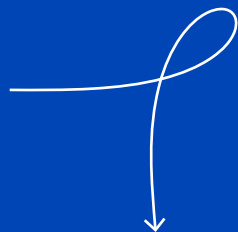




YOUTH EMPLOYMENT TOOLKIT

Employers



WELCOME!

Explore the Youth Employer Toolkit, where possibilities for youth in central Iowa are made clear and accessible!

The Youth Employment Toolkit series is a resource aiming to support youth, employers, and nonprofits in providing and accessing meaningful employment opportunities. This toolkit series highlights informative guides on how to be a key asset to the team, clear descriptions of current employment programs, guidance for employers to effectively engage with youth, and how to welcome youth into the workforce through meaningful engagement. The toolkit's purpose is to improve youth development and increase meaningful employment opportunities.

This specific toolkit benefits employers by providing insights into the various programs available and how to best support youth in their employment, building a talent pipeline. This toolkit encourages collaboration and understanding among our community, ultimately enhancing the overall youth employment landscape in central Iowa.

These toolkits were created by youth to authentically reflect their experiences, highlight gaps and barriers they've encountered, and identify opportunities for growth. The language and perspective may differ from standard United Way of Central Iowa materials, as they are intentionally written to amplify youth voices and insights.

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WHAT IS YOUTH EMPLOYMENT?

Youth employment means individuals considered youth, especially those who are 16 to 19 years old, engaging in a wide range of employment opportunities. However, it is important to point out that it is more than just simply participating in the workforce; it is about creating purposeful, meaningful, and intentional opportunities for a future generation. Whether through nonprofit organizations, businesses, or government agencies, youth employment aims to empower young people to discover interests and thrive in part-time roles to real-life career pathways.

Importance of Youth Employment

According to the 2022 ACS done by the Census, 46% of young people (ages 16-19) are employed in central Iowa. This not only shows the impact youth are currently having on our labor market but shows there is still room for improvement in access and participation. Although there are a multitude of reasons to engage our youth in the workforce, here are some key things they bring to the table.

According to [YouthPower](#), youth provide the workplace with:

- Diverse Viewpoints and Innovation
- Engagement and Inclusion
- Enhanced Productivity and Well-Being
- Creativity
- Adaptability
- Energy and Enthusiasm
- Cultural Awareness

Career Exploration Opportunities for Youth

Having an opportunity to explore different careers is crucial for helping young people gain higher-quality jobs according to the [Brookings Institution](#). There are many ways to present career exploration, given that each career is essential and needed. Job opportunities during adolescence play a crucial role in helping youth develop essential life skills, such as collaborating with others, solving problems, and managing responsibilities. These early experiences lay the groundwork for securing a stable, reliable career, which in turn provides a living wage and builds the foundation for self-sufficiency. Examples of workforce exposure that are available for youth include:

- Fast food employees
- Lifeguards
- Construction
- Receptionist
- Culinary
- Internships (paid or unpaid)
- Retail work
- Childcare
- Hospitality
- Medical

Youth employment is not a one-size-fits-all approach and can vary widely based on the goals, aspirations, and circumstances for youth. Examples of how youth employment opportunities can be structured are:

- Internships
- Apprenticeships
- Part-time and Full-time Jobs
- Work-Study Programs
- Temporary/Seasonal Jobs
- Work-Based Learning
- Service-Learning

SUCCESS STORIES

Iowa Homeless Youth Centers: IHYC Post Secondary Education Retention Program

One of the recent participants completed the program and graduated from DMACC in 2022. She started a career specific to her degree and purchased a home in 2023. The program was a support system for her while she was in school. She struggled with having stable housing and food security. Now that she has found stable ground, she still celebrates with her case managers. The program gave her a support system on her journey to success.

Urban Dreams: Youth Networking and Workforce

The Urban Dreams Youth Networking Workforce Program is a haven for youth and provides real world experiences. The relationships built with youth give the Urban Dreams staff the ability to write letters of recommendation for other job opportunities. Youth are given grace and have many teachable moments when they make mistakes. They are given the opportunity to recover from failures, which gives them a longer runway to success.

Forest Avenue Outreach: Pathway to Building Trades

Last summer, Forest Avenue had 14 kids in their program, and 12 stayed through to the end. Out of those 12, three are now applying to EP2, an electrical production company, where they plan to work.

Trinity found a job at Waldinger and can now support her family with her wages. Hunter is joining the military and studying engineering. Forest Avenue is committed to

tailoring their program to meet the unique needs of each young person. They even had a student who dropped out of school but reached out for help and found a new path in the cement trade. This summer, they are focused on recruiting students who were a great fit for the program and for careers in the trades, ensuring more success stories like these.

Pursuit of Innovation: Tech Mentorship

Before joining their program, this student never thought college was an option. In his Hispanic family, the focus was always on working rather than education. But things started to change when he began working with the Innovation team. They helped him find the best options for his future, guided him through applying to schools, registering for classes, and even getting scholarships. He loves the program because it provides him with consistency. He always attended the sessions and often went to the office for one-on-one help. Now, he is on his way to college, something he never imagined before.

WeLIFT Job Search Center: WeLIFT Let's Get to Work

WeLIFT is serving several kids who had no intention of going back to school. They had one youth who liked workshops but struggled with the work-based learning program. After working with this young person, they found out he got all his credits and will graduate this spring. WeLIFT is very proud of him.

WeLIFT has had to shift gears - in a few ways, addressing some of the root causes. They are also providing space for credit recovery because the school building is a challenging place for the youth they serve.

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH

Promoting Positive Youth Development

Youth employment programs and opportunities play a significant role in positively impacting youth development, fostering a sense of belonging, and having the ability to sharpen new skills in an environment created with youth in mind.

When youth are engaged in programs that provide positive opportunities, they are more likely to make positive decisions and display less risky behaviors. Youth who actively engage in youth employment programs show stronger communication skills, adaptability, and confidence in ways that are difficult to achieve in the classroom alone ([Brookings](#)).

Unique Experiences tailored to enhance different skill sets

Youth employment programs differ from standard careers as they offer unique experiences designed to cultivate a diverse range of skills outside of school, typical job opportunities, and their daily environment. Youth employment programs provide hands-on experience and learning opportunities for both personal and professional growth. Youth employment programs are designed for youth to establish a set of goals and use each experience to explore interests and create a career pathway.

Leadership Development

Youth employment programs often include opportunities for leadership roles and responsibilities, allowing youth to develop leadership skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and teamwork.

Networking Opportunities

Young people participating in youth employment programs have the chance to network with professionals, mentors, and peers in their chosen field or industry. These connections can lead to valuable career opportunities, mentorships, and long-term professional relationships.

Career Exploration and Guidance

Meaningful youth employment opportunities provide exposure to various career paths and industries, helping youth explore their interests and clarify their career goals. This early exposure can guide their educational choices and career decisions.

Personal Growth and Confidence Building

Engaging in meaningful work and achieving success in youth employment programs allows growth in self-esteem, self-confidence, and a sense of accomplishment among other things. This personal growth is essential for their overall well-being and future success.

Civic and Community Engagement

Youth employment has been shown to significantly reduce involvement in the criminal justice system for participating youth according to a study done in Chicago. Researchers observed that involvement in youth employment programs reduced arrests, citations, convictions, and/or incarcerations across four cities, with evidence pointing to both simultaneous and post-program effects.

Listen: Summer Youth Employment in Action

[This podcast](#) from J-PAL North America brings to life the stories behind the numbers. Hear from advocates and program coordinators, researchers, and participants themselves about why summer jobs programs matter to them and why they should matter for all of us.

[The Promises of Summer Youth Employment Programs: Lessons from Randomized Evaluations | The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab](#)

BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

There are many benefits to employers when it comes to employing youth. They bring innovative ideas and new energy to the workplace, allowing creativity to blossom and the company to grow. Additionally, youth have a willingness to learn and are curious about what it is like to work in different career settings.

Young employees represent the future of our workforce. Providing them with opportunities and experiences benefits them long-term and gives businesses a strategic advantage. According to Youthpower.org, young employees are generally less expensive than their more experienced counterparts, allowing employers to fill more positions without incurring higher costs. While having experienced employees is valuable, training young employees allows them to gain experience and develop skills, contributing to a more dynamic and capable workforce.

According to [Georgia Center For Opportunity](#) young employees offer numerous advantages to the workplace, and it is important to recognize these benefits when making hiring decisions. Establishing a program to meaningfully engage youth in the workplace may take some time on the front end but will create a pipeline of potential future employees. Key benefits of creating this pipeline are:

- Increased opportunities to grow within the company, leading to a higher retention rate
- High productivity
- Different mindsets and viewpoints
- Diversity
- Adaptivity



WHAT TO DO WHEN CONSIDERING HIRING YOUTH

Employers evaluate several factors when hiring a potential employee, such as qualifications, character, the benefits they bring to the company, and their individual needs. These same considerations apply when hiring youth.

Legal Considerations

Labor Laws and Regulations: Understand and comply with child labor laws, including minimum age requirements, work hour restrictions, and permissible job duties.

Work Permits: Ensure that young workers have the necessary work permits, if required.

Training and Supervision

Comprehensive Training: Provide thorough training on job duties, workplace safety, and company policies.

Mentorship: Assign mentors or experienced staff to guide and support young workers as they adapt to their new roles.

Clear Expectations: Set clear, achievable goals and expectations to help them understand their responsibilities.

Work Environment

Safe and Supportive Environment: Create a welcoming and safe workplace where young employees feel comfortable and respected.

Positive Culture: Foster a positive work culture that encourages learning, growth, and open communication.

Scheduling Flexibility

Flexible Hours: Offer flexible work schedules that accommodate school commitments and extracurricular activities.

Balance: Ensure a healthy work-life balance to prevent burnout and support their overall well-being.

Skills Development

Skill-Building Opportunities: Provide opportunities for developing new skills and gaining valuable work experience.

Feedback and Growth: Offer constructive feedback and opportunities for professional growth and development.

Communication

Open Lines of Communication: Maintain open and effective communication channels to address any concerns or questions they may have.

Parental Involvement: In some cases, communicate with parents or guardians to ensure they are informed and supportive of the young worker's employment.

Motivation and Engagement

Recognition and Rewards: Recognize and reward hard work and achievements to keep them motivated and engaged.

Inclusive Activities: Include them in team activities and company events to foster a sense of belonging.

CONNECTING EMPLOYERS AND YOUNG ADULTS: PRACTICAL STEPS

Connecting with young people about employment opportunities requires a multifaceted approach that involves education, community engagement, and leveraging technology. Here are some effective strategies:

Partnerships with Local Businesses

Employer Collaboration: Partner with local businesses to create job opportunities specifically for young people.

Business Advisory Councils: Establish councils where local business leaders can advise on skills in demand and how to prepare young people for the workforce.

Youth Employment Programs: Support or create programs that focus on job placement for young people.

Mentorship Programs: Develop mentorship programs connecting young job seekers with experienced professionals.

Leveraging Technology

Online Job Portals: Use online job portals and apps that cater to young job seekers. Platforms like LinkedIn, Indeed, and specialized youth job boards can be very effective.

Social media: Utilize social media platforms to share job postings and connect with young audiences.

Skill Development Workshops

Resume Building Workshops: Conduct workshops to help young people create professional resumes and cover letters.

Interview Skills Training: Offer training on how to prepare for and succeed in job interviews.

School and College Initiatives

On-Campus Recruiting: Allow employers to recruit directly from high schools, colleges, and universities.

Career Services: Strengthen career services in educational institutions to provide better support and resources for job seekers.

Support Networks

Peer Networks: Encourage young people to join networks or groups where they can share job leads and support each other in the job search process.

Parental and Community Involvement: Engage parents and community members in supporting and encouraging young people to explore and pursue job opportunities.

Government Programs

Youth Employment Services: Take advantage of government programs and services designed to support youth employment.

Subsidized Employment Programs: Explore subsidized employment programs that provide financial incentives for hiring young workers.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL RETENTION OF YOUTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Youth seek jobs that offer livable wages, good hours, and opportunities for growth. Employers can reduce turnover by establishing respectful relationships and providing clear career progression paths at the beginning of the employment.

Based on recommendations from workforce development professionals, here are some core strategies for creating healthy work environments:

Introduce Potential Employees: Familiarize youth with the workplace through tours, job shadowing, and mock interviews before they apply. This helps young people feel more prepared when applying for positions.

Positive First Day Experience: Ensure youth feel welcomed and informed on their first day. Introduce them to colleagues and clarify expectations to set a positive tone from the start.

Assign a Mentor: Pair youth with a mentor who can guide them through workplace culture and expectations.

This support is crucial as young workers may not initially understand workplace norms or feel comfortable seeking guidance.

Provide Ongoing Training: Offer continuous training opportunities to help youth enhance their skills and adapt to evolving job demands. This shows commitment to their professional development and boosts job satisfaction.

Encourage Open Communication: Establish an environment where youth feel comfortable sharing ideas, concerns, and feedback. Regular check-ins and open-door policies foster trust and improve morale.

Recognize and Reward Achievement: Acknowledge and celebrate accomplishments to reinforce contributions to the team. Recognition programs or incentives can motivate youth and enhance job satisfaction.

CREATING RESPECTFUL AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

To retain youth employees and foster a positive work environment, it is suggested that employers prioritize creating workplaces that value and respect all employees, regardless of their background or circumstances. This involves several key strategies:

Equitable Treatment

Ensuring equitable treatment involves promoting fairness across genders, races, and diverse backgrounds within the organization. Employers can achieve this by:

- Conducting regular audits to identify and address pay disparities.
- Implementing transparent policies for shift assignments and promotions based on merit and skill.
- Providing equal access to training and career development opportunities for all employees.
- Offering fair and competitive compensation packages that consider skills, experience, and performance.
- Establishing clear grievance procedures and mechanisms for youth to report discrimination or unfair treatment.

Building Lasting Relationships

Building lasting relationships within the workplace contributes to a positive and supportive organizational culture. Employers can foster these relationships by:

- Promoting open communication channels between supervisors and employees from diverse backgrounds.
- Organizing regular team-building activities or social events that encourage interaction and collaboration among coworkers.
- Implementing mentorship programs where experienced employees serve as mentors to younger or less experienced staff members.
- Recognizing and celebrating employee achievements and milestones to reinforce a sense of belonging and accomplishment.
- Creating opportunities for cross-functional teamwork and project collaboration to build trust and camaraderie among team members.

Understanding Personal Challenges

Supporting youth facing personal challenges is crucial for creating a supportive workplace environment. Employers can demonstrate their commitment to understanding and accommodating these challenges by:

- Establishing flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting options or flexible hours, to accommodate familial needs or school requirements.
- Offering employee assistance programs (EAPs) that provide resources for mental health support, financial counseling, or legal advice.
- Implementing policies that allow for reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including modified work schedules or ergonomic adjustments.
- Providing access to wellness programs and initiatives that promote physical and mental well-being among employees.
- Encouraging open communication between supervisors and youth to discuss personal challenges and explore potential solutions.

Promoting Diversity and Inclusion

Promoting diversity and inclusion enhances organizational performance and fosters innovation by embracing differences and creating a culture of respect and acceptance. Employers can promote diversity and inclusion by:

- Actively recruiting from diverse talent pools and implementing inclusive hiring practices.
- Providing diversity training and workshops to educate employees on unconscious bias, cultural sensitivity, and inclusive leadership.
- Creating Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) or affinity groups that celebrate and support diverse identities and experiences.
- Establishing policies and practices that promote equal access to career advancement opportunities and leadership roles.
- Conducting regular diversity audits to assess progress and identify areas for improvement in diversity and inclusion initiatives.

MARKETING TO THE YOUTH AUDIENCE

Marketing plays a crucial role in involving youth in the workforce. While most companies are active on social media and have dedicated marketing teams, a significant challenge can be effectively promoting their brand to younger audiences.

Younger individuals are generally more active on social media compared to older demographics. According to a study by Mayo Clinic, 35% of teens aged 13-17 use at least one of the major social media apps multiple times daily. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat are popular among this demographic. To effectively reach this audience, advertise your job opportunities on these platforms. Once established, focus on strategies to capture their attention, and generate interest in your company. Consider approaches such as:

- Having a marketing team dedicated to making youth-related content: Finding places where youth spend most of their time at (e.g.: schools, parks, neighborhoods etc.)

- Connections: Find organizations around your city that you know deal with youth and form a partnership with them (e.g.: partnering with a youth outreach organization to help youth in need of support find success).
- Benefits: Explain the benefits of being a part of this company, showcase health plans, flexibility, cultural inclusion, events, position training, etc.

Reflect on factors that address the needs of youth employees, and how your company can supplement that. For example, these are questions employers are encouraged to ask themselves:

- What does your company have that stands out from other companies?
- Do you provide food or on-shift meal discounts for your employees?
- What does work/life balance look like?
- Are adults at your workplace youth friendly?
- Would young employees feel comfortable in this workspace?
- How much would they make and how could they get a promotion/raise if their work has been proficient?

Consider analyzing these questions when marketing to younger audiences.

LEGAL AND HIRING LAWS INVOLVING MINORS

When you are considering employing youth, it is important to understand applicable work laws and legal issues. This section of the toolkit will cover how to legally hire minors and what you need to keep in mind when regarding work laws and rules related to minor workers. The legal age you can start working in the state of Iowa is 14. Minors under 16 usually need a work permit provided by the school. Minors under 16 have restrictions on how many hours they can work during the school year, which is 20 hours. Minors cannot work during school hours and their hours are limited to daily and weekly.

In Iowa, youth employment regulations adhere closely to federal child labor laws under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These laws specify the hours and times during which minors can work, based on whether it is a school week or a non-school week. Here is an overview of the restrictions:

Age 14 and 15:

- School Weeks (Labor Day to June 1): Youth aged 14 and 15 can work from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m.
- Non-School Weeks (June 1 to Labor Day): During these periods, they can work from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m.

Age 16 and 17:

- There are no time restrictions for youth aged 16 and 17 in Iowa, allowing them more flexibility in their work hours throughout the year.

Employers and youth in Iowa must adhere to these federal regulations, which are designed to ensure the safety and well-being of young workers. For more detailed information, refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Iowa Statutes Chapter 92 (Child Labor), and resources provided by the Iowa Division of Labor – Child Labor. These guidelines help protect youth while allowing them valuable opportunities to gain work experience.

More information about this topic can be found at [Child Labor | Department of Inspections, Appeals, & Licensing \(iowa.gov\)](https://www.iowa.gov/child-labor)

IOWA'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT LAW: WAIVER APPLICATION

Effective July 1, 2023, Iowa's updated Youth Employment Law ([Senate File 542](#)) makes several changes, including the ability for Iowa employers to apply for a waiver for 16- and 17-year-olds to participate in approved work-based learning or work-related programs involving certain hazardous work activities under certain conditions.

ADDRESSING BARRIERS FACED BY YOUTH

Youth employment is not just about going to work and getting paid, it is about building a stronger, more stable/inclusive future for young people and giving them the skills and opportunities they need to succeed throughout their careers.

There are some barriers young people face when it comes to finding and retaining a job. They might not have the right skills that employers are looking for. Other times, there are barriers like discrimination, not enough work experience, or their current situation.

Even though these barriers are present, organizations can step in and support younger employees while they work to remove these barriers. It is important for employers to create work environments that support young workers' well-being and work-life balance so they can thrive both at work and outside of work. As an employer hiring young workers, consider thinking about obstacles youth may face when it comes to finding work.

Family Needs

Family needs can sometimes make it hard for youth to take advantage of employment opportunities. Things like looking

after siblings, helping at home, or helping family financially can consume a lot of their time and energy. This can make it tricky for them to balance their own goals with what their family needs from them.

Supporting Financial Independence

Some youth may face barriers such as having to decline unpaid internships, or career-building opportunities due to financial responsibilities. This can hold them back from gaining important skills and experiences that will help them shape into confident career experienced adults.

Transportation Barriers

Not having transportation creates a wall between youth trying to explore and take the opportunities presented to them, and the situation in life that they are in that prevents that happening.

To provide career opportunities, recruit youth, and establish a long-term investment into youth, employers can assist with minimizing transportation barriers. For example, by

allowing flexible arrival times, enabling carpooling, and location consideration. There are many ways employers can assist with these barriers and ensure a positive way for youth to work.

Discrimination and Harassment

Instances of discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, disability, age, or genetic information can create stressful and hostile work environments for youth. These instances are difficult for anyone, but youth specifically lack the tools and experience to know how to navigate these challenging situations.

Skill Development and Experience

Some youth may encounter challenges due to a lack of specific skills or prior work experience, which can make it harder to secure employment opportunities.

Impact on Mental Health

According to a recent study, 2 in 3 employers say a mental health crisis in the US will come within the next three years; yet only 10% of employers feel prepared to manage such a crisis. These barriers can have a profound impact on the mental health of youth by adding:

Stress and Anxiety: Constantly navigating barriers such as discrimination, financial strain, or transportation issues can contribute to heightened stress and anxiety levels.

Low Self-Esteem: Facing challenges in securing employment or experiencing discrimination may negatively affect self-confidence and self-worth.

Depression: Persistent barriers and difficulties in finding suitable work opportunities can lead to feelings of hopelessness and depression.



STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYERS TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Employers should encourage open conversations about mental health to reduce stigma and make it easier for youth workers to seek help when needed. Here are some ways to promote mental health:

Educational Resources:

Provide materials and workshops that teach about mental health and common issues youth may face. Also, make information easily accessible so youth workers can learn more about mental health.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP):

If available, promote your EAP which offers confidential counseling and support services. It is important to ensure youth workers know how to access these services and what support they can expect.

Training for Essential Skills:

Offer training sessions on problem-solving, conflict resolution, and effective communication. These skills can help youth workers manage stress and handle challenges in the workplace effectively.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN IOWA

Central Iowa offers a diverse range of youth employment programs aimed at equipping young individuals with essential skills and valuable work experience across various industries. Programs such as the ones below provide structured opportunities for youth aged 14 to 21 to gain hands-on experience and develop career focused skills. Each program offers unique benefits, from paid job training and career coaching to community involvement.

By having these opportunities for youth, not only do they prepare youth for future careers but also guide them in understanding the educational pathways necessary for their desired professions. Additional resources are available to assist youth in accessing and participating in these programs, ensuring a supportive environment for learning, growth, and career exploration.

For more information on each program, interested individuals can refer to the specific additional resources provided under each program.

LIST OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL IOWA

Y-ExCEL Summer Program

The Y-ExCEL Summer Program is an opportunity for youth aged 14 to 21 in central Iowa. It offers a paid, 10-week job training program that helps participants develop crucial skills for future careers. Before starting their jobs, participants undergo a two-week paid training session focusing on essential workplace skills such as ethics, communication, dress code, and time management. This program not only prepares youth for employment but also guides them towards understanding the education and training necessary for their desired careers.

Additional Resources:

- [Y-EXCL Summer Program Overview](#) and application process details
 - [Employer Partner Form](#)
-

Iowa Workforce Development Summer Youth Employment Program

Iowa Workforce Development offers a summer youth employment program designed to connect youth aged 16 to 21 with paid work experience across various industries. Participants receive job skills training, career coaching, and support to enhance their employability. The program emphasizes firsthand learning and provides opportunities for career exploration and development.

Additional Resources:

- [Central Iowa Works Summer Youth Employment Program Overview](#)

Oakridge Youth Summer Employment Program (YSEP)

The Youth Summer Employment Program (YSEP) is tailored for high school youth in central Iowa. It provides nine weeks of paid part-time work (20-30 hours per week) at various non-profit and public locations across the community. Youth not only earn income but also gain valuable job skills through workshops and direct experiences. YSEP focuses on providing positive youth development, offering opportunities for career exploration, leadership development, and community involvement.

Additional Resources:

- YSEP Program Details and Eligibility overview- [Youth Education - Oakridge Neighborhood](#)
 - [Summer Youth Employment Program Application](#)
-

Avenue Scholars Des Moines Public Schools Internships

Launched during the 2022-2023 school year at Des Moines Public Schools, the Avenue Scholars program is tailored for students beginning their junior year of high school. It provides ongoing support through postsecondary training and continues to assist them for six months as they transition into their careers.

Additional Resources:

- Avenue Scholars Program Overview- [Avenue Scholars Des Moines \(avescholarsdesmoines.org\)](#)
- Student resources and Internships- [Student Resources | Avenue Scholars Des Moines \(avescholarsdesmoines.org\)](#)

Polk County Conservation Youth Corps Program

Established in 2017, the Polk County Conservation Youth Corps program offers young people a rewarding service-learning experience focused on conservation. Crew leaders (ages 19+) guide teams of teenagers (ages 14-18) through various service projects in woodlands, prairies, and wetlands, contributing to park maintenance efforts. This program not only emphasizes hands-on learning and outdoor activities but also provides opportunities to earn income, develop skills, and support Polk County parks and trails.

Additional Resources:

- [Application Link](#)
 - [About Youth Corps - Polk County Iowa](#)
-

YouthWorks

YouthWorks in Des Moines, Iowa, provides valuable employment opportunities for young people, helping them gain practical skills and experience in various fields. Through this program, youth not only earn income but also develop essential workplace skills that prepare them for future careers. YouthWorks connects local businesses and organizations with motivated youth, fostering a supportive environment for learning and growth.

Additional Resources:

- [Application Link](#)

Principal Financial Group

Interns gain real-world experience and decide their career path with [Principal's](#) internship program. The program offers focused activities and opportunities to develop skills, build relationships, and explore personal and career aspirations. Flexible start and end dates accommodate students' academic commitments, with most internships during the summer (10-12 weeks) and some extending into an academic semester (6-7 months). Each internship listing specifies the required timeframe and work format (onsite, hybrid, or remote)

Additional Resources:

- [Internships | Principal Careers](#)

RESOURCES

Employee toolkit for NAWB:

Ash, O. +. (2024). NAWB - family centered employment toolkit. National Association of Workforce Boards. <https://www.nawb.org/initiatives/family-centered-employment-toolkit>

Career Exploration and Skill Development | Youth.gov. (n.d.). <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-employment/career-exploration-and-skill-development>

Youth challenges source:

Sirois, M., Scott, M., & Spauldin, S. (2023b, October 5). Elevating youth worker voice. Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/elevating-youth-worker-voice>

Mawn, L., Oliver, E. J., Akhter, N., Bambra, C. L., Torgerson, C., Bridle, C., & Stain, H. J. (2017). Are we failing young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)? A systematic review and metaanalysis of re-engagement interventions. Systematic reviews, 6, 1-17.

Ray, O., Crunden, J. & Murphy, H. (2018). Liverpool City Region Youth Employment Gateway (YEG) Evaluation. Learning and Work Institute

Importance of youth employment references:

Eyster, L., Nightingale, D., Barnow, B., O'Brien, C., Trutko, J. & Kuehn, D. (2010). Implementation and Early Training

Outcomes of the High Growth Job Training Initiative: Final Report. The Urban Institute on Labor, Human Services, and Population

Mental health resources :

[Supporting Your Employees' Mental Health | Iowa Association of Business and Industry \(iowaabi.org\)](https://www.iowaabi.org/supporting-your-employees-mental-health)

[What is Employment Discrimination? | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(eeoc.gov\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-is-employment-discrimination)

Law and policy for minors:

[Iowa Child Labor Laws 2024 - FAQs \(employmentlawhandbook.com\)](https://employmentlawhandbook.com/iowa-child-labor-laws-2024-faqs/)

DEI Resources:

[Promoting Equity and Good Fit Jobs for Young Adults - The Annie E. Casey Foundation \(aecf.org\)](https://www.aecf.org/promoting-equity-and-good-fit-jobs-for-young-adults)

Hiring and recruiting: [Tips to Attract and Keep Young Workers - The Annie E. Casey Foundation \(aecf.org\)](https://www.aecf.org/tips-to-attract-and-keep-young-workers)

[Tips to Attract and Keep Young Workers - The Annie E. Casey Foundation \(aecf.org\)](https://www.aecf.org/tips-to-attract-and-keep-young-workers)

Waiver for minor employment:

[Youth Employment Waiver | Iowa Workforce Development](https://www.iowa.gov/youth-employment-waiver)

DISCLAIMER

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