



## Employer Partner Guide

### Dear Business Partner,

Thank you for volunteering with BizConnect to provide career related learning experiences to high school students in the region. These opportunities motivate students to learn and achieve more as they observe the connections between studies and work. This Employer Partner Guide provides a description of each career exposure activity and some suggestions about how to prepare for a successful experience.

### What is BizConnect?

BizConnect systematizes school-to-career efforts in a five county region in Northwest Oregon, and in a two county region of southwest Washington State. A team of BizConnect coordinators recruits businesses to offer career related learning experiences (CRLEs) to high school students, and manages a database of these opportunities. BizConnect coordinators also act as a liaison between business and school partners to facilitate successful connections and ensure quality experiences for students throughout the region.

### Employer Benefits:

- Teach emerging workforce about your business, industry, and workplace
- Evaluate potential future employees
- Generate good public relations
- Enhance employee morale
- Lead as an example to other businesses
- Support local schools that are educating your current employees' children

### Student Benefits:

- Relate classroom learning to life outside the classroom walls
- Motivates students to stay in school, graduate, and set goals
- Learn about a variety of careers available at local businesses
- Create a professional network of people who will help in years to come
- Open doors to new possibilities and options
- Understand workplace expectations

### Contents:

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- Helpful Hints for Working with Students
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- Career Related Learning Experiences Definitions
- New Graduation Requirements - [www.getreadyoregon.org](http://www.getreadyoregon.org)



## Partner Roles and Responsibilities

Communication is the key responsibility among all participants. Not all career related learning experiences have the same objectives, so *understanding the expectations of individual activities* is vital. General responsibilities include:

### **BUSINESS PARTNER SUPERVISORS:**

The worksite supervisor/volunteer plays an important role as this person will actually be interacting with the student during the activity. Good communication among the work site contact, school contact, and student will ensure a rewarding experience for everyone involved.

#### **The worksite supervisor will:**

- Provide adequate supervision of student
  - ✓ Assign tasks to students and clarify goals for the experience
  - ✓ Explain safety rules and standard work policies
  - ✓ Complete required documentation for the experience
  
- Provide students with a genuine experience
  - ✓ Give an orientation of the company and a tour of the facility
  - ✓ Provide necessary tools and equipment
  - ✓ Discuss education and training needed to perform their job
  - ✓ Answer student's questions
  
- Complete evaluations
  - ✓ Of the student
  - ✓ Of the program

### **SCHOOL PARTNERS:**

BizConnect schools match students with opportunities that match their aspirations and prepare students for success in their interactions with businesses.

#### **Schools will:**

- Prepare students per common student preparation standards
- Help employers provide a meaningful experience for the student
  - ✓ Explain requirements and help create learning objectives
  - ✓ Assist in completing paperwork, resolving problems, and otherwise
  - ✓ Respond to employers requests/questions in a timely manner

- Complete the following when appropriate:
  - ✓ Conduct work site visit(s), as appropriate
  - ✓ Grant school credit (either academic and/or career education credit) for satisfactory performance as defined in the training agreement and/or learning plan. Recruit and refer all students in compliance with federal and state non-discrimination laws
  - ✓ Comply with district policy for transportation and insurance coverage for students involved in School to Career activities

**BIZCONNECT:**

BizConnect Coordinators act as a liaison between the employer and school staff.

**BizConnect Coordinators will:**

- Manage the database to ensure accurate, up to date employer and current volunteer information.
- Recruit and prepare employers to work with students
- Recruit and prepare schools to participate in BizConnect
- Facilitate successful, appropriate student placement as needed
- Ensure a quality experience for both the student and the employer



## Helpful Hints for Employers Working with Students

Spending a small amount of time upfront organizing and planning for the school to career experience is the key to making it a success for both you and the student(s).

Here are a few things to consider:

- Arrange for student workspace and/or student parking, if applicable
- Gather company brochures, policy and safety manuals and review with student
- Have company's safety/confidentiality policy available for student
- Send an announcement through your office to coworkers who will be introduced to the student during their visit
- Be prepared to answer student questions
- Be sensitive to students diversity issues and needs
- Treat the student as a potential "hire". Ask typical interview questions, and give the student feedback on their responses. A mock interview is a great start to a job shadow or internship.

### **Adolescents in the Workplace**

Adolescence is a time when young people begin to define more clearly a sense of self and test their ideas and interests in the adult world. Most adolescents have a very limited understanding of professionalism and workplace expectations, but are eager to learn and to please.

Students may:

- Look for opportunities to make decisions and provide input
- Challenging authority
- Be interested in physical appearance (their standards, not necessarily yours)
- Want independence and privileges-but have trouble with responsibility and personal discipline
- Feel uneasy about the future
- Try out different values; beginning to build personal philosophies
- Be sensitive to the reactions of adults and want respect
- Feel insecure in new settings with adults
- Be involved in multiple activities

## **Questions to ask students...**

Most teens tend to be shy and quiet around adults they've just recently met. They will depend on the adult to make the first move and carry the conversation forward. Be prepared for this by thinking about questions to pose in advance!

Sample questions:

- What school activities have you participated in? Why? Which did you enjoy the most?
- How would you describe your personality?
- Tell me about some accomplishments that you feel good about.
- Tell me something unique about yourself.
- Tell me what skills you have acquired in school that would be useful on the job.
- What jobs have you held? How were they obtained? Why did you leave?
- What do you plan to do after high school?
- How do you think this experience might help you with those plans?

## **What if a student behaves inappropriately?**

High school students are often inexperienced in workplace expectations. They might feel uncomfortable or behave inappropriately out of nervousness, or a need to have some control over the situation.

It is not likely that students will misbehave. However, if this occurs:

- Counsel the student on appropriate behavior. Many times the student may simply not know expectations
- It is the businesses' prerogative to ask the student to leave if concerns persist
- Always notify the school contact in the case of any behavioral concerns



## Liability

Every school district has their own policy when it comes to the release of liability information, but it is the policy of all schools that partner with the BizConnect program to assume liability for their students when engaged in the course and scope of an authorized school program. The liability coverage is for activities that are directly related to their coursework, and ceases to be in effect when an employer chooses to compensate a student. In these cases, labor laws apply, and the employer becomes bound by those statutes. Liability coverage provided by school districts are not intended to cover negligence on the part of the employer offering the experience.

If there are any concerns regarding liability please contact your BizConnect coordinator. Schools are willing to share their liability policy information, but will do so only by request.

### **How do Child Labor Laws apply?**

For current information regarding Child Labor Laws, visit the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries web site, [www.boli.state.or.us](http://www.boli.state.or.us) under Child Labor. There is a section on Child Labor Laws for School to Work/Career Practitioners.

For current information regarding Teen Workers in the State of Washington, visit The Washington State Labor and Industries web site;  
[www.lni.wa.gov/workplacerrights/teenworkers](http://www.lni.wa.gov/workplacerrights/teenworkers)