forward to learning more about your opportunity. The Program Coordinator will work directly with you to frame your work experience opportunity and individualize it for each young person you welcome to your business.

Work Experience Opportunity: Best Practices & Toolkit

Workplace Requirements & Resources

As you plan to welcome a young person into your workplace and design your placement, setting expectations up front will help for a smooth onboarding process! In the [Employer Onboarding Survey](#) indicate any requirements there are for the job and provide specific details. Also, ensure that the placement is aligned with all Maine state and federal laws - check out the resources below!

Possible Requirements

- Personal Protective Equipment (steel toed boots, protective eyewear, etc.)
- Uniform
- Vaccination Records
- Driver's License
- Must be over 18
- Other

Best Practice: Be as specific as possible and share additional details! For example, if a uniform is required, what is the uniform? Is there a cost? Is it ordered through the employer?

Helpful Resources

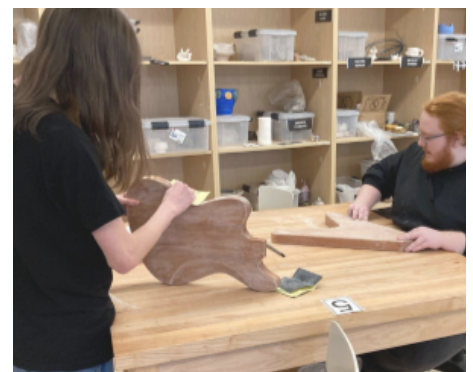
[Maine Laws Governing the Employment of Minors](#)
[Manpower Prohibited Work](#)

Job Description

When writing the job description, please be as detailed as possible about duties that the young person will be doing during the paid work. Refer to this [resource](#) on writing a job description to attract early talent!

Best Practices

- Accurately describe workplace duties and responsibilities.
- If there is an official training period, describe the training requirements and duration.
- Include details on any physical requirements, such as lifting/standing/ sitting/etc.
- Describe the job location and any related conditions, such as, outdoors in the sun, indoors, noisy/hot kitchen, office space, etc.
- Ensure that the job is aligned with all Maine state and federal laws, especially when employing a minor. Review the above resources for more information.
- Check in with the Program Coordinator to meet any school credit requirements, if applicable.



Work Experience Opportunity: Best Practices & Toolkit

Additional Details

When designing the opportunity consider these three elements for a successful placement!

Schedule	Duration	Supportive Services
Many young people are currently students. Create a work plan that accommodates class schedules to allow the young person to balance priorities and show up at their best! As a best practice, work with your young person to create a schedule that meets both of your needs, and remain flexible when there are changes.	Consider the goals of the opportunity and pace the placement duration to meet those objectives. For example, if the opportunity is to work with your marketing team on a new product launch, perhaps the placement duration lasts for the full life cycle of the project, even if that means only a few work hours each week.	Highlight the benefits of working for your company and/or any supportive services you may provide specific to the MCEP. Examples and things to consider include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexibility in work schedules• Provided uniform/PPE free of cost• ADA Accommodations• Opportunities for English Language Learners• Transportation assistance• Certificates upon work experience completion

Supervisor & Mentor Responsibilities

The Maine Career Exploration Program introduces young people to future employment options and prepares them to succeed in careers. As such, it is important to add an element of both supervision and mentorship to the placement. Ideally the supervisor and mentor are different people, though this is not a requirement and may not be possible at a smaller business.

Supervisor

The young person’s direct supervisor at the worksite. Responsibilities include:

- Training
- Scheduling
- On the job coaching
- Job related questions
- Performance feedback

Mentor

An assigned mentor to the young person. The mentor may be someone in the same role as the young person, someone who took a similar career path, or someone in leadership. Responsibilities include:

- Check in on the experience
- Share their own career path and experience
- Answer industry and career questions

Become a Preferred Employer Partner with MCEP

The **Preferred Employer Partner with the MCEP** designation recognizes Maine businesses who have successfully hosted a young person in a work experience. Your preferred partnership will signal to current and prospective employees that you are dedicated to supporting the future generation as they explore career options!

By becoming a Preferred Employer Partner you will receive benefits to help attract the future workforce to your business and highlight you as a dedicated and quality employer in Maine: This includes:

- **Your logo featured on the Preferred Employer Partner webpage:** Your logo will link to a destination of your choosing, such as your website, Live + Work in ME employer profile page, or other job posting board.
- **The Preferred Employer Partner media toolkit:** The toolkit will help you display this partnership designation on your website and social media channels, broadcasting to your greater network your dedication to investing in the future workforce in Maine.
- **Opportunities to become a repeat employer host:** The MCEP's Program Coordinators will proactively reach out to you with future opportunities to support additional young people in your workplace, helping you grow interest in your industry and build your potential employee pipeline.

To qualify you must have:

1. Successfully hosted a young person at your business through the Maine Career Exploration Program.
2. Completed the Employer Post Work Survey and indicated your interest in becoming a Preferred Employer Partner with the MCEP

A Program Coordinator will follow up with next steps!



FAQs

What are the requirements for an employer to participate?

Any Maine employer is eligible to participate. You must be ready and able to develop work opportunities suitable for young people/students and facilitate on the job training that meets learning goals and your business needs.

What does it cost me as an employer to participate?

There are no upfront costs, though there is a time commitment from employers. The Maine Career Exploration Program pays young people for up to 75 hours to work in your business. There is no wage, insurance, or liability cost to you!

Are there any jobs a young person cannot do in the workplace?

Yes, all jobs must comply with local, state, and federal laws. A more comprehensive list can of prohibited jobs can be found [here](#).

How do I get started?

Get started by completing and submitting the [Employer Onboarding Survey](#). Completing this survey will allow the MCEP to understand more about your work experience opportunity and once we receive your information, a Program Coordinator will be in touch with next steps! Best practices and additional resources are found in the Employer Handbook.

How do I find a young person to host?

You can find a young person in two different ways. 1. Complete the [Employer Onboarding Survey](#) and a Program Coordinator will be in touch with you on next steps. 2. Reach out directly to the MCEP Program Manager and they will connect you to local opportunities.

What if I have already identified a young person? How can I find out if they are eligible for the MCEP?

Fantastic! Please ask your young person to make the introduction directly to the Program Coordinator if they are already working with someone! Otherwise, please reach out to the MCEP Program Manager on next steps to host.

Who is the Program Coordinator? How do I find my local Coordinator?

The Program Coordinator is responsible for program implementation and acts as a liaison between the young person and employer. The Program Coordinator either works within the school or for a community based organization. After completing the onboarding survey, the MCEP will introduce you to the Program Coordinator.

What needs to be included in a young person's work experience?

The MCEP's [Work Experience Opportunity: Best Practices & Toolkit](#) in the Employer Handbook details what is included in the work experience. Please use this as a guide as you complete the [Employer Onboarding Survey](#). If you have any questions, please work with the Program Coordinator.

FAQs

Is there a mentorship element in this program?

Yes! We ask that you identify a program mentor within your organization. Remember this is an exploration program as the young person learns about Maine businesses, industries, and opportunities.

What if the job description changes during the work experience?

If anything changes during the work experience, please contact the Program Coordinator you are working with to discuss.

My young person has an issue on the job (performance, scheduling, workplace injury, other). What do I do?

Please contact your local Program Coordinator to discuss.

I want to extend the work experience for the young person working in my business. Can I do this?

Possibly! The Maine Career Exploration Program can pay a young person for up to 75 hours of work at your worksite. Contact your Program Coordinator to discuss whether additional funds are available to extend.

Can I hire the young person directly at the conclusion of the work experience?

Absolutely! The Maine Career Exploration Program's mission is to connect young people in Maine to the many businesses and organizations, like yours, in an effort to grow our talent. When a business decides to hire a young person after their placement we call this a success story! Remember that if you are hiring a young person directly, you will need to conduct your regular onboarding paperwork as the young person will no longer be covered under the program's insurance and wages.

What does it mean to be a Preferred Employer Partner with The Maine Career Exploration Program?

This means that you are a Maine employer who has been onboarded and vetted by the Maine Career Exploration Program to host young people in work experiences. This partnership provides your business additional visibility to attract talent to your business. Please see more information [here](#) on how you can receive this credential!

I know other businesses that want to get involved. How can I share information with them?

Please share your experience with them and direct them to our [employer page](#) on our website where they will find the tools and contact information to get started. We appreciate the word of mouth!

