

WORK IMMERSION PROGRAM GUIDELINES

August 27, 2018 – June 30, 2019



Governor's Workforce Board RI
1511 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920
DLT.GWBINFO@DLT.RI.GOV
www.GWB.RI.GOV

An equal opportunity employer program. Auxiliary aids and devices are available upon request to individuals with disabilities



PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Whether they are hiring for entry-level workers or for more advanced positions, employers strongly prefer to hire applicants with demonstrated work experience. For recent high school or college graduates, it can be difficult to build such experience from scratch once they enter the job market. While for out-of-work job seekers; lengthy periods of unemployment and gaps in their work history may cause an employer to hesitate in hiring. Work Immersion is designed to boost the employment prospects of new and returning workers while opening hiring channels and reducing hiring risk for employers.

Paid work experiences such as those provided through the work immersion program help avoid gaps in work history and provide the opportunity for either immediate employment, or valuable experience that can keep a job seeker's resume "fresh."

The intent of this program is to help students and unemployed adults gain the work experience necessary to obtain gainful and fulltime employment.

STATUTORY CITATION

The Work Immersion program has been established pursuant to Rhode Island General Law § 42-102-11.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Grant Program the following terms apply.

Employer: The employer is the entity, company or organization entering into the contract agreement with the Governor's Workforce Board and providing the work experience and paying wages to the Employee. For the purposes of payment by the State of Rhode Island, the Employer may also be referred to as the approved RI state supplier.

Employee: The individual – Career and Technical High School student, College student or unemployed adult - that is hired by the Employer and named in the application and contract to participate in the Work Immersion experience. The employee **cannot** be a subcontractor or hired under 1099

ELIGIBLE EMPLOYERS

There are three (3) eligibility requirements for an employer to participate in the Work Immersion Program. The employer **MUST**:

- 1** Be classified as a for-profit, not-for-profit or public-sector entity doing business in RI
- 2** Be in good standing with the State of Rhode Island Division of Taxation
- 3** Be an approved supplier that is registered in the Rhode Island Financial Accounting Network System ('RIFANS'). If your business is **NOT currently registered** with RIFANS you must register before submitting an application for Work Immersion. Please click [here](#) to be directed to the application.

 **NOTE:** For questions regarding RIFANS please contact doa.purchasecoordinator@purchasing.ri.gov or call (401) 574-8100. You may also visit the [State of RI Division of Purchasing's website](#)

GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1 The Employee must be a new hire. Current employees or Contracted/1099 employees are not eligible.

2 **THE WORK EXPERIENCE MUST PROVIDE:**
150 total hours Minimum to 400 total hours Maximum
 The **maximum length** of contract is **cannot exceed 20 weeks**



3 Individual employers are limited to no more than **five (5)** Work Immersion employees within the state fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).
Any employer interested in hosting more than five (5) employees in a fiscal year should contact the GWB.



4 **WAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATES:**
 35% for hourly wages from the state minimum up to \$13.12
 50% for hourly wages ranging from \$13.13 to 20.00.



Reimbursement Rate	Aug-Dec 2018 Minimum	Jan-Jun 2019 Minimum	Maximum
35%	\$10.10	\$10.50	\$13.12
50%	\$13.13		\$20.00

5 The work experience must be meaningful and impact the participant such that they gain skills or experience that will further their career.



WORK EXPERIENCES

Meaningful Learning Opportunity

All work experiences should provide a *meaningful learning opportunity*, defined as a work experience which is:

Rigorous	allows the Employee to gain and/or improve upon their technical and professional skills and demonstrate mastery of those skills
Relevant	connected to the Employee's interests and to the real world of work
Reflective	engages the Employee in meaningful evaluations from supervisors and industry professionals
Interactive	provides multiple and extended opportunities for Employees to interact with and learn from industry professionals
Integrated	<u>in the case of a student Employee only</u> , related to the student's field of study

ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

UNEMPLOYED ADULTS



To be eligible for work immersion as an **unemployed adult**, an individual must:

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Be unemployed (either collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits OR is currently not receiving wages prior to applying to participate in the Work Immersion Program)

STUDENTS



To be eligible for work immersion as a **high school CTE student**, an individual must:

- Attend (or have graduated within the previous six months) a RIDE-approved CTE program which is aligned to a GWB priority industry;
- Be at least in their Junior year of high school



To be eligible for work immersion as a **college student**, an individual must:

- Be a Rhode Island resident; or
- A non-resident attending a Rhode Island based college or university; or
- Have graduated a Rhode Island college or university within the past six (6) months

All students must be of legal age and legally authorized to work in the State of Rhode Island. Please see the [RI Child Labor requirements](#), should you have any questions.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Before a work experience can begin, an application must be submitted and approved by GWB staff. Work Immersion applications are available online at <http://www.gwb.ri.gov> and are received on rolling basis. Assuming accurate and complete submissions, applications are typically processed within seven (7) days of receipt of application. Once an application is approved, the employer will receive a Notice of Contract. While employment may start at any date after an application is submitted, the GWB cannot reimburse for wages earned prior to the start date of the contact.

Applications may be completed directly by employers and are accepted online ONLY. Paper based applications will no longer be accepted.

Each submission is initially review by GWB staff to ensure all sections of the application are complete. Applications are reviewed for appropriate wages to be paid to the Employee, total hours requested and start and end dates of the work experience.

If any issues are identified in the application; the point of contact listed on the application form will receive a letter outlining the items required for approval. The employer must re-apply with the corrections.

BY COMPETING AN APPLICATION, YOU THE EMPLOYER, ARE AGREEING TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN THIS DOCUMENT.

AWARD PROCESS

Once an application is approved, the applicant or point of contact identified on the application will receive the Notice of Contract via email.

REPORTING AND PAYMENT PROCESS

All payments in the Work Immersion program are made on a cost reimbursement basis in which the employer pays the Employee's wages up front and requests reimbursement at the conclusion of the contract. At the conclusion of the contract, the employer is required to submit the Work Immersion [Request for Reimbursement Form](#) and appropriate wage records to the GWB Info Box at DLT.GWBINFO@DLT.RI.GOV **within 60 days of the contract end date.**

If documentation is not received within the 60 days, the reimbursement will not be processed and the contract will be closed.

 **NOTE:** The employer may retain the Employee for as long as they like; however, reimbursement is paid for hours and wages worked **during the contract period, ONLY.**

ELIGIBLE HOURS

The Governor's Workforce Board reimburses for work hours classified as "**regular**" hours worked and does **NOT reimburse for:**

- Holiday Pay if the company is closed
 - Holiday pay that the Employee worked will be reimbursed at the contracted rate of pay, not time and a half.
 - Overtime hours will be counted as regular hours and also paid at the contracted rate of pay
- Worker's Comp Hours
- Family and Medical Leave Act Hours
- Vacation time hours
- Sick time hours
- Any other classification other than regular hours

REQUESTING REIMBURSEMENT

Two items are required to request reimbursement.

1 The Work Immersion Request for Reimbursement Form.

When the employer receives their Award Letter they will also receive a **Work Immersion Request for Reimbursement Form**. The form includes final participant information, the number of hours worked during the contract period and the Employee's Social Security number.

- Social Security numbers are collected at the conclusion of the contract period during the reimbursement process to ensure security and confidentiality
- Social Security numbers are required to confirm Employee's pre- and post-work experience employment and wages

2 Verification of Wages – Time and Pay Records

There are two (2) forms of acceptable wage records:

1. The Employee's paystubs for each week they worked within the contract.
- OR-**
2. The Employee's time cards AND canceled/processed checks that verify the Employee was paid



NOTE: Year to date pay roll records are not accepted.

Wage documents must identify:

- ✓ The Employee's first and last name
- ✓ The dates of the pay period
- ✓ The hourly rate of pay
- ✓ The number of hours worked within the pay period

If any of the above items are not present or incorrect, the Governor's Workforce Board will deny the request for payment and outline the reason for denial. **The Employer will have ten (10) business days to correct the issue and return the complete information.**

CHECKING REIMBURSEMENT STATUS

Payments will be issued within 30 days of receipt of adequate evidence of wages paid. Employers may check [RIPAY](#) for payment information. As a RI State supplier - employers may look up payments submitted to your organization by conducting a vendor search or check number search if you would like to inquire what the payment amount of a check included.

Vendor Payment Search

Search Criteria - Please find and select a vendor and enter an invoice # or date range.

Find Vendor: * Vendor Name:

Type the organization's official name, not dba. Try different variations. Then hit **GO** * Start Date: * End Date: Select the company from the drop down

Change start and end dates

VENDOR NAME	AGENCY NAME	PAYMENT DATE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	PO #	RELEASE #
1						
2						
3						

<< >>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

GWB Staff is available to provide technical assistance throughout the process-from the application stage throughout final reporting. Workforce network partners such as Adult Education providers, nonprofits, and American Job Centers may, and are encouraged to, promote Work Immersion as a way to help place job seekers into positions and may assist businesses in the application process; however, that individual/organization may not be compensated with Work Immersion funds.

[*You may click here to begin the application process*](#)

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

