

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

A Toolkit for Employers – Part 1

WHY EMPLOY YOUTH WHO HAVE HAD JUVENILE JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT?

Youth involved in the juvenile justice system face significant barriers, especially as they are returning to the community from detention or longer-term incarceration at a juvenile rehabilitation facility. It's not unusual for these youth to face ongoing challenges in many aspects of their lives – at home, in their neighborhoods, and at school. In 2010 under a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Washington's Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration formed a multi-disciplinary partnership with community organizations in King County. The project is called LEAP - *Learning Employment and Achieving Potential* and is a juvenile offender reentry initiative that is connecting youth to education and employment after they are released from incarceration.

Limited employment opportunities and low earning potential are among the strongest predictors of a return to crime. Connecting youth to positive adults and work experiences goes a long way towards reducing future crime and ensuring that youth have the support they need to be productive adults. A sense of belonging and giving back are constructive experiences for youth that help keep them on track towards promising futures. Employers who hire youth with juvenile justice involvement understand that they are making a big difference not only to the youth, but also to the community.

Employers who hire youth in the LEAP program will join a committed group of community members and professionals who are all supporting our youth on their paths forward. Youth participating in the LEAP program have case managers, mentors, education advocates and other support to help them gain the skills to be successful in achieving their education, employment and life goals. Together, we can ensure that youth have the skills, confidence and hope to be successful.



“Working with these youth, we are given the opportunity to mentor them allowing us to help shape their future. We give them a real life environment to learn skills that will carry them to a better life.”

WHY EMPLOYERS GET INVOLVED

- POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
- KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE
- FINANCIAL INCENTIVES
- FEDERAL BONDING
- DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

TOOLS FOR EMPLOYERS

- SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
- UNDERSTANDING CRIMINAL RECORDS
- RESOURCES

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Learning, Employment and Achieving Potential for Youth with Juvenile Justice Involvement

POSITIVE CHANGES THROUGH WORK EXPERIENCE

EMPLOYERS ARE IDEAL MENTORS

Employers are ideal mentors for youth who are in the process of gaining skills, confidence and experience for post-secondary education and career. Informational interviews, job shadows, internships and apprenticeships are the building blocks for developing skills and relationships that lead to jobs and careers. Even if your workplace does not have paid positions, consider creating opportunities for diverse and energetic young people who might not otherwise have exposure to your industry or field.

DEVELOPING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE FROM THE GROUND UP

The LEAP program helped Jackson get his start on a career as a chef. After completing an inpatient drug treatment program, Jackson worked on his resume and interviewing skills and obtained a food handler's permit. He got a subsidized internship as a prep chef at Jalisco's Mexican Restaurant.

Through the LEAP Program, Jackson was able to get an interview at a famed Tom Douglas Restaurant when his internship finished. He was hired and started out as a dishwasher and has now worked up to taking on prep chef responsibilities. Jackson has cut his ties to his past gang life and is now planning on going back to school to get his GED in the fall. Jackson is currently off of probation and has not been in trouble for over a year and a half. Jackson prides himself on being a good father, and is amazed in how far he has come in reaching his goals towards a successful future.



“Step by step, LEAP helps open doors of opportunities in education and employment for me.”

For more information about opportunities to help support youth through jobs, contact:

Kristen Sutton
LEAP Job Developer
Employment and Educational Resources
500 SW 7th Street, Suite 200
phone: 206.205.3117
fax: 206.296.2796
Kristen.Sutton@kingcounty.gov

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A Toolkit for Employers – Part 2

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR EMPLOYING YOUTH

Youth seeking employment through LEAP are supported in a variety of ways that prepare them for success in school and the world of work. LEAP youth may receive case management, tutoring, job training and coaching, mentoring, or work experience. Other service options include summer employment, study skills training, or instruction in obtaining a GED or equivalent.

There are a number of financial incentives for employers who are interested in hiring a youth participating in the LEAP program or other work training programs in the county. Read below for more information.

PAID INTERNSHIPS & WORK EXPERIENCE

Most LEAP youth are eligible for a stipend or other compensation for work experiences or internships. For these youth, employers have low financial outlay while youth are being trained on the job. Where there is a good fit, paid internships can turn into permanent jobs. See contact information on the right for more information about subsidized internships and other support for youth in the program.



FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

PAID INTERNSHIPS

King County
Employment and Educational Resources
500 SW 7th Street # 200
Renton, WA 98507
206.205.3512
Michael Davie, MSW

WASHINGTON STATE BONDING PROGRAM

Employment Security Department
Offender Employment Services Division
State Bonding Coordinator
1.800.339.3981 or 360.438.4151

www.wa.gov/esd/oes/bond/default.htm

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT

More information and application forms can be found on the WA Employment Security Division website (<http://www.esd.wa.gov/hireanemployee/resources/taxcredits/index.php>) or the

US Department of Labor website (<http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/>)

Or by calling 1.800.669.9271

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POSITIVE CHANGES THROUGH WORK EXPERIENCE

WASHINGTON STATE BONDING PROGRAM

The Washington Bonding Program provides free insurance to pay employers for loss of money or property due to dishonest acts of their employees. This fidelity bond is specifically for job applicants who are or may be denied coverage by commercial carriers because of their perceived risk status. Any job can be covered by the bond. The job can be full-time or part-time and in the private sector or public sector. The bond covers a minimum of \$5,000 up to \$25,000 with no deductible. Obtaining a bond under the program is very easy and can be requested by an employer, job applicant or job placement agency. See the contact information for the Washington State Bonding Program on the front of this flyer for more information.

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT

Employers in Washington state may be able to save money on their federal taxes as much as \$2,400 per each qualifying new hire during their first year of employment through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program. New hires who have been convicted of a felony and have been hired within a year of conviction or release from prison qualify for the tax credit. See contact information on the front of this flyer for the Employment Security Division website more information.



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INTERVIEWING & HIRING YOUTH WITH JUVENILE JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT

If you've not had experience interviewing youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system, you might have a lot of questions that you are not sure how to ask. The following are sample questions that may help you make a decision about whether a youth is right for your company and the job. You might be surprised at how mature, thoughtful, and motivated these youth are for work and their future.



SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why do you want the job? Why are you motivated to do a good job?
2. Do you have questions about this job? Do you understand the requirements of this job?
3. What skills or experience do you have that can help you do a good job in this position?
4. What have you learned from your life experiences that would make you a reliable and productive worker in this job?
5. Have you received any training, counseling, or other support to help you to be a good employee?
6. What support do you have to help you show up on time every day and do a good job?
7. What is your offense history? Will these past offenses impact your ability to do a good job?
8. Do you have any requirements for supervision right now? How will that help you in this job?
9. Are there any limits on who you can have contact with or what kind of jobs you can do? Is there anything we can do here in the workplace that can satisfy those requirements?
10. Who can you call if you need support? A family member, mentor, case manager, probation counselor, friend, teacher?
11. Would you like us to list anyone to call if you need more support when you are at work? A family member, mentor, case manager, probation counselor, friend, teacher?

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JOBS HELP YOUTH GET BACK ON TRACK

Youth who are employed and working towards a career are much less likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system. Youth participating in the LEAP program have case managers, mentors, education advocates and other support to help them gain the skills to be successful in achieving their education, employment and life goals. Giving LEAP youth an opportunity for a work experience, paid internship, or unsubsidized job is a great investment in a young person's future and for them a big step towards responsible adulthood. Employers can make a tremendous contribution to reducing crime and keeping our communities safe by giving youth a chance.

UNDERSTANDING CRIMINAL HISTORY AND COURT INFORMATION

These days, electronic court records and credit history are readily available to employers. Information could come directly from the source, but more likely come through private reporting agencies. In general, having criminal history or bad credit raises red flags for employers. Employers are rightly concerned about safety and security in the workplace. Because this electronic information can be out of date or inaccurate, however, employers should be encouraged to take care before making a decision to not give a young person a chance at an interview or a job.

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION & FAIR CREDIT ACT REQUIREMENTS

Screening out all applicants who have criminal history may violate civil rights protections under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. An individualized assessment of applicants is an approach that takes into consideration the nature and seriousness of the offense, the time that has passed since the incident or sentence, and the nature of the job the applicant is seeking.

Employers need to inform and get permission from applicants to obtain a credit report. If an applicant is denied a job or if an employee is fired based on information in a credit report, then employers must provide the source of the report and give the applicant an opportunity to dispute the accuracy or completeness of the information. For more information see <http://bit.ly/kafHFm>.



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YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

A Toolkit for Employers – Part 4

King County Employment and Educational Resources (EER) is part of the King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), Community Services Division. EER has operated education, employment and training programs for over 30 years. The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, King County, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development primarily funds our Youth Programs serving young people between the ages of 16-21, residing throughout King County outside the City of Seattle.

The purpose of the Youth Program is to assist young people in acquiring the skills they need to become self-sufficient and successful in employment. As part of their participation in the program, most of the youth participants are in educational activities to increase their basic academic skills, complete high school credits, obtain a GED, or to develop the learning and academic skills required for post-secondary programs and/or employment.

Young people enrolled in the program participate in one or more training activities in which they are placed at work or training sites. These activities include Work Experience and Internships. Depending on the type of activity, program participants may be placed with employers in the private, public or non-profit sectors. The purpose of these placements is for youth to:

- *Develop positive work behaviors*
- *Understand the relationship between academic success and employment*
- *Explore careers*
- *Acquire specific job skills*
- *Gain work experience and/or*
- *Obtain long-term employment*

Each participant is assigned to a case manager. Participants in the program undergo a thorough assessment. A case manager helps each participant develop goals to achieve while enrolled in the program and a plan to reach those goals. Goals include:

- *Acquiring good basic academic skills*
- *Pre-employment and job search skills*
- *Work maturity skills (positive work behaviors)*
- *Specific occupational skills*
- *Basic computer skills*



SUPERVISOR'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A placement at a training site is often a key part of a participant's training plan. The job of a supervisor is vitally important. The EER case manager will assist employers and the onsite supervisors in structuring the training experience of the youth assigned to the site. Site supervisors should be able to

- 1) Orient youth to the agency or business
- 2) Define and develop skills
- 3) Teach tasks required of placement
- 4) Oversee hands-on work activities
- 5) Complete necessary paperwork:
 - Training Site Agreement Form
 - Work Site Skills Agreement Form
 - Supervisor Evaluation Form
 - Youth Timesheets
 - Obtain a Minor Work Permit when necessary

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YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN THE WORKPLACE

PERMITS OR OTHER CERTIFICATIONS:

Minor Work Permit

- If the participant you are training is less than 18 years of age and you are operating a private sector or private non-profit organization, you must obtain a minor work permit. Permits can be obtained by calling the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries at 1-800-423-7233 or by visiting their website at www.lni.wa.gov/workplacerrights. You can also obtain the necessary posters for your job site at this website.

Food Handler's Permit / Other Certification:

- Some jobs require a Food Handler's Permit or other certifications such as CPR, Water Safety, etc. prior to starting work. The case manager will instruct the youth on how to obtain these items, but it is the responsibility of the work site to inform EER of any required permits prior to youth starting work and also to ensure that required permits are up-to-date or stored at the work site as required by law.

SAFETY REGULATIONS / ACCIDENT AT THE WORK SITE:

Safety is an important part of every person's job whether working outside with machinery and sharp tools or in an office. Federal and Washington State Child Labor Laws cover EER participants. Prevent accidents and injuries by following the worksite rules, procedures, safety regulations and child labor laws regarding tools, equipment, chemicals and machinery they can or cannot use. Participants should know how to obtain first aid. Whenever a technical question pertaining to safety or the need for more information arises, do not hesitate to contact your EER case manager.

AGE REQUIREMENTS:

Participants 18 years old or older MAY:

- Perform any job that is safe for an adult to perform

Participants 16 or 17 years old MAY:

- Operate some motor-driven machinery if safety training is provided in the use of the equipment. This includes power mowers, electric or motorized hedge trimmers, power lawn edger and drill motors.

Participants 16 or 17 years old may NOT:

- Operate any mechanized or power driven equipment (including punches, chain/circular table saws, power drill hoisting apparatus, heavy equipment such as mining or logging equipment, bulldozers, etc.)
- Repair roofs and work on other elevated sites that require ladders, safety belts or lifelines
- Be exposed to corrosive chemicals or radioactive materials
- Work in demolition, wrecking or excavations
- Work as a nurse's aide (unless the minor is in a certified training program)
- Work in excessively noisy or dusty environments (requiring regular use of protective equipment)
- Work in boats or on any structures in or over water

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