



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

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- New Graduation Requirements - 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 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



Student Preparation Standards

Resume'

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- Have students develop a resume for advanced CRLEs
- Instruct students to submit their resume to business volunteers prior to any scheduled appointments

Assessment

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- Ensure students have completed an interest assessment of the school's choosing
- Make certain students identify CRLEs that match their career interests
- Make a decision about the appropriateness of the student/CRLE match

Inventory of student preparation

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- Assist students with the development of learning objectives – what will they learn from this CRLE?
- Direct students to complete and submit all required paperwork (permission slips, release forms, nondisclosure agreements, etc.)

Study!

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- Instruct students to research the CRLE's BIO (Business, Industry and Occupation)
- Have students prepare questions for volunteers.
How does one get the skills it takes to qualify for this job? Etc.

Expectations are set and understood

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- Ensure students are aware of and agree to appropriate behavior while on the CRLE
- Instruct students on appropriate dress for the situation (hygiene, clothes, shoes, piercings)
- Make sure students have a transportation plan

Timeliness

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- Convey the importance to **BE ON TIME** (On time = 15 minutes early)
- Make sure students know that if they are delayed they should phone the business volunteer

Have everything they need, tell them to:

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- Bring pre-prepared questions
- Bring a copy of their resume, pen, notepad
- Bring the name and phone number of the business volunteer in case they need to reach them

Etiquette:

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- Instruct students on how to make a good first impression: Stand up straight, firm hand shake, appropriate greeting (Hello, not Hey), make eye contact
- Be engaged, ask questions, listen, observe, take notes
- Be respectful of the time and commitment the businesses are making: Remain on site for duration of scheduled time and **turn off cell phone!**

Be sure to show their appreciation

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- Instruct students to thank the volunteer at the end of the CRLE for their time
- Have students send a thank you letter within one week of CRLE completion
- Make certain students tell business volunteers a couple of things they have learned

Add experience to resume

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- Educate students that resumes require frequent updating to reflect new experiences
- Instruct students to update their resume to include this new experience

Reflections

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- Have students complete student evaluation of CRLE experience
- Instruct students to complete reflection of experience for credit documentation

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Career-Related Learning Experiences (CRLEs): Common Definitions

Career-Related Learning Experiences (CRLEs) are structured student activities in the community, the workplace, or in school that connect academic content and career-related learning to real life applications. These experiences extend, reinforce and support classroom learning.

CRLE Type		Definition
Basic CRLE	Guest Speakers <i>30-60 minutes</i>	Guest speakers may address students in a classroom, auditorium, or at a community event. They allow a large group of students to hear, firsthand, about a particular occupation, business, or industry. Guest speakers may talk about the necessary preparation, required knowledge and skills, and other interesting information from the point of view of an employee or manager in their field. Guest speakers may also describe how they entered their current occupation, the major responsibilities for individuals in this occupation and the industries in which it is found. Guest speaker visits typically last for 30-60 minutes.
	Company Tours <i>1-4 hours</i>	A business site visit or industry tour allows a group of students to view an organization's facility and operation. Students explore career options and the world of work by observing the worksite and asking questions about jobs, skills, and tasks performed by the company. Site visits typically last one to four hours, and the group size varies to meet each organization's unique needs.
	Informational Interviews <i>30-60 minutes</i>	An informational interview allows a student to explore a particular occupation and gather information about the necessary preparation, required knowledge, and other interesting facts. Informational interviews help students broaden their vision of career fields, gain exposure to different adult role models, and understand the connection between school, work, and achieving goals. During the interview, a business person provides the student with a glimpse of what career is like, the necessary training, and workplace requirements. The student is prepared with a set of questions. The interview can take place in person or by phone. The time commitment is typically 30 to 60 minutes.



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Advanced CRLE	Job Shadows <i>2-8 hours</i>	Job shadows provide an opportunity for a student to spend a specified amount of time (usually not less than a few hours or more than a day) with one or more employees at a business site. The student learns about potential careers by “shadowing” the daily routines and activities of individual workers. Businesses and employees who host job shadows go about their regular work while discussing it with the student. The student observes the employee and then “interviews” the employee about his/her work and education. Job shadows help students develop communication skills and make the connection between academic classroom work and their career goals. Job shadows are unpaid and last 2-8 hours.
	Mock Interviews <i>30-90 minutes</i>	Mock interviews help students develop and practice job interviewing skills. Employers who regularly interview job applicants (often human resource professionals) set up interview sessions with individual students to help them prepare for their future interviews. Typical interview questions are presented and students are asked to respond as in a real interview. After the interview, students are given construction feedback regarding their interviewing style and how they responded to the questions. Mock interviews typically last 30-90 minutes.
	Internships <i>24+ hours</i>	Employers offer internships to provide students with opportunities to experience “hands-on” learning in the area of their career interests and apply classroom learning in a real-life environment. They also can explore a particular career pathway, industry, or occupation and learn workplace readiness/soft skills and entry level job skills essential for success in the workplace. The student's assignments may include occupation-related tasks and/or special projects. Employers have an opportunity to review the goals and objectives created for the internship by the student. These experiences can be paid or unpaid, reflect a wide range of hours per week, and are completed during one week to one year (a minimum of 24 hours).
	Senior Project Advisors <i>Time varies</i>	A project advisor provides support and advice in the technical aspects of a student’s senior project. Senior projects, also called extended applications, are designed as the culminating experience for high school students in Oregon. A senior project is a large, often complex project designed around a student’s career and educational interests and goals. The student designs the project with input from teachers and the project advisor. Students are expected to solve problems, create products, and make presentations. They demonstrate extended application through successful completion and presentation of a collection of evidence. A senior project typically lasts one school year (9 months); for the business partner the time commitment is typically 20 hours.