

# PROGRAM STAFF TIP SHEET

## Career Mentoring: Success Factors

A tip sheet for Learn & Earn Program staff

When designing and implementing your Career Mentoring program, keep the following success factors in mind.

- ❑ Apply the Work-Based learning essential elements
  - › Address the elements in the design of your Career Mentoring program.
  - › Check in with the elements periodically to ensure that all ten are being addressed in the implementation of the program.
- ❑ Select the appropriate Career Mentoring model.
  - › Career Mentoring should focus on career exploration, training, and related education.
  - › Career Mentoring should take place at your organization, the workplace, online, or at an approved outing.
  - › Career Mentoring evolves and may look differently over time.
- ❑ Assess, select and prepare Career Mentors.
  - › Conduct an assessment of potential mentors and select and support those who are a good fit with the youth and young adults in your program. Find other ways for those not selected to be involved.
  - › Conduct any required background checks and apply the same standards as those used with volunteers to Career Mentors.
  - › Provide an orientation and training to the Career Mentors, including clarifying that there is to be no face-to-face activity outside of supervised activities. Remind mentors to keep equity issues in mind, ensuring that one mentee isn't offered many perks while another receives few.
  - › Verify mentor commitments.
  - › Make sure they know how to contact their program representative if they have concerns or questions about their mentee.
- ❑ Define how much face-to-face time is desirable.
  - › Early on in the experience, the more the better. The first few times, face-to-face connection is important before other forms of meetings and interactions start to happen.
- ❑ Balance events with activities.
  - › Explore flexible ways to engage mentors and provide opportunities for youth and young adults to connect—not just through high-stakes, intensive events.
- ❑ Explore alternative forms of connecting.
  - › Try Skype, email and other social media.
- ❑ Address key legal, safety and health issues.
  - › Follow applicable policies.
  - › Establish a clear set of boundaries for the Career Mentoring experience and ensure that both mentors and mentees understand them.
  - › Help employers and organizations comply with all rules and regulations related to interacting with youth and young adults through community-based programs.
  - › Make it clear to both youth and young adults and employers and organizations that there are to be no face-to-face connections outside of arranged activities.
  - › Set/follow policies guiding online and social media interactions.

- ❑ Encourage mentor choice and matching.
  - When possible, allow the mentor and mentee to interview and select each other.
  - Match youth and young adults with potential career mentors based on career interest, gender, and personality—when possible matching with someone the youth or young adult can relate to.
    - Sample Activity: Have youth and young adults prepare and distribute bios to potential mentors.
  - Provide multiple connections and exposures before choice.
    - Sample Activity: After a few exposures, have youth and young adults pick their top three career mentor choices.
  - Create/identify potential matches out of other program activities.
- ❑ Support the Career Mentoring experience.
  - Develop clear, written policies and procedures for all parties.
  - Tailor the Career Mentoring Guide to your program.
  - Have the youth/young adult and the career mentor set and communicate expectations that are assessed on a regular basis.
  - Provide ongoing support and training for career mentors.
    - Update and adapt the Career Mentoring Mentor Tip Sheet and share/review with your mentoring volunteers.
    - Provide a single point of contact for all mentors (designate a mentor coordinator at agency).
    - Support mentors to help them tell their story of the pathway/journey to their present position.
    - Support mentors to help youth and young adults build their personal traits.
    - Help mentors understand issues of confidentiality and their responsibilities.
- Provide ongoing support for youth and young adults.
  - Encourage youth and young adults to share interests and ideas with their career mentor.
  - Suggest that youth and young adults invite their mentor to school events/activities.
  - Create assignments for youth and young adults to share with their career mentor.
  - Have youth and young adults share current study topics with their career mentor.
- ❑ Develop an effective employer and organization engagement strategy.
  - Define the Return on Investment (ROI) for employers and organizations.
  - When possible, get top-down support in the company and organization.
  - Bring in four to five people from a single company and organization to spend time with small groups of youth and young adults.
  - Explore connecting Industry Advisors and Board Members as career mentors.
  - Use employers and organizations to recruit other employers and organizations.
  - Cast a wider net than your current industry partners. Identify potential mentors that your youth and young adults would want to connect with and learn from.
- ❑ Help career mentors understand and support the Learn & Earn Program's approach.
  - Share the Professional Skills Fact Sheet with the career mentor.
  - Share the current focus of classroom training and workshop activities on a regular basis.
  - Encourage career mentors to talk about the Professional Skills with their mentee, and support and connect to what's going on in the program.