

EMPLOYER FACT SHEET

Workplace Challenges

A fact sheet for employers

A Workplace Challenge is a Career Preparation activity where small groups of youth and young adults (four to six per team) from a Learn & Earn Program are engaged in solving a problem or a challenge issued by a partner employer in consultation with program staff.

The structure of the challenge is based upon effective project-based learning approaches, enhanced by a focus on the targeted Career Pathway and an authentic problem or issue faced by an employer partner. The youth and young adults are engaged in career-focused, project-based learning and work as a team over time to identify possible solutions. They then create and deliver a presentation on their solution to the employer.

Grade/Program Levels: All

Employer/Youth or Young Adult Ratio: 1-2 employer partners to 4-6 youth and young adults.

Duration: 6-8 weeks

Frequency: Face-to-face sessions at the beginning and end of the challenge, with periodic check-ins.

Location: Ideally in the workplace at both the beginning and end of the activity, with youth and young adult teams working on the challenge conducted at the youth organization or school.

Costs: Staff time

Special Considerations: Comply with organization policies. Address any safety issues at the workplace.

Why are Workplace Challenges important?

- Research shows effective project-based learning activities like those conducted in a Workplace Challenge help youth and young adults learn new concepts more easily and engage more deeply.
- Offers the opportunity to develop, practice and demonstrate many of the academic, technical and professional skills needed for success in the workplace.
- Allows youth and young adults to experience what it might be like to work and practice in a field of interest.
- Enhances the relevance of classroom instruction and workshop activities through the application of applied knowledge to a real-world problem or issue.

What are the benefits to my company?

- Exposes potential future workers to what it might be like to work in your industry.
- Promotes an understanding of the role and contributions of your business in the local economy, and some of the issues or problems you are facing.

- Introduces youth and young adults to your employees and co-workers.
- Helps your employees understand how to communicate with the next generation of workers.
- Provides a fresh perspective (and perhaps viable solution) to a problem or issue your company is facing.
- Provides the opportunity for good public relations and boosts workforce morale.

What do I need to do next?

- Contact your program representative.
- Arrange for a presentation to employees who might be interested in being a challenge host.
- Consider any impacts on company policy.

Resources

- Distribute the *Challenge Host Tip Sheet: Workplace Challenge* to employees who might be interested in representing your company as a challenge host.
- Review *Employer Participation Options: Career Pathways and your Company* to learn more about how to get the most out of your partnership with New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development programs.