

Northeast Texas Pathways



Guide for Educators: Finding Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Students



A proud partner of the [AmericanJobCenter](#) network

Guide for Educators: Finding Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Students

Introduction

Work-based learning (WBL) provides students with practical experience and skills necessary for successful careers. As educators, facilitating these opportunities is crucial for student development. This guide outlines the key components for educators to effectively find and implement WBL opportunities for their students.

1. Program Planning and Design

1. Define Objectives:

- Identify the goals of the WBL program (e.g., skill development, career exploration, industry exposure).
- Align the program with educational standards and student career goals.

2. Partnerships:

- Establish connections with local businesses, industry associations, and community organizations.
- Collaborate with these partners to create mutually beneficial WBL opportunities.

3. Program Structure:

- Determine the type of WBL program (e.g., internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, project-based learning).
 - Define the duration, schedule, and structure of the program to fit both academic calendars and employer needs.
-

2. Identifying Opportunities

1. Industry Research:

- Research local industries and employers that align with your students' career interests and academic focus.
- Identify key contacts and gather information on potential WBL opportunities.

2. Outreach and Networking:

- Attend industry events, career fairs, and networking functions to establish relationships with potential employers.
- Use social media and professional networks (e.g., LinkedIn) to connect with industry professionals.

3. Community Engagement:

- Engage with local chambers of commerce, business development organizations, and workforce boards.
 - Leverage these connections to find WBL opportunities and promote the benefits of partnering with your institution.
-

3. Developing Partnerships

1. Proposal and Pitch:

- Create a compelling proposal outlining the benefits of WBL programs for employers, such as access to emerging talent and community involvement.
- Schedule meetings with potential partners to present your proposal and discuss collaboration opportunities.

2. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU):

- Develop MOUs that clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of both the educational institution and the employer.
- Ensure agreements cover aspects such as supervision, safety, evaluation, and legal considerations.

3. Communication and Coordination:

- Maintain open and regular communication with employer partners to coordinate student placements and address any concerns.
 - Designate a point of contact within your institution to manage the relationship with each partner.
-

4. Preparing Students

1. Career Readiness:

- Provide career readiness workshops covering resume writing, interview skills, and professional behavior.
- Offer guidance on how to research potential employers and industries.

2. Application Process:

- Assist students with the application process, including preparing application materials and practicing interview techniques.
- Facilitate mock interviews and provide constructive feedback.

3. Orientation and Training:

- Conduct pre-placement orientation sessions to prepare students for the workplace.
 - Cover topics such as workplace expectations, communication skills, and time management.
-

5. Program Implementation and Monitoring

1. **Placement and Supervision:**

- Match students with suitable WBL opportunities based on their skills, interests, and career goals.
- Ensure students are adequately supervised and supported throughout their placements.

2. **Mentorship:**

- Encourage employers to assign mentors to guide students and provide regular feedback.
- Foster a supportive environment where students feel comfortable seeking advice and assistance.

3. **Ongoing Support:**

- Regularly check in with both students and employers to monitor progress and address any issues.
 - Provide additional resources or support as needed to ensure a successful experience for all parties.
-

6. **Evaluation and Feedback**

1. **Performance Reviews:**

- Implement a structured evaluation process to assess student performance and learning outcomes.
- Use a combination of self-assessments, employer evaluations, and educator reviews.

2. **Feedback Mechanisms:**

- Create opportunities for students and employers to provide feedback on their WBL experience.
- Use surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one meetings to gather insights.

3. **Continuous Improvement:**

- Analyze feedback and evaluation results to identify areas for improvement.
 - Adjust the program as needed to enhance future WBL opportunities.
-

7. **Post-Program Support**

1. **Reflection and Debriefing:**

- Facilitate reflection sessions where students can discuss their experiences and lessons learned.
- Encourage students to identify how their WBL experience has influenced their career goals.

2. **Career Pathways:**

- Provide guidance on next steps, including further education, additional WBL opportunities, or job search strategies.

- Help students explore potential career pathways based on their interests and experiences.
 - 3. **Alumni Networks:**
 - Maintain connections with program alumni to build a strong network of industry professionals.
 - Offer ongoing professional development and networking opportunities for alumni.
-

8. Placing Students with Disabilities:

When placing students with disabilities in work-based learning settings, teachers should consider the following key components:

1. Individualized Assessment and Planning:

- **Comprehensive Evaluation:** Conduct an assessment of the student's strengths, weaknesses, skills, and interests. This assessment should consider both academic and functional skills, including social skills, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities.
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** Develop an IEP that outlines specific goals and objectives for the student's work-based learning experience. This should include accommodations and modifications needed to ensure success.
- **Career Exploration:** Help the student explore various career options that align with their interests and abilities.

2. Workplace Readiness Skills:

- **Soft Skills:** Teach essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, punctuality, and problem-solving. These skills are crucial for success in any workplace.
- **Technical Skills:** Provide training in specific job skills relevant to the chosen work-based learning opportunity. This may include computer skills, customer service skills, or industry-specific skills.
- **Self-Advocacy:** Empower students to advocate for themselves and their needs in the workplace. Teach them how to communicate their needs to supervisors and coworkers, and how to ask for accommodations if necessary.

3. Job Placement and Support:

- **Identify Suitable Workplaces:** Collaborate with local businesses and organizations to identify suitable work-based learning opportunities that match the student's skills and interests.
- **Job Coaching:** When necessary, provide job coaching and support to the student during the transition to the workplace. This may include job training, on-the-job support, and ongoing monitoring.
- **Employer Partnerships:** Build strong relationships with employers to ensure that they understand the student's needs and are willing to provide appropriate support.

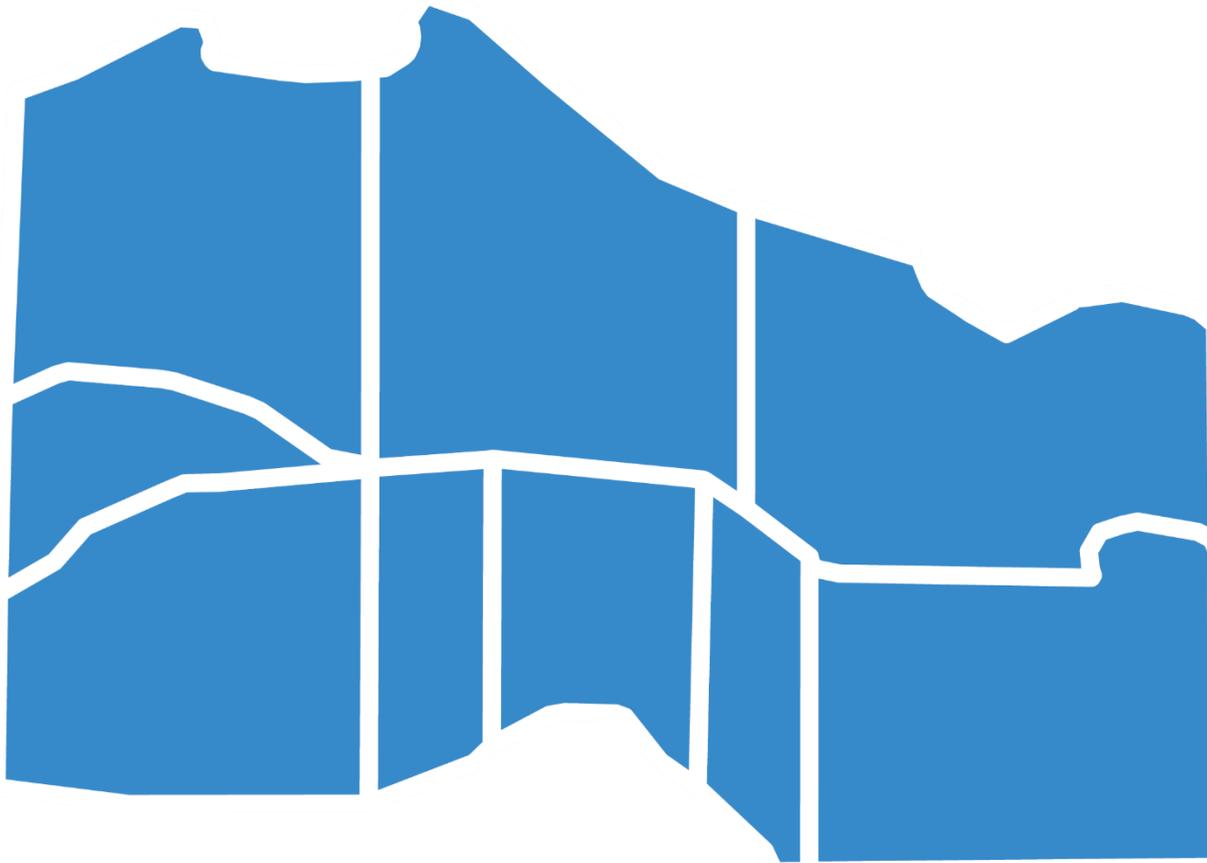
4. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- **Regular Check-ins:** Conduct regular check-ins with the student, employer, and job coach to monitor the student's progress and address any challenges.
 - **Data Collection:** Collect data on the student's performance, including attendance, productivity, and quality of work. This data can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the work-based learning experience and make adjustments as needed.
-

Conclusion

By implementing an effective WBL program, educators can provide students with valuable hands-on experience that enhances their academic learning and prepares them for future careers. This guide serves as a foundation for creating robust WBL opportunities tailored to your students' needs and aspirations.

**PROUDLY SERVING BOWIE, CASS, DELTA,
FRANKLIN, HOPKINS, LAMAR, MORRIS, RED
RIVER, AND TITUS COUNTIES**



A proud partner of the
AmericanJobCenter*
network

Equal Opportunity Employer/Programs
Auxiliary aids and services are available up request
Relay Texas TDD: 800-735-2989 and (Voice) 711
www.netxworkforce.org