



WORK IMMERSION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

EMPLOYERS

1. A work experience ended earlier than originally planned. Am I still eligible for a wage reimbursement for the time worked by the participant?
Yes, provided the minimum hour commitment (45 for Students, 60 for Unemployed Adults) has been met.
2. Does my company still receive the full amount that was originally approved in the award letter?
No, the company will only be reimbursed for the amount of hours paid.
3. Can a Work Immersion participant be terminated?
Yes, a Work Immersion participant is an at-will employee as with any other employee. A reimbursement will be provided only for the hours worked provided the minimum hour requirement is met (see above).
4. What is a W9 tax form? Is it for the company or the participant? Why do you need it?
The W9 Tax Form is a 'Request for Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and Certification' for the company. **It is not an employee W2 form.** This form provides the GWB with your company's correct TIN to allow the state to issue payment to the organization and, if applicable, report information to the IRS. This requirement is non-negotiable.
5. I've been informed that the name on my W9 doesn't match my company name. How can this be resolved?
You will need to contact the State Controller's Office, Division of Purchases, to resolve the issue.
6. An employee has been with us for a few weeks but I only just recently learned about the Work Immersion program. Can I still enroll him/her into the program for a period of time?
No, Work Immersion is not available for individuals with whom an employer already has an employment relationship.
7. Is work immersion available for 1099 independent contractors?
No, Work Immersion is for employees hired directly onto an employer's payroll only (commonly referred to as "W2 employees").

8. The application process is delaying my hiring. Can an Award Letter be back-dated once it is complete so I can bring this employee on board?
No. The GWB makes every effort to serve our employer customers as efficiently as possible, but there are processes in place to protect employers, staff, and taxpayers that must be followed. Back dating is not allowed and employers must apply at least two weeks before the intended start date.
9. How long will it take for me to receive the wage reimbursement?
Assuming all paperwork is submitted correctly and in full, up to 45 days.
10. Is an individual who has a paid, temporary work experience under the Work Immersion Program considered an employee of the business that provides the work experience?
Yes, the participant considered an employee as any other employee of the business.
11. Would an employer's Unemployment Insurance rates be affected by providing a temporary work experience under the Work Immersion Program?
Employers who participate in the program would have to report wages for these work immersion participants just as they do for the permanent employees in the company. In order to be the chargeable employer in Rhode Island, you must have an employee who worked for you in the base period and earned at least 4 weeks at \$192.¹ This could potentially lead to being charged if they keep the person for the entire 400 hours; however, the change (if any) to their experience rating would be minimal. The chances of someone being eligible without wages from another employer is non-existent since all the wages with the participating employer would be earned in one quarter. We cannot however tell the employer that the potential does not exist.
12. If an employer expects to be eligible for the 25% retention bonus, should the employer submit paperwork for reimbursement once or twice?
Either option is permitted.
13. Is there a limit on the number of Work Immersion participants per company?
Yes. Individual employers are limited to no more than 10 Work Immersion participants within a fiscal year. Requests for more than 10 participants will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

STUDENTS

1. Can a Rhode Island resident who is attending an out-of-state college or university participate in the Work Immersion for College Students program?
Yes, as long as the student is a RI resident he/she is eligible.
2. If a student is receiving academic credit for the internship are they still eligible for wages and wage reimbursement?
Yes, and we encourage students receiving academic credit for their Work Immersion experiences.

¹ <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/ui/EmpCharges.htm>

3. I am a double-major or am otherwise pursuing two or more different fields of study. Can I obtain a work experience in either field?

Yes. A Work Immersion experience for a student must be related to at least one of their fields of study.

4. Your guidelines indicate that CTE students must be enrolled in a RIDE-approved CTE program which is related to a GWB priority industry. Why and where is that list of programs?

The GWB is aligning with RIDE's funding priorities, in which only CTE programs which meet industry-approved standards and which are aligned to GWB priority industries receive State categorical funding.

5. Are there legal questions I need to consider when hiring a student?

Common legal questions and answers regarding internships and work experiences can be accessed [here](#).

GENERAL PROGRAM

1. Can Work Immersion funds be combined with a WIOA-funded On the Job Training ("OJT") contract?

No, as the conditions of both programs require at least a 50% wage commitment on behalf of the employer.

2. Would a participant's Unemployment Insurance benefits be affected by participating in a temporary work experience under the Work Immersion Program?

Yes, UI benefits may be impacted for the period of time they were participating in the paid work experience. If they work and earn over their current benefit rate they would not be entitled to any benefits. If they work part-time and earn less than the weekly benefit rate they could collect partial unemployment. Once the work experience ended they could reopen their existing claim and continue collecting. If the claim has expired while they are working they would file a new claim and based on their eligibility could possibly start collecting on a new claim.

3. Does Work Immersion affect an individual's eligibility for TANF or ORS benefits?

The Governor's Workforce Board does not determine this eligibility. Please check with the applicable agency.

4. Can a participant engage in more than one Work Immersion experience?

It depends. Participants may engage in 400 hours of Work Immersion within a lifetime. For example, if a participant has a 200-hour Work Immersion experience one year, they may participate for no more than 200 hours the next year.