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Young Adult Participant Handbook 2025-2026  
Work Experience Programs

# Participant Handbook

## ***Welcome!***

The Lowell Career Center's Work Experience Program provides....

Exciting ways for you to participate in work readiness activities that will help you achieve your career goals!

Eligible Young Adults can participate in in person subsidized worksites/programs that will provide the opportunity to develop skills and abilities needed to succeed in the World of Work. It is an opportunity to become self-sufficient and a productive member of the workforce.

Provides you with a valuable work experience and exposure to a variety of career possibilities. Helps you to develop positive work habits and attitudes.

Encourages you to continue your educational growth and gain familiarity with the requirements of different jobs.

Pays you an hourly wage or stipend that will assist in your personal and family needs.

## **The MassHire Lowell Young Adult Career Center Work Experience Program**

As a program participant, you will have the opportunity to gain a meaningful work experience that will help you develop good work habits and job skills. In addition, you will be able to make tangible improvements to your neighborhood and the City of Lowell by participating in a subsidized worksite placement sponsored by City and State agencies, community groups, churches, and other non-profit organizations.

This handbook is written as a guide for the participants who are participating in the Young Adult Program sponsored by the Greater Lowell Workforce Board and the Lowell Career Center. It outlines your responsibilities and code of conduct while participating in the Young Adult Work Experience Program.

***Keep it in a convenient place for you to find quickly.***

We look forward to a very rewarding work experience for you!

Lowell Young Adult Career Center Staff

## **Program Operations**

The MassHire Lowell Young Adult Career Center (MHLYACC) Summer Work Experience program will operate for 5-6 weeks (time varies depending on the program you are placed in) starting as early as June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and ending as late as August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025. (Please note some worksites have different schedules so your start and end dates could vary based on your assigned worksite). Year-Round Work Experience Programs operate September through May with exact dates being announced in late 2025. Hours vary per placement. Young people working on in person sites will be paid an hourly wage per hour. Each participant will be assigned to a Worksite Supervisor or Program Leader. Your Worksite Supervisor/Program Leader will tell you the exact time you are to report to and complete work each day. **You will only be paid for the actual hours you work. You will not be paid for days missed due to sickness, holidays, or for your lunch break. Pay rates will not change.** Young people working on service learning projects will be paid VIA stipend for their program participation.

## Participant Responsibilities

You will be evaluated based on your behavior and work performance. The Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan or similar tool will be used to measure your success in your summer job to help determine the skills you need to enhance to reach your career goals. Listed below are tips for you to consider:

- Begin your new job enthusiastically.
- Respect the authority of your supervisor.
- Find out what your supervisor expects of you.
- You're not expected to know everything when you start.
- Learn your job well.
- Work productively and efficiently; don't waste time.
- Follow directions accurately.
- Listen carefully.
- Ask clarifying questions; there are no "dumb" questions.
- Take notes as instructions are given.
- Make a commitment to do your BEST—everyday!
- Demonstrate self-discipline and initiative.
- Arrive on time every day.
- Cooperate with co-workers.
- Have pride in your job; take your work seriously.
- Practice good work habit and observe rules for your area.
- Present a professional, well-groomed image at all times.
- Call your supervisor if you are unable to come to work or will be late. Keep workplace phone numbers with you at all times.
- Give advance notice of medical and dental appointments.
- Understand and follow all safety guidelines.
- Let your Worksite Supervisor know of any problems you may be experiencing.



## Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan (MWBLP)

The Work-Based Learning Plan is a tool to document the work readiness and/or occupational learning gains a young adult will acquire at the site. If a different tool is to be used, it will follow similar competencies as the MWBLP. The website for technical assistance is [www.skillslibrary.org](http://www.skillslibrary.org)

Listed below are some of the **Mass Work Based Learning** Competencies you may be evaluated on while you are participating on your Worksite.

- ✓ Collecting and organizing information
- ✓ Computer technology
- ✓ Interacting with people
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Mathematics and Numeric Analysis
- ✓ Accepting Direction and constructive criticism
- ✓ Workplace appearance
- ✓ Attendance and Punctuality
- ✓ Motivation and taking initiative
- ✓ Understanding workplace culture, Policy and Safety
- ✓ Speaking, Listening and interacting with co-workers



## **Work and Jobs**

There are many different in person jobs in the MHLYACC Work Experience Program and many different organizations providing valuable work experiences. These organizations and agencies are called worksites. They include community groups, churches, non-profit organizations as well as government agencies and for-profit businesses.

We try to take your interests and abilities into account when assigning you to your job/project. We cannot always guarantee a perfect match, but every job is useful. Your willingness to do the job/project assigned and to accept supervision is important to the success of the program.

The Lowell Career Center Staff will provide assistance to you and your Worksite Supervisor/Program Leader in any way possible. They may also present weekly work readiness activities as well as picking up your time sheets.

Your Worksite Supervisor/Program Leader is totally responsible for you during the workday. He/she will provide on-the-job training and supervision by assigning individual tasks and duties, creating a supportive environment, and meeting with you regularly to discuss your progress and future plans.

### ***Who's who in the Program...?***

#### **Worksite Supervisor/Program Leader**

This person works for the worksite as your on-site Supervisor. His /Her duties include:

- Explaining the worksite rules and processes.
- Instructing you in your daily assignments.
- Providing as much personal attention as possible.
- Being available to discuss your progress and evaluate your performance.
- Determining your hours and helping you to complete your weekly time sheet.
- Completing the Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan (MWBLP) with you and the CCL Staff.
- Providing ongoing supervision during daily assignments.
- Recommending whether you should be terminated.

## MHLYACC Staff

The MHLYACC Staff will work closely with both you and your Worksite Supervisor to ensure your participation in the program is successful. They will answer all questions regarding payroll, disciplinary actions and MHGLWB/MHLCC policies. They will assist Worksite Supervisors with the completion of the MWBLP (Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan).

MHLYACC Staff duties include:

- Staying in contact with you and your Worksite Supervisor.
- Visiting and evaluating worksites.
- Acting as a mediator in conflicts between you and your Worksite Supervisor or staff.
- Answering questions regarding timesheets and paychecks.
- Collecting your time sheets and delivering your paystubs.
- Regularly evaluating your work performance.
- Recommending whether you should be terminated.

## Participant (This is Your Title)

Participants should be aware that you are now a member of the workforce and therefore responsible for your own performance. Your behavior on the job will create an impression with your Worksite Supervisor. If their experience with you is a positive one, they will continue to sponsor other young people in the future by providing them with a similar opportunity. If not, their partnership with MHGLWB/MHLCC may end.

Even though you may not see this job as a career or occupation, we hope that it will provide you with a good experience. There is something to be learned from every job you do.

A Participant's responsibilities include:

- Be on time! Absenteeism and tardiness will make it more difficult for you to complete your job.
- If you know that you will be late or absent from work, **call** your Worksite Supervisor. It is never excusable not to call. This is basic work etiquette.
- Dress appropriately for your job. If you are unsure of what to wear, ask your Worksite Supervisor.
- No friends or family visits at the worksite. You are there to work, not socialize.
- No talking on your cell phone, text messaging, or using the office computer for personal use when you should be working! Limit personal phone calls at all times.
- Following the directions of your Worksite Supervisor.
- Work cooperatively with your Worksite Supervisor and co-workers.

## Discipline Policy

Participants must adhere to all rules and regulations of the Career Center as well as the worksite. These rules and regulations include adhering to guidelines regarding attendance, attitude, safety and dependability.

Before a participant is terminated from the program, they should be given one written warning. The warning must include a brief description of the infraction or incident warranting the warning, the date and time of the incident, and include any resolution to the problem. A specific timeframe set for improvement of the problem is also beneficial.

In the event of an emergency situation the participant may be terminated without prior warning.

### **Attendance/Punctuality Policy**

Work Experience programming works with many different organizations within the Greater Lowell community. In order to keep these relationships strong, we need to ensure that the worksites are being satisfied in this relationship. Below please find a general attendance and punctuality policy:

### **No Call No Show Policy**

- First Offense will warrant a verbal warning.
- Second Offense will warrant a meeting with Career Center Staff and a written warning that will be kept on file at the Career Center.
- Third Offense will result in termination from the program without the chance to participate in any other Youth Works Programming, including summer jobs.

### **Calling out of Work**

- Calls should be made at least an hour in advance. Calls need to be to your worksite supervisors not your contacts at the Career Center. Career Center staff is not always readily available and are not responsible for your attendance at your worksite.

### **Tardiness**

- Unexcused Tardiness will not be tolerated. You need to be at work at your scheduled time. Three tardies will result in a written warning. If the unexcused tardiness continues after the written warning you will be terminated from the program. If terminated you will no longer be able to participate in any other Career Center sponsored Youth Works Programming, including summer jobs.

### **High Risk Meetings**

Below please find a general high risk meeting policy:

#### **Reasons for High Risk Meeting:**

- Poor Attendance
- Poor Punctuality
- Outside Life Circumstances
- Poor Reviews from Worksites
- Youth requests one

High Risk Meetings will be scheduled with Career Center Staff to check in one on one when needed. These meetings will be documented and kept on file at the Career Center. If you are scheduled for one of these meetings it is mandatory that you attend as a part of your participation in the Young Adult Program. You may leave these meeting with required action steps that Career Center Staff will check in with you about.

## Grounds for Termination

**The following behaviors are grounds for suspension and/or termination:**

- Fraud and/or dishonesty
- Drunkenness and/or use of narcotics including Marijuana.
- Misuse/abuse of property
- Fighting
- Possession of any type of weapon
- Use of abusive language
- Continuous absenteeism and tardiness
- Refusal to participate in internship or classroom activities
- Sexual Harassment/Bullying of others



**Emergency situations include but are not limited to:**

- Reporting to the Worksite under the influence or possession of drugs (including marijuana) or alcohol.
- Theft of materials or equipment from the Worksite.
- Assault on another person.
- Willful destruction or damage to equipment.
- Possession of any weapon or an instrument that can be construed as a weapon.

## Payroll Procedures

**Hours:** Participants are given a schedule and allotted hours they are scheduled to work. Hours cannot exceed these limits unless authorized by the MHLYACC Manager.

**Wages:** Participants working in person on a work site will be paid a per hour rate based on prevailing minimum wage.

**Stipends:** Participants working on group service learning projects will receive a stipend associated with hours worked on the project per week.

**Participants are not paid for vacations, holidays or sick leave.**

**Lunch Break:** Participants are not paid nor supervised during lunch breaks. Participants must be provided with a lunch break if they are working more than 6 hours a day. **\*\*Please do not list breaks and lunch on the timesheet unless you work more than 6 hours per day.**



It is the general policy of the MassHire Lowell Young Adult Career Center that young adults will not be paid for any time that they are not actually participating in any Career Center sponsored activity.

The following are the only allowable exceptions to this policy.

- If the worksite is closed due to an emergency and an alternate site is not available, participants will be paid for the normal number of hours for that day.
- If work is called off for inclement weather and the participant has reported to work, they will be compensated at a minimum of one hour of work.

**Payroll Procedures:** Time sheets must be submitted on a weekly basis so that a bi-weekly check can be processed. The collection of time sheets begins on Monday. MHLYACC Staff will pick up your timesheet. It is your (Participant) responsibility to make sure that timesheets are completed properly and readily available to the MHLYACC Staff when they arrive at your worksite to pick them up on Monday or Tuesdays.

Stipend forms will also be submitted on a weekly basis. Attendance at all activities will be taken weekly by Program Leaders who will then complete stipend forms based on attendance and participation.

All Payroll and Stipends will be processed with a multi-week lag time, please see chart regarding pay periods for the summer cycle of work experience. Checks are issued bi-weekly even though timesheets are collected weekly (keep in mind you may not be working all the weeks listed):

|               | <b>Week Starting</b> | <b>Week Ending</b> | <b>Dates Checks Available</b> |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Week 1</b> | 6/29/2025            | 7/5/2025           | 7/24/2025                     |
| <b>Week 2</b> | 7/6/2025             | 7/12/2025          | 7/24/2025                     |
| <b>Week 3</b> | 7/13/2025            | 7/19/2025          | 8/7/2025                      |
| <b>Week 4</b> | 7/20/2025            | 7/26/2025          | 8/7/2025                      |
| <b>Week 5</b> | 7/27/2025            | 8/2/2025           | 8/21/2025                     |
| <b>Week 6</b> | 8/3/2025             | 8/9/2025           | 8/21/2025                     |

Charts for Year-Round Programs will be provided at a later date.

**Do not use pencil when completing your timesheet. This is a legal document. You must use black or blue pen.**

Each time sheet should include the following:

- Your legal name (**what is listed on your social security card**). Your check will be made payable to the name you signed on your tax forms. Do not sign your 'nick name' i.e. Jimmy instead of James.
- Name of your Worksite.
- Time you start each day. Please round off your time. For example, if you arrive at 7:55am, please write 8am.
- Time you finish each day. Please round off your time. For example, if you leave at 3:18pm, please write 3:15pm.
- If you work for 3.5 hours it needs to be marked as such, not 3 hours and 30 mins as an example.
- Each day's total hours (you do not receive pay for the time you are late or leave early).



- Total weekly hours.
- Your Worksite Supervisor's signature in blue or black pen.
- Your signature in blue or black pen. Your time sheet is a legal document.
- **Address changes:** It is the Participant's responsibility to notify the Lowell Career Center of any changes in mailing address.

## Payroll/Stipend Problems

Any error found in a paycheck or stipend will be corrected as soon as possible. Any problem with a participant's pay must be reported to MHLYACC Staff as soon as the error is discovered. The MHLYACC Staff will immediately initiate steps to correct the error.

## Cashing Your Check/Stipend and Direct Deposit

1. Everyone receiving hourly wages must have direct deposit set up prior to the start of the work experience. You will receive a check for the initial pay periods and then the direct deposit will begin. \*Young adults receiving stipends are not eligible for direct deposit\*
2. When you receive your check you will be required to sign your name on a weekly check register to indicate that you received it. This gives you some protection against an unauthorized person claiming your check. Take the check to a bank for cashing as soon as possible to prevent loss or theft.
3. Present proper identification to the teller.
4. **Remember!** If your check is lost or stolen, notify Lowell Career Center Youth staff **immediately**. The Lowell Career Center's Fiscal Office will issue a stop payment request on the missing check and begin the process of replacement. This is a process that takes at least two (2) or more weeks. A \$15.00 stop payment fee will be deducted by the City of Lowell for each re-issued lost check.
5. **No one else can pick up your check.** Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, at a **minimum** we will require a letter, signed by the person who owns the check (you), stating the name of the person authorized to pick up the check, the reason why the check cannot be picked up in person, and a photo ID of the person authorized to pick up the check.

## Safety Procedures

Safety is everyone's responsibility and should be promoted daily.

1. No task is so important that it cannot be completed safely.
2. General awareness and basic common sense will be the best guide to avoiding accidents.
3. Unsafe conditions must be immediately reported to your Supervisor.
4. Inspect your area carefully before starting your task.
5. Avoid unsafe conditions. Example: poison ivy, broken or improper tools, power lines, bees, hornets, wasp's nests and power equipment.



6. Dress properly for the type of tasks you will be doing, for example if performing outdoor work it is best to wear footwear that is sturdy and protective.
7. If you are prone to sunburn and are working outdoors it is best to wear protective sunscreen or sun block.

#### **What to do in case of an accident:**

1. Report all accidents to your Supervisor immediately.  
Personal injury must receive prompt medical attention. Any young adult injured on the job may seek medical attention at LGH Saints Medical Center Emergency Room One Hospital Drive, Lowell, MA {Hours: 24/7}
2. Your Supervisor should contact the LCC (978) 805-4723 or (978) 805-4703 to report the injury. LCC Staff will meet you at the LGH Saints facility with the required paperwork to document your injury so that we may pay for this medical care.

All accident reports must be completed within 24 hours of the injury. **We cannot compensate the hospital for any bills incurred as a result of a work-related injury unless a report is filed with the Career Center within 24 hrs after the injury occurs.**

3. Accidents resulting in property damage must be reported to your Supervisor immediately.

By law your employer is not allowed to fire or punish you for reporting a safety problem.

For more information on safety visit the OSHA Teen Workers website:

[www.osha.gov/teens](http://www.osha.gov/teens). You may also contact The US Dept. of Labor Occupational and Safety and Health Administration @ 617.565.8110.

It is important that you report all unsafe acts and conditions, accidents and incidents to your Supervisor. Do your part and enjoy a safe summer!

## Child Labor Laws

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Federal Labor Laws are strictly enforced by the Career Center of Lowell in the operation of the Summer Young Adult Work Experience Program. Please reference the following:

### **Summary of Massachusetts Laws Regulating Minors' Work Hours and Occupation Restrictions**

This is a compilation of state and federal child labor laws. The most protective laws are presented here and apply to all employers of teens including parents who may employ their children. There are additional regulations in this area not summarized here and some exceptions for employers in agricultural industries. Questions about the state child labor laws should be directed to the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, Fair Labor and Business Practices Division (617-727-3465). Questions about federal child labor laws should be directed to the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division (617-624-6700).

#### **Prohibited Jobs (Hazardous Orders)**

**Persons under 14 may not work:** There are a few exceptions to this such as working as news carriers, on farms, and in entertainment (with a special permit).

#### **Persons under 16 years old may *NOT*:**

- Operate, clean or repair power-driven machinery (except office machines or machines in retail or food service not otherwise prohibited)
- Cook (except on electric or gas grills that do not have open flames)
- Operate fryolators, rotisseries, NEICO broilers, or pressure cookers
- Operate, clean or repair power-driven food slicers, grinders, choppers, processors, cutters and mixers
- Perform any baking activities
- Operate microwave ovens (except to heat food in microwave ovens with a maximum capacity of 140 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Clean kitchen surfaces that are hotter than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Filter, transport, or dispose of cooking oil or grease hotter than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Work in freezers or meat coolers
- Work in a manufacturing facility or occupation (e.g., in a factory, as an assembler)
- Work on ladders, scaffolds or their substitutes
- Work in garages, except dispensing gas and oil
- Work in brick or lumber yards
- Work in amusement places (e.g., pool or billiard room, or bowling alley)
- Work in barber shops
- Work in construction, transportation, communications, or public utilities (except doing clerical work away from heavy machinery off the job-site)
- Work in warehouses (except doing clerical work)
- Load or unload trucks, railroad cars, or conveyors
- Ride in or on a motor vehicle (except in a passenger seat wearing a seatbelt)
- Wash windows in public or commercial buildings if the window sill is more than 10 feet above the ground
- Work doing laundry in a commercial laundry or dry cleaning establishment
- Work as a public messenger
- Work at processing operations (e.g., in meat, fish, or poultry processing or cracking nuts, bulk or mass mailing)
- Work around boilers or in engine rooms
- Do industrial homework
- Work with dangerous electrical machinery or appliances
- Work that is determined by the Massachusetts Attorney General to be dangerous to the health and well-being of minors

### **Work in any of the occupations or tasks prohibited for persons under age 18**

#### **Persons under 18 years old may *NOT*:**

- Drive a vehicle, forklift or work assist vehicle (except golf carts in certain circumstances)
- Ride as a passenger in a forklift
- Operate, clean or repair power-driven meat slicers, grinders or choppers
- Operate, clean or repair power-driven bakery machines (except for certain countertop models and pizza dough rollers)
- Work 30 feet or more above ground or water
- Handle, serve, or sell alcoholic beverages
- Use circular or band saws, guillotine shears, wood chippers, or abrasive cutting discs
- Use power-driven woodworking machines
- Use, service, drive or work from hoisting machines

- Operate or load power-driven paper balers, compactors, or other power-driven paper processing machines
- Use power-driven metal-forming, punching, or shearing machines
- Use buffing or polishing equipment
- Manufacture brick, tile, or kindred products
- Manufacture or store explosives
- Work in excavation, wrecking, demolition, or shipbreaking
- Work in forest fire fighting, forest fire prevention, timber track operations or forestry service
- Work in logging, sawmilling, or mining
- Work slaughtering, packing, or processing meat or poultry
- Work in railway operations
- Work in roofing or on or about a roof
- Work in foundries or around blast furnaces
- Work manufacturing phosphorus or phosphorus matches
- Work where they are exposed to radioactive substances
- Work as a firefighter or engineer on a boat
- Oil or clean hazardous machinery in motion
- Work in any job requiring the possession or use of a firearm\*

**Tasks not specifically permitted by the US DOL Secretary of Labor are prohibited.**

### **Legal Work Hours for Teens in Massachusetts**

***Note:** After 8:00 p.m., all minors must have the direct and immediate supervision of an adult supervisor who is located in the workplace and is reasonably accessible to the minor, unless the minor works at a kiosk, cart or stand in the common area of an enclosed shopping mall that has security from 8:00 p.m. until the mall is closed to the public.\**

### **14 and 15 Year Olds**

#### **Work Hours**

- Only between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. during the school year
- Not during school hours
- Only between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. during the summer
- (from July 1 through Labor Day)

#### **Maximum Hours When School Is in Session**

- 18 hours a week
- 3 hours a day on school days
- 8 hours a day Saturday, Sunday, holidays
- 6 days a week

#### **Maximum Hours When School Is Not in Session**

- 40 hours a week
- 8 hours a day
- 6 days a week

### **16 and 17 Year Olds**

### Work Hours\*

- Only between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. (on nights preceding a regularly scheduled school day) – if the establishment stops serving clients or customers at 10:00 p.m., the minor may be employed until 10:15 p.m.
- Only between the hours 6 a.m. and 11:30 p.m is permitted. (on nights not preceding a regularly scheduled school day).
- Exception for restaurants and racetracks: only between 6 a.m. and 12:00 midnight (on nights not preceding a regularly scheduled school day).

### Maximum Hours of Work –Whether or Not School is in Session

- 48 hours a week
- 9 hours a day
- 6 days a week

\* Indicates a change MA Child Labor Laws, effective date January 3, 2007.

## Participant's Rights and Complaint Process

The Lowell Career Center complies with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 in the administration. Both laws uphold equal employment opportunities for individuals regardless of race, national origin, gender, religious, political belief, age or disability.

The Lowell Career Center or agencies or institutions to which Career Center services are being provided will not tolerate discriminatory practice. Any youth who feels his/her rights have been violated and who cannot resolve the issue informally with LCC Staff has the right to file a formal grievance without penalty with the Career Center Manager, Heather Donovan, in accordance with the GLWDB and Career Center of Lowell's grievance procedures. Ms. Donovan's telephone number is (978) 805-4703.

## Names and Telephone Numbers to Remember

Supervisor's Name:

Tel # of Worksite:

Tel# to call if late or absent:

Days of week you work M\_\_\_ T\_\_\_ W\_\_\_ TH\_\_\_ F\_\_\_ Hours: From \_\_\_ to \_\_\_

Contacts @ the MassHire Lowell Young Adult Career Center:

- ❖ Heather Donovan, MHLYACC Manager: (978) 805-4703
- ❖ Victoria Wellenstein, Coordinator: (978) 805-4820
- ❖ Brandon Bernier, Supervisor: (978) 805-4782
- ❖ Cassidy Peinert, Young Adult Career Advisor: (978) 805-4716
- ❖ Anna Mansfield, Young Adult Career Advisor: (978) 805-4769
- ❖ Cassandra Uong- Downs, Young Adult Career Advisor: (978) 805-4739
- ❖ Ashley Maccarone, Young Adult Career Advisor: (978) 805-4742